

Commercial in Confidence

February 2018



UNCOVERING YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Discovery Phase

Authors: Maxine Moss-Black and Mark Burrett



INTRODUCTION

Chaotic lifestyles, homelessness, rejection, lack of connection to establishments makes identifying the needs and the right language to engage with NEET (not in employment, education or training) young people very difficult. Economically inactive young people are often hidden in society, not receiving benefits, not on anyone's list. With the objective of improving services to NEETs and gaining better outcomes, West Berkshire Council (WBC) and Reading Borough Council (RBC) as part of their 'Elevate' employment project commissioned Projects with Purpose (PwP) to research:

'How best to attract and engage with these complex service users with a view to moving them into employment, education or training and test the opportunity of setting up an online Peer Led Programme'.



Within this report, PwP share the overall findings from multiple research channels and a set of recommendations that will focus on improving attraction and engagement of young people not in employment, education or training.

Research Channels:

- Workshops and semi structured interviews with service providers and young adults, investigating activities, behaviours and beliefs about attraction to and engagement with employment programmes
- Desktop research, taking learning from other research, pilots and case studies across the UK and Europe, to broaden the scope of investigation
- Social network analysis, covering communication from the last 6 months of key issues affecting youth employability in West Berkshire and Reading
- Stakeholder online survey, polling the views of predominantly LinkedIn networks

"...boxed throughout the report are quotes from the research participants so that you can read in their words the rich experiences and thoughts around the needs of young people."

*"Thank you to everyone that took part in the research and for being so open and honest.
"Mark and Maxine, Projects with Purpose*

INTRODUCTION	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT	6
WORKSHOPS	10
INTERVIEWS	14
SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH	21
YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKSHOPS	25
WIDER RESEARCH	29
CONCLUSIONS	31
RECOMMENDATIONS	33
APPENDIX A – STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOPS	388
APPENDIX B - INTERVIEWS	40
APPENDIX C - WORKSHOPS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE	42
APPENDIX D - DESKTOP RESEARCH	44
APPENDIX E – SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS	47
APPENDIX F - WEBSITE SURVEYS & FORUM	49

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This discovery phase is designed to test the hypothesis:

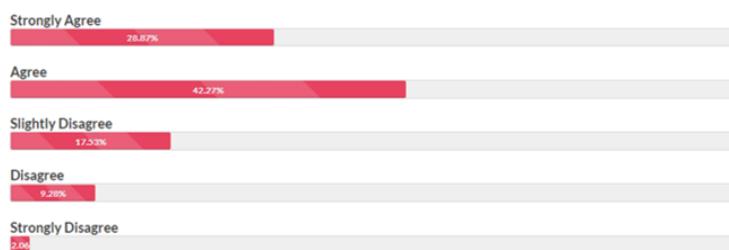
“Could a young people’s, peer led, digital service attract and engage significantly more people to the Elevate Programme”

Our research suggests that the answer is a resounding and conclusive yes but with a strong warning that a digital service in isolation will not work. The young people were very vocal about their continuing need for in-person services, with huge value put on being able to ‘trust’ the person providing that service.

“My support worker from Southampton, treated me like a daughter, acted like a best friend and told me off like a mother. I trusted her. ”

The evidence demonstrating the value of a blend of traditional face to face and digital services, combined with peer led services that work closely with the existing Elevate Programme is compelling:

Peer to peer support is thought to be the best way to engage with young people.



A total of **71%** (Strongly agreed and agreed) of the 412 survey respondents think that that Peer to Peer support is the best way to engage with young people

Unequivocally, digital is a powerful means of engaging with young people, demonstrated by the unique Social Media study commissioned for this research (Appendix E).

Digital and particularly social media creates a space that young people choose to make their own and they are already there, using it.

“Yeh, we share job opportunities with each other on messenger...”

They choose the platform, the groups to join/create which evolve into an environment where they can interact, learn and contribute on their own terms; creating a sense of belonging and worth as peers endorse their comments and provide support that carries through their journey.

“I've got a young person, who gets up every morning, walks his friends to school so it's outside, but then refuses to go to his school so goes back home.”

“...I feel like social media and everything will be amazing to connect with young people...”

The search for a place of belonging was a resounding theme when speaking to young people. Creating that place, both on and off-line is a compelling way to offer new opportunities to NEETs.

Summary of Recommendations

A series of young person led, pilot initiatives designed to deliver immediate and tangible benefits have been scoped for consideration:

1. Digital attraction and engagement campaign
2. Pop-Up Local Job Information Service
3. Website and Online service to Complement and Enhance the ‘Pop-Up’ Service
4. Peer to Peer Engagement Programme - supporting the development of new initiatives
5. Hidden Impairment Assessments - Effective identification of learning and reasonable adjustments for employment

The pilots will run independently to the existing Elevate Programme but by design will focus on referring people through to it. Whilst pilots will be led by young people, they will receive skills, coaching and mentoring through Projects with Purpose who will also take the role of measuring impact, reporting and pilot governance.

UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

NEETs, A National Description

A common misconception is that someone cannot be NEET unless they are unemployed. This is not the case. According to Andrew Powell's recent Briefing Paper 'NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training' (SN 06705) published 28 December 2017, NEETs are broadly categorised into two areas; Unemployed and Inactive. 'Only 38% of the 790,000 young people who were NEET in the third quarter of 2017 were unemployed (299,000). The remaining 62% were economically inactive, which means they were not working, not seeking work and/or not available to start work.'

'790,000 people aged 16-24 were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the third quarter of 2017, 11.1% of all people in this age group. This was the same level as in the previous quarter and down 65,000 from the third quarter of 2016.'

'Studies have shown that time spent NEET can have a detrimental effect on physical and mental health, and increase the likelihood of unemployment, low wages, or low quality of work later on in life.'

There are several reasons cited for causes of NEET status. These are mostly as follows:

- Looking after a family or home
- Disability
- Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Poor health (physical and mental)
- Lack of qualifications
- Substance abuse
- Responsibilities as a carer

The Gender Gap

Historically more women than men have been NEET, however over the last year the number of men and women aged 16-24 who were NEET have been at similar levels.

The main reason why there has been a fall for women has been because the number of women who are inactive as they have been either looking after their family or their home has decreased significantly.

The number of men who are economically inactive has increased for a number of reasons, with one reason being a large increase in the number of men who were either long term sick or disabled.

Ethnicity

The proportion of 16-24 year olds who were classed as NEET was highest for those from Pakistani/Bangladeshi backgrounds (16%) and lowest for those from Indian/Chinese/Other Asian backgrounds (7%).

Risk Factors

Risk factors can be determined early on and many NEETs might have been children with low attainment at GCSE level, health problems, those with familial difficulties and those with special educational needs (SEN). Structural risk factors were also identified, such as lack of suitable jobs available, lack of training and apprenticeship opportunities and welfare support providing higher income than potential wages.

“...when they're at year 11, they are already having problems at school you know, exclusions, suspensions, in behavioural units because they're kicking off because they've not had that family stability, that you or I have had.”

Complexity

NEETs are a complex group of people, often with chaotic lives, third generation unemployed or a looked after child. Understanding how these conditions affect young people, in their behaviour, decision making, self-esteem, ability to learn and other capacities can't be underestimated. The impact of each person's circumstances and their journey through the challenges of social and economic life is unique to them.

“There's just so many other things before they even when they get their head around looking for jobs and if they think that they're ready.”

Professor Amanda Kirby, CEO of Do-It Solutions, Neuroscientist and Researcher, uses the image below to illustrate the interaction between life adversity (past and present), developmental disorders and learning difficulties and those who are Looked After Children and Young People. This shows a complex web of causation that can lead to young people becoming excluded from Employment, Education and Training.

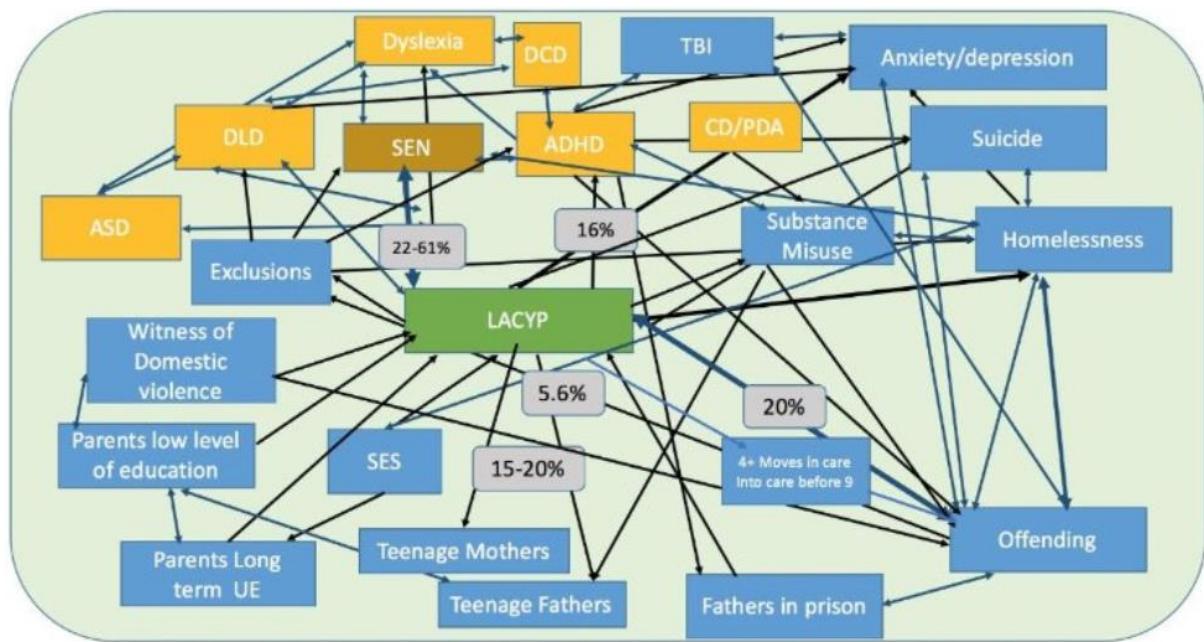


Figure 1 Professor Amanda Kirby 2017

Complexity is a tricky issue to battle with and Professor Kirby captures the challenge decisively with the statement that **'Big data can change society, but little data can change a person's life. Individuals need individual solutions - but we need to work together to solve this.'**

The Elevate Programme

The Elevate programme is a 3-year work programme introduced across six Berkshire Local Authorities in 2016 as the place for 16-24 year olds to get help, advice and support on employment, work experience, volunteering and mentoring. The programme is funded through the European Social Fund.

Key delivery partners are co-located in a central hub, creating a culture of collaboration and a catalyst for conversations around operational delivery. The brand is growing locally and a new person-centred pathway where partnership delivery is supported by a holistic service has emerged along with collective operational governance. Partner organisations are now recognising the benefits of working together and are keen to sustain the project and continuing to work this way.

Whilst the programme is growing momentum, however, although performance is increasing, the biggest problem remains engaging with people and getting them onto the programme.

This discovery phase is about understanding the NEETs context and applying that understanding to inform enhancements to existing services to better support young people into Employment, Education and Training.

Service Providers and users talk about the complexity around the lives of NEET young people, quotes:

“... when they're at year 11, they are already having problems at school you know, exclusions, suspensions, in behavioural units because they're kicking off because they've not had that family stability, that you or I have had. ”

“Then unfortunately the drug and alcohol comes into play and then you get the mental health drug induced psychosis, all those sorts of things are quite typical. And the mental health is quite a big one for both boys and girls.”

“You've got self-harm, eating disorders, anxiety, a whole ream of different things that come out. All stemming from I guess being put into care. ”

“...and then also the behavioural thing also could be because of a lot of them have been moved placements, semi placement moves whether it's local to Wokingham or Reading or wherever we are or a lot of them move out of area. So, it's just, it's quite chaotic. There's no stability so. They just kick against all of that, kick out against that. You do get the odd one that manages to make it through without any real issues. But I would say generally that's not the case.”

“Unfortunately, you know historically care leavers have also got, get involved in the youth justice system.”

“...he just doesn't have the label of a young offender or a care leaver so, there's lots out there that need us, but are not able to access our services.”

“There's just so many other things before they even when they get their head around looking for jobs and if they think that they're ready.”

“...engaging long term NEETS very hard. Long term because of lifestyle and that's their family expectation or no family expectation because of their social background. Background sometimes decides what path a young person will take. Not all NEET's are long term NEET's and don't get out of bed. Quite a few do want a job or want to move on to something.”

“One girl I was working with didn't want to do A-levels, she wanted to do something else. Her parent's adamant she would do A-levels and nothing else. Initially she wanted to go to college and do bricklaying; parents said it was only for boys.

Sometimes it's family but it's not always in the way that we think of, a family who are in a council house who have had five kids and none of them have worked, it could be middle class family who have got three other children and they've all gone to university and have all done A-levels and now you've got their fourth child who wants to go to college and do bricklaying, so it's finding another course she likes as well and she did end up doing something else, sports coaching.”

WORKSHOPS



Method and Scope (Appendix A)

To understand how to approach testing the hypothesis within the complexity described, we started the engagement with two workshops and was attended by a diverse group of participants including:

- Reading Voluntary Actions Group Lead RVA
- Troubled Families Employment Advisor DWP
- YOT (Youth Offending Team) Officer from West Berkshire
- Team Leader Reading Elevate
- Tracking and Engagement Officer, West Berkshire
- Post 16 Adviser, West Berkshire
- Elevate (City Deal) Programme Manager, Reading Council
- 14-19 Participation and Apprenticeship Lead, Reading Council
- The NEET Prevention Team Officer, Elevate hub from Wokingham.
- 17-year-old male receiving services from the Youth Offending Team West Berkshire

Recurring categories and themes emerged amongst the complex issues discussed, and following further analysis, we ordered the rich input from the workshops into aggregates to focus further investigations on.

This analysis of the workshops enabled us to build a framework to organise the overall research findings within. (see Appendix a for plenary Stakeholder Workshop Analysis)

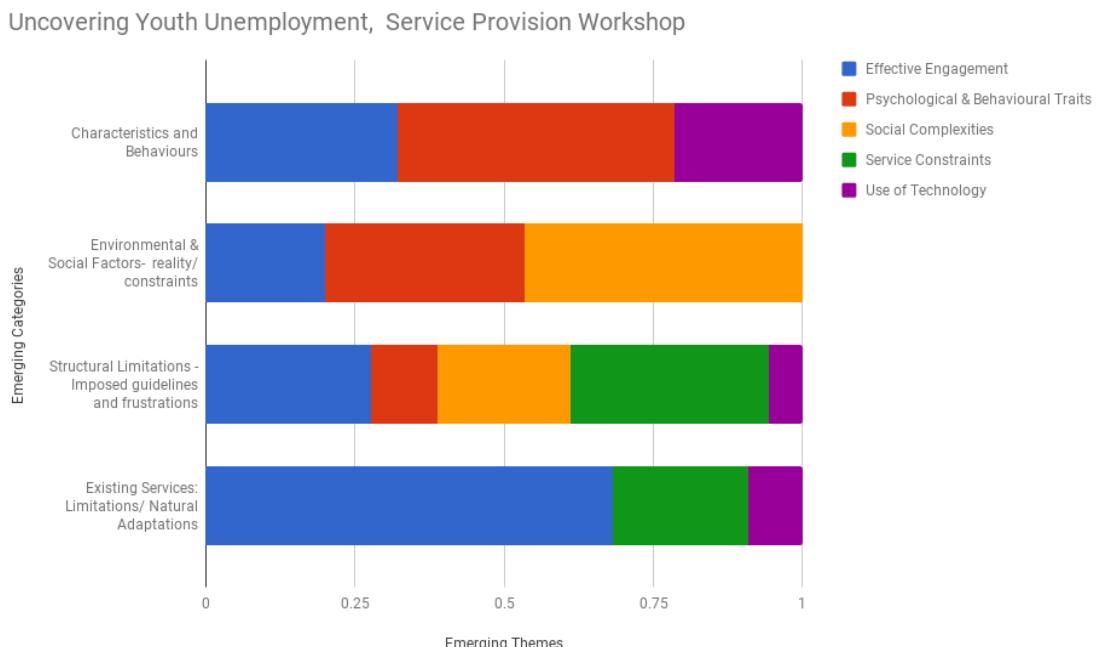


Figure 2 Emerging Themes and Categories from Workshop

Themes

Figure 1 shows the grouping of common themes into categories. ‘Effective Engagement’ and ‘Psychological and Behavioural Traits’ are the most prevalent themes and were used as a focus for the design of semi-structured interviews in the next stage of investigation, and to structure the findings in this report.

The other themes shown in figure 1 above, ‘Social Complexities, Service Constraints and Use of Technology’ will be studied within our investigations of the primary themes of ‘Effective Engagement’ and ‘Psychological and Behavioural Traits’. For example, the ‘*Social Complexities*’ of a young person who is a carer of their parent or is third generation unemployed is critical to understand and can help to explain ‘Psychological and Behavioural Traits’. However, where social complexities in most cases cannot be removed, we will concentrate on understanding the traits they present in individuals and how best to ensure services are fit to respond.

‘*Service Constraints*’ is a similar theme. The topics of existing services, processes and contractual constraints as expected were common themes that must be considered however were not upheld as a primary issue.

Lastly, ‘*Use of Technology*’ wasn’t a focus in the workshops, however is an important focus that will emerge within our primary themes.

Sub-Themes

After identifying the two primary themes above, further analysis was conducted within these to uncover more detailed sub-themes, discrete issues discussed in the workshops.

Psychological and behavioural traits, sub themes

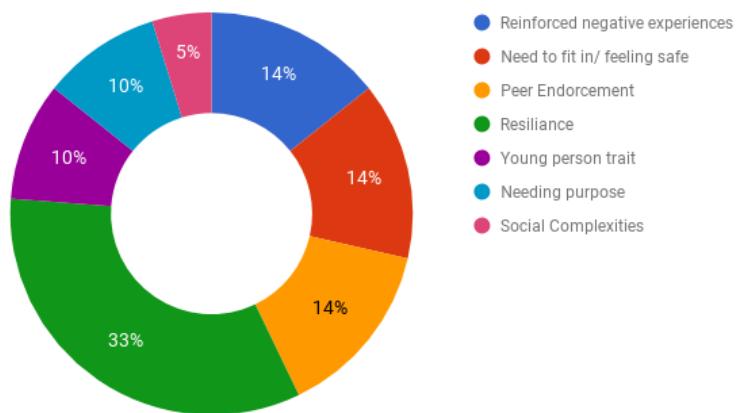


Figure 3 Psychological and Behavioural Traits, Themes

Effective engagement, sub themes

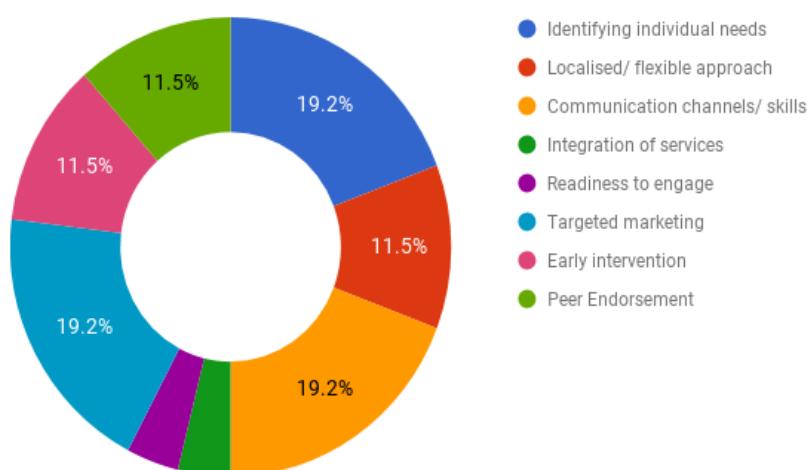


Figure 4 Effective Engagement Themes

These findings were again prioritised and used as a focus for the design of semi-structured interviews in the next stage of investigation, and other research channels.

Key Themes	Effective Engagement	Psychological and Behavioural Traits
Priority sub-themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identifying individual needs - Communication channels/ skills - Targeted marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Resilience - Peer endorsement - Reinforced negative experiences - Need to fit in/ feel safe

Figure 5 Themes and Sub-themes filtered and condensed

Conclusion

Developing a shared understanding of the current situation, the difference between what people want and the current reality, is essential to addressing the challenge that stakeholders face when seeking change.

“...the workshop really made me think about what it is I do to engage with the young people I work with.”

The initiating workshops were designed to build a foundation for change, engaging with stakeholders, establishing common ground with an understanding and acceptance of the current reality.

The outputs from the workshops are:

- Shared understanding of the current situation
- Catalyst for ongoing conversations that stimulate new thinking
- Organised and improved quality of information
- Semi-structured interviews design and identification of people to interview
- Themes for following stages of research

Emerging from the workshops is the metaphor of bridging the gap between different worlds. There is seen as a real distinction between the ‘places’ young people inhabit and the ‘places’ that have been created for them to go to get support. This dissonance becomes a common investigation throughout the research methods used.

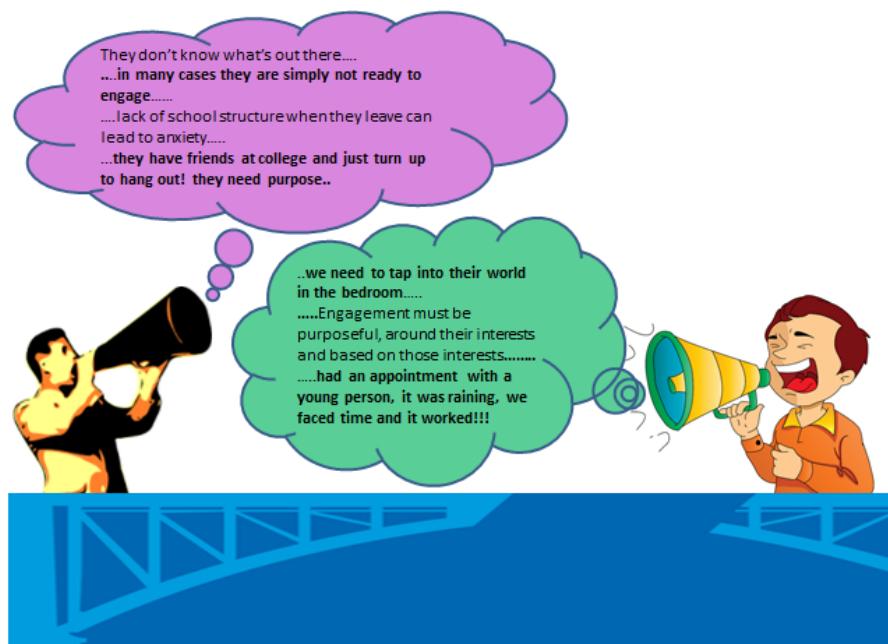


Figure 6 Bridging the Gap, quotes from Workshops

INTERVIEWS

Method and scope (Appendix B)

Semi-structured interviews are a method of enquiry that uses predetermined but open questions to prompt discussions with interviewees, giving the interviewer the opportunity to explore emerging topics further. The open nature of the questions used, enables the process to be as much as possible interviewee-led.

8 interviews were completed across a variety of knowledgeable participants with varying job roles and perspectives:

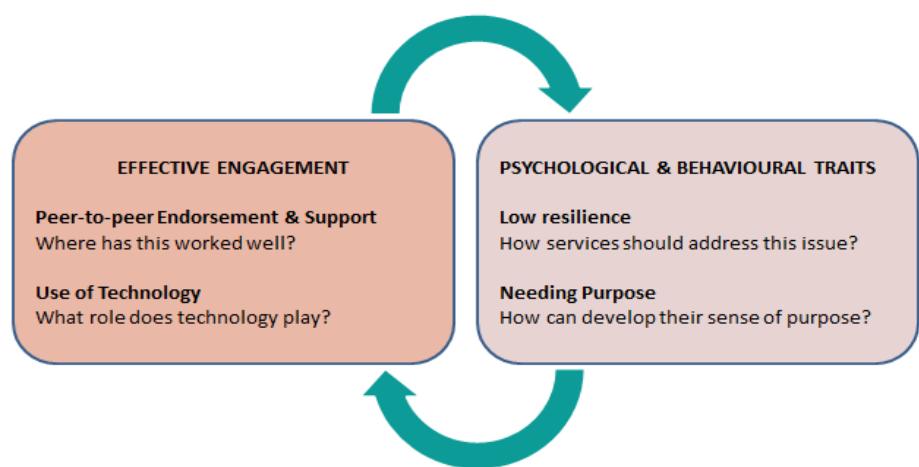
- 14-19 Participation and Apprenticeship Lead from Reading Council
- Senior Social Worker from the leaving care team, working with looked after children at 16.
- The NEET prevention team. Elevate hub from Wokingham.
- 16-24 Tracking & Engagement officer from Elevate
- YOT Officer from West Berkshire's youth offending team
- Employment Support Hub Coordinator from Bracknell Forest Councils Elevate Hub
- Intervention Tracker from West Berks Youth Offending team who is working with in the NEET Prevention Team and Wokingham Elevate.
- YOT Officer with a service user, 17-year-old male receiving services from the Youth Offending Team West Berkshire



Twitter post from participant

The questions concentrated on the following broad themes:

Interview questions were tailored to the specific themes and issues revealed from the preceding stakeholder workshops.
(See Appendix B for full details of the questions and interview transcripts)



Findings

The one-to-one nature of the interviews enables an insight not only into what people think but also the reasoning that leads them to their conclusions.

Incredible insights and real-life scenarios were revealed along with the invaluable experience, expertise and passions of experienced frontline workers and service users. As recognised storylines and archetypes appeared, shared patterns began to emerge around the beliefs, aspirations and needs of young people.

Recurrently, the approach described by participants demonstrated a credence in natural instinct and intuition, relying on personality, empathy and flexibility rather than mechanistic, operational processes of service designs. As front-line staff described what they do, they often seemed unwitting to the extent that they adapt a services or processes to meet the needs of an individual.

Cutting through all the discussions, there were some common themes:

- The need to build relationships with young people, treat them as an individual
- The need to persevere, show unconditional support, demonstrate and earn trust
- The need for space and time within roles to invest in building self-resilience
- The importance of helping young people to establish a sense of purpose and belonging
- Engaging is about finding ‘that one thing’ that gets a young person interested e.g. gym, horse riding, bikes,
- Social complexities as barriers to engagement

The conditions of young NEETs were often cited as long and enduring complex lifestyles that impact on core beliefs around self-worth, often manifesting in often anti-social behaviour and seemingly unwillingness to engage.

Some tremendous, existing resilience building programmes for young people were referenced, however frustrations that availability can be limited to those with a labels such as ‘Care Leavers’ and ‘Young Offenders’ were voiced. This frustration was recognised also in the preceding stakeholder workshops.

“...he just doesn't have the label of a young offender or a care leaver so, there's lots out there that need us, but are not able to access our services.”

Digital methods, primarily social media, were recognised as a useful channel for interviewees to communicate with the young people they are working with. It was described as enabling them to reach young people, often ‘in their own bedrooms’ for example using text messaging as a simple way of keeping in touch and building trust with a

young person e.g. seeing how an interview went. Beyond these simple accounts of engaging digitally with individuals, the harnessing of wider reaching digital engagement solutions was seen as a largely untapped potential.

Peer endorsement was unanimously recognised as an extremely valuable method of engaging with young people. Peers are more likely to understand the needs of young NEETs and having a similar background and experience is a fast-track to earning trust. Peers that have overcome issues that young NEETs identify with are ready role models, making those common goals seem more obtainable and ‘within reach’. For example, often situations such as living in a hostel and seeing how someone they lived with got a job and in turn a flat can be that trigger for change.

Where peer support has been provided by someone who has been through similar circumstances themselves the chances of success are considered to grow, endorsing a peer mentoring approach.

Evidencing Practice

Peer-to-Peer Support and the Netherlands Streetcornerwork Projects

Studies in the Netherlands, (Youngworks, 2014 and Marketing Tribune, 2015 ⁽¹⁾) have shown that young people under the age of 20 are most susceptible to peer pressure because they are impressionable. The young people respond more effectively to e.g. affirmation and acceptance (Youngworks, 2014).

The Streetcornerwork projects works primarily with young people and long-term addicts who, because of a variety of social and personal problems, have disengaged or threatened to disengage with society. Fieldworkers or ‘Field Corner Workers’ as they are known, actively contact these groups in their social environment to promote the interests of these young people and the elderly. Projects have been implemented in Amsterdam., Haarlem, Heemstede, Heemskerk, Velsen en Woerden).

Streetcornerwork has developed a methodology that is applicable to most fields including NEET projects. This model is based on the Baart's approach (2001) and is available to the young people and mainly run by peers, because their peers understand the environment and can therefore relate to their situations, needs and also know what is at stake (Baart's approach 2001) ⁽²⁾.

¹ Youngworks, 2014 and Marketing Tribune, 2015

² Methodology Baart's 2001

Learning Difficulties and Mental Health

Surprisingly there was no discussions around learning difficulties or mental health specifically or how they impact on behaviours or their understanding of the situation many young people are in.

"I need a bit more support on how to apply and get job interview support with the application process. I find the Apprenticeship Application process to complicated."

Research states, the prevalence in young offenders for:

- ADHD is 60% (Shiroma et al.,2010).
- ADHD +Dyslexia + Dyscalculia(Maths)30%
- Motor abilities of adolescents with a disruptive behaviour disorder: The role of comorbidity with ADHD Van Damme, Tine ; Sabbe, Bernard ; van West, Dirk ; Simons, Johan. Research in Developmental Disabilities, May 2015, Vol.40, pp.1-1

In an offending population 88% of the participants with at least one problem area in literacy skills also had other neurocognitive deficits. Functional illiteracy and neurocognitive deficits among male prisoners: implications for rehabilitation.Tuominen, et al. Journal of Forensic Practice, 16.4 (2014): 280-268.)

Semi-structured Interview Quotes

Effective Engagement

"...relationship building, mutual acceptance. What they need not what advisor thinks they need..."

"...the way you are with them, I'm always here, you've got my mobile number just drop us a text when you've done that, when they've done the application or when they've had the interview. Keeping that relationship with the person going so that they do feel they want to come back and tell you how it's gone. You might be the only person giving them that sense of purpose. You might be the only person who gives them that confidence because they don't get it at home. Or they haven't even got the expectation to even look for a job at home."

"...Building up a rapport over text messages is great because one day they might answer the phone properly and have a conversation, but that might take three or four months. If they're not engaging properly that might slip further..."

"Timeliness. It has to be the right time for them. Their willingness to engage. Flexibility; it's all got to be on their terms. You've got to have the flexibility to be able to get to them as and when they need it - getting out to meet them if they're not going to leave their house but also other channels that we've got available. So are they going to WhatsApp, are they text message or are they going to use Facebook or they're going to direct message me on Twitter and having all those different avenues open to meet their needs..."

"One of the girls I had to report to social services for neglect, it was horrible, one of the worst days of my life. But she later, six months later, came back and said 'I really messed up that day'. And that was really nice because she was able to, we had that rapport and that relationship to be able to come back from there. Yeah it was a really big knock, but we came back together and continued to work, and the trust was still there because she recognised that I was doing it for the right reasons, was to protect her and her child. So it's about having that rapport from the start...."

"Even the language can be completely different depending on where you are. Not just all like, English as a second language, but the street language, they're more connected to it, they understand it more and that helps a lot with building the rapport and trust if you understand what they're talking about."

"I think the same thing, I'm going to go back to the school thing. You've got to find out what their skills are, find out what their passion is and build upon that because as soon as they find that then that is their purpose, then if say someone likes music, they really like music and you find that out and you're like okay they really like music, say hey guess what when you go to college you should do music."

"I think it's definitely the school thing where you're got to, I would say find out early and because when more kids are younger like everyone knows they're easy to influence. So if you influence them in the right way, then they're going to do the right thing throughout their life."

Semi-structured Interview Quotes -

Psychological and Behavioural Traits

"Time, patience, perseverance and just keep investing those skills and keep engaging. But also having the provision. I'm not right for everybody, we have to understand that because it is just me. There are people that I can't click with, I really struggle to find that common ground. There's no alternative..."

"...the whole 16 years they've been told what to do, where to go and how to do it. Then all of a sudden at 16 it just disappears."

“...going to the gym, that type of stuff, it’s building his self-esteem and confidence the whole time and for me I can see it in him because, from the start of when I started working with him to now, his confidence has just gone like this and that’s great. But it is finding that one thing, that is that young person can be really difficult especially if you’ve got someone who’s spent years being knocked down. How do you rebuild that and that, it is a real challenge.”

“... they’re getting up every morning and walking to that college, that’s a positive in itself. They’re getting there. They’re not in the door yet but they’re there. So it’s just trying to find out what’s happened and be that intermediary between that young person and if there’s been a breakdown with the college or something like, as in schools.”

“...so we’ve identified some very key bloggers, young bloggers, that are posting some really quite you know challenging stuff out there that young people are gravitating toward.”

“...when they’re at year 11, they are already having problems at school you know, exclusions, suspensions, in behavioural units because they’re kicking off because they’ve not had that family stability, that you or I have had.”

“...then unfortunately the drug and alcohol comes into play and then you get the mental health drug induced psychosis, all those sorts of things are quite typical. And the mental health is quite a big one for both boys and girls.”

“...you’ve got self-harm, eating disorders, anxiety, a whole ream of different things that come out. All stemming from I guess being put into care.”

“...the behavioural thing also could be because of a lot of them have been moved placements, semi placement moves whether it’s local to Wokingham or Reading or wherever we are or a lot of them move out of area. So, it’s just, it’s quite chaotic. There’s no stability so. They just kick against all of that, kick out against that. You do get the odd one that manages to make it through without any real issues. But I would say generally that’s not the case.”

“... with this young lass that everyone’s been saying should be in a secure unit, her behaviours were off the wall in terms of child sexual exploitation, self-harming and all of that. So, I fought that case and tried to do direct work with her. I did whole days direct work with this young person to turn that around. Just got off the phone to her Mum now and yes, it’s going really well. I brought Mum in to play, went to meet Mum for lunch, invited the young person as well. Took the young person for a haircut to build her self-esteem and reduce chances of her going into crisis, when she does she scares people, so she was sectioned two weeks ago. I’ve been trying to tap her into one of the Elevate projects, which is the horse riding, which I’ve been to see.”

“...got a kid that had drug and alcohol problems now works in a garage as an apprentice and he talks really honestly about his issues with mental health and stuff like that and

about how he's turned it around and he's now doing really well as an apprentice. That inspires other kids and that works, because it's not me spouting about apprenticeships. It's a kid saying this is me, and just laying it out and saying this is where I've come from and I am just like some of you, and it works!"

Conclusion

Closer to Home

Predominantly, participants spoke of work that was all about engaging with young people and helping them to the point where they can benefit from the employment services on offer. Building authentic relationships and trust, helping young people to build resilience through perseverance, and cultivating self-esteem are recognised as necessary hurdles to overcome before many young people are at a point where they are ready to even consider employment. And once in employment these issues will remain just as important, if not more, as the need to learn new work skills if they are to sustain. The need to generate new and innovative ways to engage with young people, that make them feel more 'at home' is a clear driver for improvements.

Within Reach

Peer endorsement and support was expressed as a valuable means of improving engagement and motivation for young people. While the benefits were unanimously recognised by participants, evidence of formal delivery through recognised peer-to-peer programmes was minimal. More often, examples were given of peer support achieved by chance or personal innovation rather than by service design. Whilst all participants effortlessly recognised the benefits of peer support, in many cases, unless prompted it wasn't spontaneously spoken about. Endorsement of peers helps young people visualise their goals as 'within reach' and the opportunity to deliberately harness peer-to-peer as an active service is a clear driver for improvements.

"Online Recommendations made by my friends and my peers, I would take notice"

"Young People Workshop Quote "I was young offender came out at 16, and needed help with interview skills, and to go to the interview because of my social anxiety. I had ask to for interview skills support. But did not like asking for it and it was hard to get it.

I now provide peer to peer support to young offenders for a charity called Muslim Aid , telling my story, it works and I provide peer to works Charity (Muslim Aid)."

In Language We Understand

The discernible fact that ‘even the language can be completely different....’ was evident to participants. Communicating in the terms of young people is imperative and so is the medium used. The use of technology and social media was seen as a powerful asset however largely underutilised and an opportunity for vastly improving engagement with young people.

SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH



(Appendix E)

To further understand how young unemployed people are engaging the social media, research starts to delve into what the young people are thinking and feeling about unemployment.

This part of the research was commissioned in order to identify key social media topics, trends and barriers for young people classed as NEETs across West Berkshire and Reading. It was carried out by a specialist organisation called Foco (see Appendix E for full Social Media Report)

Method & Scope

The process split social media research into two major strands in order to reflect the two broad types of NEETs: those who are unemployed, and those who are economically inactive.

From March 20th to September 20th, 2017 data was gathered with a mix of manual searches as well as the use of enterprise social media and web analytics tools. 13,600 posts from Twitter, blogs and forums were ‘pulled’ from the web from all over the U.K., examining 20,583 mentions (posts, comments and engagements from across the social web). The data

was then filtered to extract only results from users signed in or located in outer London and the South East (consisting of the Home Counties, including Berkshire).

Findings

The findings draw attention to the type of communication people in this age group enjoy, such as YouTube videos about gaming or inspirational videos about beauty.

Posts on forums about issues around unemployment reveal an altogether darker story, with anonymous NEETs sharing intimate details of mental health problems, drug and alcohol dependency, and unstable family life.

When we look at conversations about unemployment among young adults, experiences of poor mental health feature regularly. Often, words such as 'depressed' or sad emojis to this effect are used in a direct reference to how that person feels about their employment status, for example, XXXXXXXX, aged 18, posts on Twitter:

I'm sick of being unemployed 😭

11:47 PM - 7 Aug 2017

2 Likes 2 Retweets

Structural barriers are reported too. Some jobseekers share problems with application

Applied for ob this morning, told at lunchtime that the closing date last week, and yet, this afternoon the job is still being advertised!

closing dates being out of date, as well as problems with finding jobs in their area.

Again, there is evidence that long-term unemployment affects mental health. Seven months later, XXXXX posts again.

Another year older today. Still unemployed. Still single. Slowly becoming depressed about my current situation.

Importantly the research is highlighting that young people are talking about employment and it is an issue for them and they are finding ways to share how they are feeling about it

'Employment' is a hot topic

- London
- Outer London (e.g. Reading & West Berks)
- Leeds
- Manchester
- Lancashire
- Scotland



Evidencing Practice

BOLD Social Media Glass, Netherlands

Project data platform BOLD Social Media Glass, developed by data scientists of the Leiden, Delft and the Erasmus University. The research team consists of data scientists, social scientists and cultural scientists. They received \$2.5m euro funding in September 2017 to investigate the option to combine structured urban data with unstructured, dynamic data from sensors or social media. In this research the option to use this Big Data system to get an overview and reach the 66.000 young NEETs in the Netherlands will be studied.

Required Actions:

- Immerse in the attitude of young people and speak their language
- Inventory existing platforms for young people
- Determine the form in which young people give input and influencing this.

Web: [Data platform Social Glass](#) ⁽³⁾ and watch the video for more information about the project.

Conclusion

The social media research has found that a high number of young people are very active in using social media to find employment. They share their frustrations with each other and importantly gain peer endorsement around how they are feeling and their views.

³ [Data platform Bold-Cities Social class](#)

From the evidence we have gained from the workshops and interviews social media an often-used communication channel that should be used more strategically to improve attraction and engagement.

The Young People's Workshops explore this further:

*“... we would attend if we knew about it through social media, use a *@!! load of emojis to promote it!!! Bring employers to us!”*

“So, like I met a couple of my friends over social media. I didn't know them. I was just like hey, you like video games and they were like yeah, and I like met up with some of the ones and like, dude let's play some video games and that was basically, we blended both of the things together and it kept the friendship and it's still going on and it's been going on for like seven years.”

“I'm thinking things that are dying out, like Snapchat and Scram, there's going to be another social media. YouTube is slowly dying out actually. So there's going to be another YouTube. Like all these things young people will definitely know about and always keep updated about, so every five seconds they will be like oh, this is going on, this is going on, like they will check their phone non stop”.

“I think that in terms of their digital footprint and their digital confidence and actually their inability to be able to function in life without digital is more of a danger. So it's just, I mean it's a simple answer really. It's absolutely crucial it has to be embedded in everything we do and everything they do.”

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKSHOPS

(Appendix C)



Figure 7 Newbury Young People Focus Group

Most of the young people that attended were surprising open and honest about their circumstances. After explaining what the workshop was about, both groups were very positive and forthcoming in sharing their ideas linked to their own experiences, on what they need and would want from an employment service.

Method and scope

Two workshops were hosted with a total of 10 young people from a wide range of backgrounds including Care leavers, Young Offenders, Troubled families. One of the workshops was in Reading and the other in West Berkshire

The objective of the workshops were:

1. Share our findings from research so far, identify gaps and align with the views of service users
2. Identify preferences for the best attraction and engagement solutions for users of the Elevate programme.

Findings

For the young people who were care leavers living in supported housing, environmental factors were found to be a huge barrier to changing their mindset around gaining and sustaining employment. Many had successfully secured employment and subsequently fallen out of it through a mix of self-sabotage related to feelings of low self-worth through to frustrations of poor pay. Despite the fact there was a strong desire to work and improve their lifestyles unintentional consequences of their sometimes-irrational behaviour.

The groups highlighted other complexities such as being a 'care leaver' or homeless and NEET. They described uncondusive living arrangements, for example other tenants being middle aged men who are constantly drunk and using drugs and making loud noise throughout the night. Another example was having to be out of their accommodation by 8am and then not allowed back in until 9pm, leaving them wondering what they are supposed to do through the day and trying to keep warm.

With all this to contend with, Hostels then warn them not to work as it could result in losing their room due to rent arrears (removing the constant of JSA). It is little wonder they questioned how they were supposed to be in the right frame of mind to look for work.

Other key discussion points:

- The importance of being able to trust the person that's helping them, they were fed up with false promises of thing that would never manifest.
- Needing support in applying for jobs because they were struggling with complicated application processes
- Employers having a poor perception of young people ahead of applications and being advised not use a Hostel Address otherwise they wouldn't be considered
- Feeling pre-judged by Social Workers
- Needing more time with Advisors so that their needs could be understood
- Importance of peer support in helping them see another way. Many participants wanted the opportunity to offer peer support themselves.

Throughout the workshops and interviews we have noticed that young people's Mental Health has been raised as an issue and this was found to be the case through the Social Media research, but Learning Difficulties or Learning Disabilities have not been mentioned although one individual in the group required significant support in filling in short forms.

The majority of young people had and used a smart phone, were able to access a laptop or ipad and were comfortable looking things up online. Main use for phone discussed was;

Texting, Whatsapp don't call anyone, Snapchat (Snap Text and Photos) Facebook, Email, Instagram. Some also stated being a member of forums linked to finding jobs.

Some of the young people hadn't heard of Elevate and those that had didn't all have a positive experience.

"...went to see Elevate, CV support and job searching. Typical council service. Don't get a good service just average...."

"Someone else stated the Elevate website was suitable as a jobsite. "

Key Findings

What young people said they wanted from an employment service

Pop Ups'	Online services	Service Enhancement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Run by young people, use closed shops as a space to promote jobs for young people,• Raise awareness with the employers that we are here!• Provide Information on different employers• Would do paid jobs to run the service both for digital and pop-up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Online Peer to Peer support would work• Use an App for young people to chat to advisors• Content should be designed by young people as they would feel like they are achieving something• Online employer interviews• Online Recommendations for friends and peers, I would take notice.• Incentives would work well - seeing my progression through the online journey into employment.• Like the idea of young people helping young people online as would take notice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More flexibility service, drop in service• 1-1 Assessment to identify individual needs• Employer information about local employers that pay well• Young people led Work experience placements• Self-employment opportunities• Provide Mentoring & Coaching• Fill in the gaps example given (CV, Cover letters & Advise)• Phone, text Web Chat service, Facetime• Information Provided on our needs

Quotes - Young Persons workshop:

"...there are a lack of role models - easier to find someone with a drive then a role, it's better to have someone with drive then a role model."

"I now provide Peer to peer support to young offenders promoting it works for a Charity called (Muslim Aid)."

"We would feel proud if we ran services for young people and would feel like a real sense of achievement."

"... you need our input especially if it's going to be a service for us because then it will, I think it will just work better."

"...with teenagers it's all being part of a group."

"...getting really good success rate, really good engagement because kids listen to other kids"

"...people that keep their Promises, if someone says they are going to do something do it. Help looks like listening to us like this workshop is help. Time is an issue. Listening to

young people is key. Time is an issue, speed of support is key. “

“We don't know where the services are that we can use.”

“...we are looking for people to Trust. “

“... I belong to a number of group forums to find jobs...”

“...yes I needed reassurance that I could apply for roles. We want to Advisors to build up trust with us, but need time to do this.”

“Time is an issue. Find out more about what we want rather than pushing jobs we don't want our way.”

“I need help with interview skills, go to the interview with you because of my social anxiety. Provide support a week before, I had to ask for interview skills support. But did not like asking for it and it was hard to get it. “

“Mates left course so I left.”

“We want people to trust in the community and listen to our needs...”

“Can't talk to staff at Two Saints Nothing is confidential...”

“We don't know where the services are..>”

“People like us who want to work, we are bored sitting at home.”

“...she treated me like a daughter, acted like a best friend and told me off like a mother. I trusted her.”

“We share job opportunities with each other.”

“Bring employers to us...”

“...people that keep their Promises, if someone says they are going to do something do it. Help looks like listening to us like this workshop is help, Time is an issue. Listening to young people is key. Time is an issue speed of support is key.”

“...not heard of elevate service or website nobody has shown us.”

“Don't really support each other at houses, Two saints Tenants are only friends if you have drugs...”

“I feel like social media and everything will be amazing to connect with young people because basically that's all they do so probably great. “

Conclusion

Acknowledgement of learning difficulties and mental health is noted as a reference gap within the semi structured interviews and now within the young people's workshop feedback.

The groups were all very self-aware, understanding their needs from a service as well as identifying their own behaviours that needed to change or improve to progress. They reference peer support as a positive way of doing this, mentioning people that have inspired them to make some changes to date.

They recognised they needed more time with advisors to build a relationship of trust and for the advisor to get to know them and understand their needs. The frontline workers interviewed recognised their need and voiced their frustration at not having enough time to spend with the young people they support the two groups are aligned yet there is a service gap noted.

The groups were clear that they valued in person support and wouldn't want online services to take over. They did however acknowledge that large elements could be digitised to improve services and that social media is a really good way of communicating with them.

WIDER RESEARCH

Desktop Research (Appendix D)

To help test our local findings we reviewed a number of existing research papers, innovative projects and pilots nationally and internationally that dealt with the attraction and engagement of young people that are not in employment, education or training.

Projects With Purpose Website Forum and Survey (Appendix F)

Accessed through neet.projectswithpurpose.co.uk a network of over 2000 LinkedIn users were invited to contribute to an online forum and survey focusing on the emerging themes of 'Effective Engagement' and 'Psychological and Behavioural Traits' from the initial workshops. Over 400 people participated with a number of them asking for further information and offering to be involved in any further development.

Interested organisations: Future Care Capital, Equal Approach, Microsoft, Do IT Solutions, Orchard Hill College & Academy Trust, Twinning Enterprise, Good Things Foundation, Newcastle College Group, Foco Global

Online Forum (Appendix F)

The forum had 390 views with 25 posts. The posts are full of useful insight, practice and thoughts around the thread subject, sample:

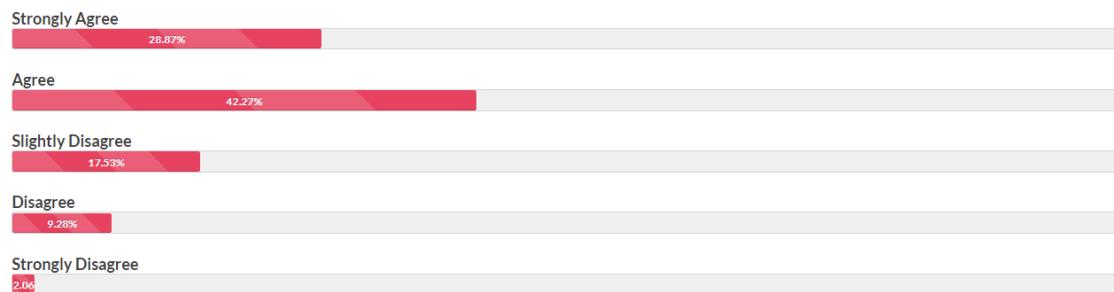
"Building on what they already feel good at or know something about will overcome the feelings of not being good enough especially if learning difficulties have made life hard. Difficulties with attachments and being let down makes it hard to put yourself out there for another rejection. Difficulty regulating makes it scary what impact a knock back could have - rage? suicidal feelings? So safer to go for what is predictable. Life scripts that mean I don't deserve it so self-sabotage. Therefore, support needs to allow time to learn how to regulate, how to make sense of past experiences and increase self-worth before having the ability to hold down relationships and a job."

Online Survey

There were 412 responses to the online survey, further endorsing our selection of themes and sub-themes:

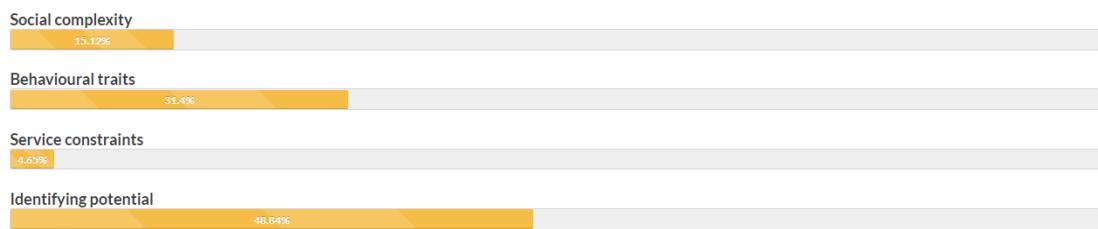
71% Strongly agreed and agreed that Peer to Peer support is thought to be the best way to engage with young people:

Peer to peer support is thought to be the best way to engage with young people.



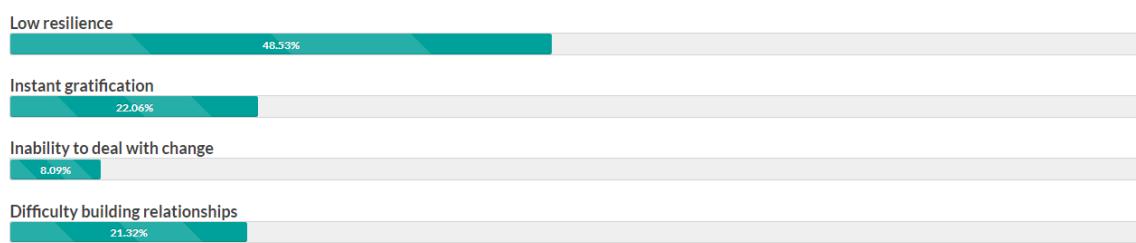
48% of respondents see identifying Potential as the biggest barrier to youth employment:

What do you see as the biggest barrier to youth employment?



48% thought low resilience was the most important to address to improve youth engagement:

Which of the following is the most important to address in order to improve youth engagement?



“ Young adults have many more distractions in their lives today than 20 or more years ago. They get gratification from so many other areas faster and therefore spend more time on those projects.

— Survey response - Instant gratification reason ”

CONCLUSIONS

This discovery phase of work was to test the hypothesis:

“Could a young people’s, peer led, digital service attract and engage significantly more people to the Elevate Programme”

In conclusion our findings say yes it would, however both young people and Elevate frontline teams believe that a digital service in isolation would not work, a ‘blended’ service should be developed.

The detailed knowledge and experience held by the service providers around the service they deliver, the needs of young people they serve and how best to support them has been incredible. However, the evidence shows a fundamental disconnect between how services are set up to support NEET young people and the needs identified by the service users that participated in this discovery phase:

1. Service providers recognise the need to invest more time in developing relationships with young people to understand and meet their needs.

2. Young people are saying, yes we want to engage but we need more time with our service providers so that we can build a relationship of trust and so that they can understand our needs better.

"we want people that keep their Promises, if someone says they are going to do something do it. Help looks like listening to us, like this workshop is help. We reconconise Time is an issue but Listening to us is key. Time is an issue, yes, but speed of support is key."

Both stakeholders want the same thing, but tight budgets and existing service designs are maintaining this gap.

3. Existing marketing and communication is not working. Young people don't know of or trust the employment services that are available to them. The social media research offers a solution, showing how messages can be shared organically using the right language through online peer groups and social media.
4. Peer support led services has been identified as a powerful way of attracting and engaging with young people. However, it is an activity that happens in pockets or by chance rather than by design meaning it is a primarily untapped opportunity to improve services to young people.
5. Digital is being used by young people as a matter of course and they are keen as are the service providers to use it more effectively within service delivery. Young people are clear they wouldn't want this to replace in person services as this is valued by them.
6. Learning difficulties and mental health was not talked about by the service providers although mental health was highlighted as a substantial issue by the young people. Recognising the common link between the psychological and behavioural traits often leading to becoming NEET e.g. exclusion from school, young offenders and learning difficulties, not identifying a fundamental service user needs will lead to continued lack of engagement and where employment is successful, a lack of sustainment.

"...yes, because it's in the pocket of every young person. great way to target young people."

"You know they could just you know have an app on their phone which sends the notifications to say you've got this, you got that."

" So you know what would be good if we did some of these days experiences. if we can show them little snippets and put them on YouTube so I can say look this is what this job is. So this is what you can do in life..."

RECOMMENDATIONS

New initiatives to support the elevate programme need to be designed to deliver significant tangible results during the next 12-month period and within the constraints of limited budgets and Elevate operational staffing resources.

A series of young person led, short pilot initiatives are recommended that are equipped to:

- Deliver immediate results aligned to the Elevate Programme requirements
- Provide evidence that proves concepts for ready expansion of new initiative
- Can be evaluated to demonstrate Return and Social Return on Investment over discrete time parcels

Recommended Approach

Working with young people and the Elevate teams, scope out and agree objectives for agreed initiatives.

Measures of success are to include:

- Effectiveness of attraction strategies
- Sustained levels of engagement
- Behaviour change of young people (linked to involvement of work packages and subsequent experiential learning)
- Return on Investment for Elevate Programme
- Systems thinking - new ways to attract and engage young people
- Others to be determined through engagement with Elevate team and young people

Recommended Initiatives

1. Digital attraction and engagement campaign

Overview

The Social Media Research insights report showed that the techniques service providers and public-sector organisations used to provide information about jobs, training and education programmes are not hitting the mark. The results speak for themselves. Projects with Purpose will provide the tools, learning and support for young people to use digital methods, including social media, to reach out directly to their peers, in the places they inhabit online. The pilot will be led by young people who would be upskilled and then coached in social marketing, enabling recruited individuals to develop and run the campaigns.

Campaign targets will be developed that meet the requirements of the Elevate Programme that can be delivered in isolation or in conjunction with other initiatives.

Expected Benefits

- Test in a short period of time, the value of a young person led attraction and engagement activity across the Elevate Programme.
- Tangible results, measured against a specific campaign strategy using a clear set of metrics that demonstrate impact, effectiveness, Return and Social Return on Investment
- Exponential increase in uptake by communicating in the right language, in the right places.
- Continued learning and insights into the Social Media channels that get the best results.

2. Pop-Up Local Job Information Service

Elevate Service providers in both workshops and interviews have told us we need to go to young people within their communities and their own homes however funding and operational limitations mean that young people are being asked to attend Elevate offices.

Young people that we have engaged with have suggested pop-ups within their local communities that they could run, to engage with local employers and to attract young people.

Elevate staff and young people work in partnership to trial a Pop-Up Job Information Service in Newbury. Led by young service users, individuals will receive a business coach to support them in planning and managing the pilot project. Employer engagement and involvement can be supported by Elevate staff with existing links and the service would actively signpost to services already successfully established within the programme. The pilot can be delivered in isolation or in conjunction with other initiatives.

Expected Benefits

- Test in a short period of time, the value of a young people's face to face, peer to peer led service.
- Increased uptake from employers and young people by using a new, local young people led local employer engagement initiative
- Development and testing of a new hyper-local way of attracting and engaging young people.
- Assess commitment of local employers to provide work trials or employment through this local initiative led by young people in the community.
- Further employer and youth attraction from PR opportunity created by new local initiative

3. Peer-to-Peer Website and Online Service

Overview

Develop a basic website with online peer support through web-chat, forums and content sharing designed by young people to provide an ongoing extension to Pop-Up services. Young people will receive digital upskilling in basic website development, and a business coach to support them in planning and managing the project.

Expected Benefits

- New, active channel for attracting new candidates to the Elevate programme that people can access from their own homes and communities.
- Motivation from real-time peer support directly through web-chat
- Provides alternative options for those that prefer to engage digitally
- Measure the ROI of digital engagement

4. Peer to Peer engagement programme - underpinning each pilot

To explore the peer to peer concept linked to the each of the pilots, the approach would be taken weave in a peer to peer delivery model for all.

Working with the Elevate teams and local mentoring organisations (locations to be agreed) attract young people who would be willing to participate as peer mentors. Then develop and deliver a peer support programme that builds on the relationships developing between the young people engaging with new initiatives. Young volunteers will work with new initiatives, helping to shape and grow the programme and assess which route is the most effective for peers to attract peers.

Expected Benefits

- A smaller scale pilot to measure the effectiveness of a peer to peer programme run by young people
- Opportunity to learn and shape any longer-term peer programmes
- Explore which of the Peer to Peer models within each of the pilots have the most impact

5. Hidden Impairment Assessments - Effective identification of learning needs and reasonable adjustments for employment

Overview

Using an agreed market leading Do -It assessment profiling tool with a sample of XXX young people to identify learning needs, hidden impairments, reasonable adjustments and other traits to provide support plans based on identified needs. Macro data is used to show trends that can be used to inform service provision priorities and re-profiling with individuals will measure distance travelled over time. Profiling can be used for existing Elevate candidates and for candidates attracted through new initiatives.

Benefits

- Identifying individual barriers to engagement - e.g. reading age and support needs to ensure these needs are met
- Identify hidden impairments so that tailored support can be offered
- Macro data to inform need for existing and design of future support programmes

Projects with Purpose

- Projects with Purpose delivery of skills, coaching and mentoring of the young people delivering the pilot projects and the measuring of impact, reporting and pilot governance.
- PWP are a client centric led organisation with a wealth of experience in designing peer to peer led blended digital services for disadvantaged people resulting in increased social mobility and economical benefits.
- Continuity of service for delivery phase (gained essential knowledge and insight of Elevate service and both service provider and young people needs)
- Established links with young people in Reading and Newbury and Elevate Stakeholders
- Access to essential Impact assessment tools to measure and analyse effectiveness of proof of concept
- Have the essential skills and knowledge to empower young people to get and remain involved and designing services that enable an experiential learning experience for young people.
- Experienced in coaching and developing Executive and Management Teams in organisational change that makes the most out of delivering digital services.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – WORKSHOPS

link to follow



Description

As part of the initial discovery phase two workshops were organised and ran on the 5th October 2017 am & pm , with service providers that engaged with young people across Reading and West Berks.

Objectives

1. Through informal discussions obtain their views on the main barriers that young people face, in addition around their personal understanding and thoughts of the existing service.

2. Gain views on the following

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Existing service provision• How they could be improved• What works well• Who we should be talking too re semi structured interviews• Thoughts on Peer led approach• Issues at play from their specialist area and local nuances and specific challenges e.g. Urban V rural	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What Q's they would appreciate knowing the answers to from within the semi-structured interviews.• Identify early project champions• What shall we name the project• Input into project communication etc.
---	---

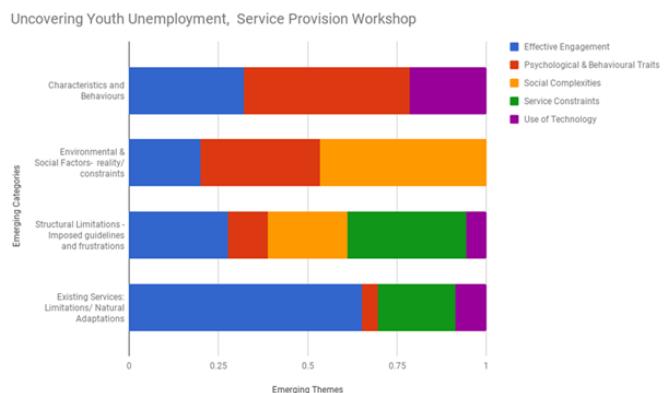
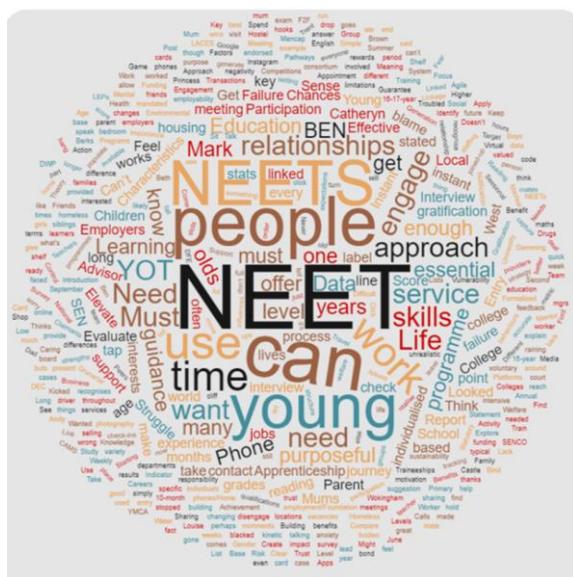
3. To identify the most relevant Interviewees for the semi structured interview phase,

Attendees of Reading Workshop

- Steve Hendry, Reading Voluntary Actions Group RVA
 - Stoner, Geoff - Troubled Families Employment Advisor DWP
 - Charlotte Mcauley - Youth Offending Team West Berkshire
 - Tracey Smith: Team Leader Reading Elevate
 - Savannah Cook: Interventionist Tracker. West Berks Youth Offending team, working with in the Neet Prevention Team, wokingham Elevate.
 - Mark Browne: Post 16 Adviser West Berkshire
 - Alex Pye: Tracking and Engagement Officer West Berkshire
 - Gresty, Paul- Elevate (City Deal) Programme Manager
 - Nicky Philpott - Youth Offending Team West Berkshire
 - Cathryn Henry - 14-19 Participation and Apprenticeship Lead (Reading Council May 2015 - October 2017)
 - Shari Barrett- The NEET prevention team. Elevate hub from Wokingham.
 - Ben - Young Person from West Berkshire

Workshop Analysis

Link to Analysis Spreadsheet



APPENDIX B - INTERVIEWS

Link to folder

Using the categories and sub themes that were identified as the most relevant in preventing young people to engage with Training and Employment, from the initial workshops on the 5th October and using the following process:

Objective - Agreed structure scope and approach to the semis structured interviews

- Share findings of focus groups
- Share findings so far from Social Media Analysis
- Agree final list of Interviewees for semi structured interviews
- Agree dates for interviews
- Agreeing question sets and scope of the interview sessions (inc. Reference to Peer led and digital delivery models:
- Generic
- Role specific

We developed a set of 5 standard questions to be used within 8 semi structured interview Style. The interviews were recorded and using transcribing services we produced transcripts for each Interview. This allowed us to then compare and analyse the responses to the questions.

Questions were asked about the following areas:

- About you
- Effective Engagement
- Psychological & Behavioural Traits (Sub Theme Resilience)
- Psychological & Behavioural Traits (Sub Theme Needing Purpose)
- Peer Endorsement (Sub Theme of lack of role model)
- Use of Technology.

The Interviewees

We were fortunate enough to interview 8 people from a wide range of service provision, Youth offending team, Care leavers, both Prevention & Tracking. This enabled us to gain a wider view on the barriers young people face. Detailed in the main report.

List of interviewees:

1. **Cathryn Henry - 14-19 Participation and Apprenticeship Lead** (Reading Council May 2015 - October 2017)
2. **Patsy Jones - West Berkshire Senior Social Worker; Leaving Care Team:** Working with Looked after children Post 16.
3. **Shari Barrett - The NEET prevention team.** Elevate hub from Wokingham.
4. **Alex Pye - West Berkshire 16-24 Tracking & Engagement Officer:** Working with young people aged 16-24 to support them to participate in employment, education or training.
5. **Charlotte Mcauley – West Berkshire Youth Offending Team Intensive Officer:** Working with young people on court orders for periods anywhere between three months to three years.
6. **David Bolam- Employment Support Hub Coordinator,** Children, young people & learning. Bracknell Forest Council Elevate Hub
7. **Savannah Cook -Interventionist Tracker.** Working with in the NEET Prevention Team, Wokingham Elevate.
8. **Nicky Philpott - West Berkshire Restorative Justice & Reparation Worker**

APPENDIX C - YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORKSHOPS & VIDEO

[Link to folder](#)

[Link to Video](#)

We hosted two, 2-hour workshops with 10 young people from a wide range of backgrounds (Care leavers, Young Offenders, Troubled families) one on the 5th at the Reading Elevate Hub and on the 8th December 2017 at Newbury.

The objective of the workshops was twofold:

First Session 1 hour - sharing our findings and gain their views, do they share the same

Obtain Young People's views on the emerging sub Themes/categories from both initial workshops with service providers, Social media report findings and Semi Structured Interviews

Second Session 1 hour (Service Design)

What young people's views are on what a service should look like to attract and engage young people: Considering how could digital, Social Media, Peer to Peer be used within that service.

Questions used were:

What would you want it to do for you?

What Content do you think should be used

Look & Feel - what should it look like

Newbury Young People Focus Group (Very different group to the Reading group - care leavers)



Reading Young People focus Group (Wide range of backgrounds enabled rich discussions about sharing experiences and their views on what they need



Both Groups were very engaging and forthcoming with their own experiences and views on what they wanted and ideas on what they believe the service should look like.

APPENDIX D - WIDER RESEARCH

[link to folder](#)

Desktop research Initial headlines

We took an approach with the NEET research to identify what best practice there was linked to the key themes identified from the initial Focus Groups and subsequent findings from the semi structured Interviews. We looked at what research there was in the UK and decided to research what approaches were being taken in the Netherlands, known for their innovation around specialist services.

Below are some of the highlights we have found linked to Motivation & Barriers and costs to the public purse:

Support from a partner, family members or peers was a particularly significant motivator for those who had applied for a course and **least** important for those with no plans regarding learning”

BIS Motivation and barriers to learning for NEETS (Feb 2013) research paper 67

NEETs as pre-offenders have often had:

“negative experience of traditional classroom subjects, or struggle with self-esteem and communication.”

Coates Review, Unlocking Potential: a review of education in prison

Develop alternative and flexible learning opportunities for young people who do not benefit from a conventional classroom experience” p3

Approaches to supporting young people not in education, employment or training – a review (2012)

Conclusions

“identified an overall lack of high quality studies examining online peer to peer support for young people” p3

Online peer to peer support for young people with mental health problems JMIR Mental Health 2015

Cost of NEET homeless

The research found that the estimated cost to the state of a NEET homeless young person is £12,200 per year at 16-17 years old, which is £8,900 more than for a NEET-only young person. The total cost of a NEET homeless person then rises for 18-24-year olds to £19,400 per year. This is £12,200 more than the cost of a NEET-only young person. It is estimated that 83,000 young people experience homelessness every year (Clarke. 2015). Based on Centrepoint data which shows that 58 per cent of homeless young people are NEET, the annual net public finance cost for all NEET homeless young people is estimated at £556m per year over and above the cost if these young people had not been homeless. A

Is prevention cheaper than cure, Centre Point report October 2016

Attracting & Engaging NEETS is not just a UK problem. A snapshot of the Netherlands & Europe

In addition to where it complimented/ endorsed interviews/ workshops what else was interesting

With around 16.5 million residents on approximately 42,000 square kilometers of inland area (that includes 1600 square kilometers of water where nobody lives), the Netherlands is one of the smaller countries in the world.

there are currently still about 66,000 young people who are not registered with educational institutions, cannot be found in UWV's employers' files, are not working on a legal bound employment contract and are not visible to the government.

young people are no longer eligible to register for a home; they are no longer entitled to student grants and cannot apply for an ID. In addition, those who are not registered in the population register cannot claim further education, medical care (The Netherlands only have private health insurance)

it is assumed that the existence of ghost youth can form a basis for crime, radicalization or other normative conduct. Young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training are at risk of becoming socially excluded

Already in 2005, the Dutch government formulated the aim to reduce the number of early school leavers per year to 25,000 within 15 years.

The tragedy is that NEET youth and their parents often have no idea of the profound consequences of not being visible to any government bodies. This can create major issues for the social and economic future of the youth. In the short term, they seem to have found a solution to the urgent difficulties and problems they face, but in the longer term these solutions prove to be devastating for their future. For example, these young people are no longer eligible to register for a home; they are no longer entitled to student grants and cannot apply for an ID. In addition, those who are not registered in the population register cannot claim further education, medical care (The Netherlands only have private health insurance) and also to engage with someone who can provide support is more difficult. Long term issues can arise such as: reduction in pension or other benefits. Finally, it is assumed that the existence of ghost youth can form a basis for crime, radicalization or other normative conduct. Young people who are neither in employment nor in education or training are at risk of becoming socially excluded – individuals with income below the poverty-line and as said before, lacking the skills to improve their economic situation.

The Dutch government want municipalities and organisations like e.g. the UWV (UWV provides national implementation of employee insurance and labour and data services) (⁴)) and social services (⁵) to work effectively together in partnership with the aim to guide around 66,000 NEET youth to education and/or work. Already in 2005, the Dutch government formulated the aim to reduce the number of early school leavers per year to 25,000 within 15 years. Nevertheless, there are currently still about 66,000 young people who are not registered with educational institutions, cannot be found in UWV's employers' files, are not working on a legal bound employment contract and are not visible to the government. Everyone wants the same for young people: working towards an independent existence. The government calls upon municipalities to help the youth to go back to school or to prepare and assist them to mainstream employment (⁶).

This desk research is based on the principal that everyone has something to offer and to be committed in assisting people in finding their strengths and potential, irrespective of their situation background and disabilities. Although the amount of NEET youth in the Netherlands are low in comparison to other European countries according Youth Workers Index (⁷). **The European statistics are alarming. The European situation has been made aware by the organization of Economics Co-operation and Development (OECD) (⁸).**

APPENDIX E – SOCIAL MEDIA RESEARCH

Social Media insights Report

Link to report

We know that young people spend a lot of time online, so we felt it was important to understand what they were doing on social media, which hasn't been properly understood within the context of youth employment

In line with our discovery phase objectives of gaining an understanding young people's behaviour. PWP were keen to find out what the behaviours are for young people when

⁴ UWV - employee/er benefit agency

⁵ Social Work The Netherlands is the trade association of social work

⁶ Government want better support for youth

⁷ Young workers index (PwC)

⁸ OECD data on numbers of NEETs in Europe

using social media. What are they saying and wanting?. Explore a question we had, is social media an effective way to attract and engage young people to the Elevate service.

To do this we commissioned Foco Global, who help fintech companies improve the lives of their customers by inspiring social good. They do this through the following stages:

Deep insights - use ethnographic semiotics, social network analysis and existing organisational data to gather deep and sometimes hidden insights into the core beliefs and behaviours of the people

story building, - co-create emotive, memorable stories that inspire transformative action.

Storytelling- help clients to identify the vehicles they should use to tell those compelling stories to the right people in the right way at the right time - from technologies and media to events

Oversight- help clients measure and improve their storytelling campaigns, so the results improve continually. Permanently.

With the agreed outcomes & needed insights below. Foco examined 200000 young people Social media post over a period of 4 weeks.

Outcomes Identify the key issues affecting youth employability across West Berkshire and Reading to boost employment amongst 16-24-year olds not in employment, education and training (NEETs).

Online social insights brief

- map the online networks of experts and influencers relating to young people (16-24) and employment within West Berkshire and Reading
- identify the key topics, trends and networks of the young people generally across these regions
- identify the key topics, trends and networks relating specifically to youth employment
- identify possible barriers to employment such as user experience, usability and accessibility.

PwP press quote used.

Online mapping will help understand not only the issues young people are facing, but the language they are using, which will help the service engage with what can often be a hard-to-reach group.

'We know that young people spend a lot of time online, so we felt it was important to understand what they were doing on social media, which hasn't been properly understood in the context of youth employment.

'We are managing to uncover some of the issues about why they are not engaging with public services,' she tells New Start. 'One of the key things that has already popped out of the preliminary data is that young people do not understand what is on offer or how to get it.

'This will give us some insight to identify what we can put in place to support this group. In terms of being able to communicate and invite them to a workshop, it's an incredible insight that we haven't had before.

APPENDIX F - WEBSITE SURVEYS & FORUM

Description

Using the identified sub themes & categories from the initial workshop with Service Providers and young people. We developed a 3 questions survey linked to these categories to gain wider thoughts through a Social Media Campaign.

Within PWP website we created a landing page where visitors could register and complete the survey. In addition, we developed a discussion forum, designing a number of questions again linked to the sub themes and categories using the 5 key questions below.

The social media campaign ran from mid-October through to early January. Using existing data bases of relevant contacts we undertook a targeted approach and through the creation of a number of posts.

This evoked a lot of interests within this subject matter, suggesting this is an area many people are thinking about.

The headline results:

412 Responses to the online survey

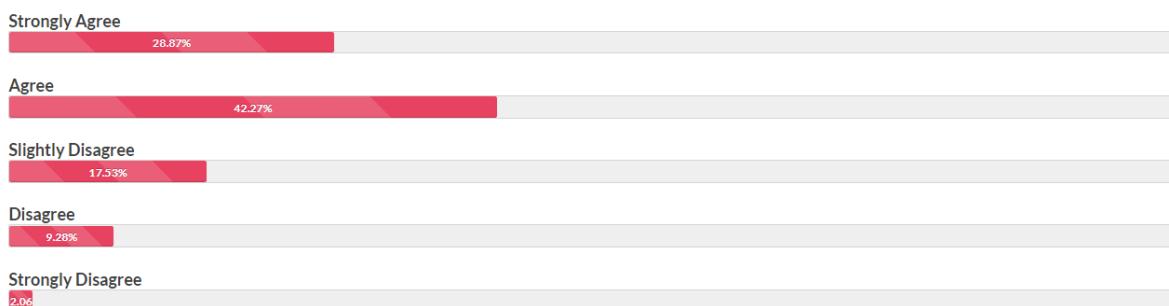
390 views to the forum

25 posts within the discussion forum (See quotes below)

Survey

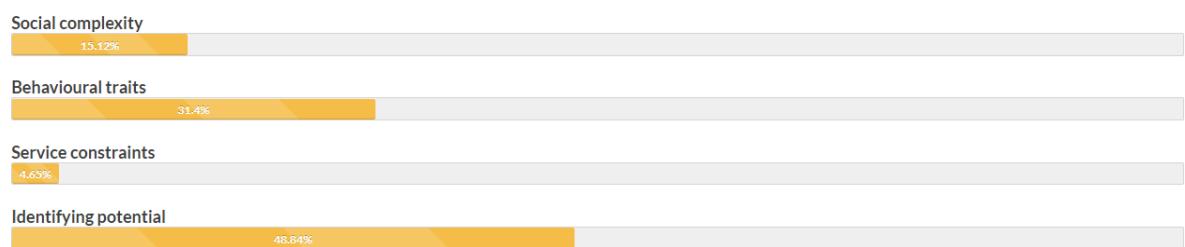
71.07% Strongly agreed and agreed that Peer to Peer support is thought to be the best way to engage with young people

Peer to peer support is thought to be the best way to engage with young people.



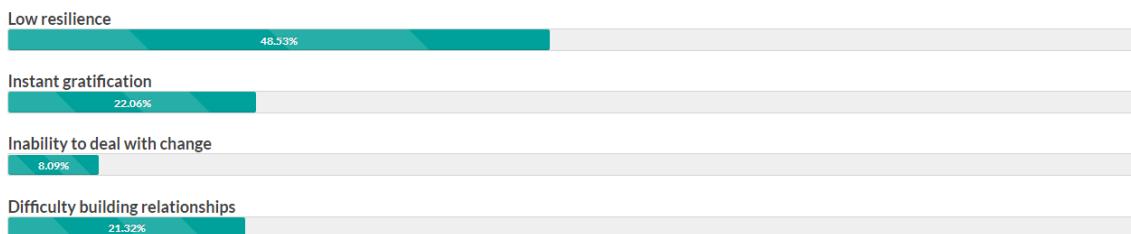
48.8% of respondents see identifying Potential as the biggest barrier to youth employment

What do you see as the biggest barrier to youth employment?



48.53% thought low resilience was the most important to address to improve youth engagement

Which of the following is the most important to address in order to improve youth engagement?



“ Young adults have many more distractions in their lives today than 20 or more years ago. They get gratification from so many other areas faster and therefore spend more time on those projects.

— Survey response - Instant gratification reason

”

5 Discussion themes & Posted comments

Link to forum

1. What type of support do young people want and how do we address such complex needs? (ID: 3)

Research with both young people and service providers suggests young people have a fear of failure linked to years of non-conformity and peer pressures have endorsed their feeling of worthlessness...

They need someone to contain their difficult feelings rather than react to them, a mirror that shows their value and a role model who shows how to have good relationships by having one with them, able to repair the inevitable ruptures and negotiate a better way forward for both building Emotional Intelligence.

I think young people are also looking to be empowered and encouraged to take ownership where they can. Having a role model who is 'on the journey with them' and understanding, rather than a figure head who 'knows it all'. I think that being presented with someone who comes across as 'knowing it all' might be intimidating and cause them to shut down/resist.

2. Young people and instant gratification, it's a trend, but what does it mean for them and their futures? (ID: 2)

The first key theme we'd like to explore is the need young people to have instant gratification in all that they do, it was mentioned numerous times in the workshops. It would be great to here thoughts on this and any examples.

I am working with a young boy who wants to always take the therapy toys home. With consistent boundaries he is learning he can cope with disappointment as more than likely he is distracted by something else soon enough as we notice this happens each week. He

started full of rage in the initial sessions but now his annoyance is more of a grumpy complaint.

On the learning side where I work, we no longer fight it —we gamify it. Shorter, smaller content bites. Quicker feedback and rewards. It's both a metaphorical and practical framework. Metaphorically one plays against oneself, the other, and the rules of the game. Practical, conscious practice upgrades performance. Notably when students see skill as learned, not innate. No more 'I'm stupid', but what I did was stupid. Big caveat is the chemical soup a student —a player!— brings to the game. Dosed up diet-coke and twix, smooth concentration is elusive.

3. Why don't some young people engage, what do you think could be done differently? (ID: 4)

There are many reasons, personal circumstances, anti-establishment views, not knowing where to start. Perhaps if we spent more time with young people better identify their personal interests that could work?

Building on what they already feel good at or know something about will overcome the feelings of not being good enough especially if learning difficulties have made life hard. Difficulties with attachments and being let down makes it hard to put yourself out there for another rejection. Difficulty regulating makes it scary what impact a knock back could have - rage? suicidal feelings? So safer to go for what is predictable. Life scripts that mean I don't deserve it so self-sabotage. Therefore, support needs to allow time to learn how to regulate, how to make sense of past experiences and increase self-worth before having the ability to hold down relationships and a job.

I think there are a myriad of reasons why some young people chose not to engage and risk becoming NEET. So there is no one simple solution that will solve the problem of engaging, let alone self-regulating. For example, a young person with a substance abuse problem, will have different issues to contend with, to that of a young person who has reached parenthood at an early age, or a young person who has carer responsibilities. Each cohort will have different barriers to overcome. The key is building a relationship that is built on reciprocal trust and allowing young people to have a voice that is heard, without fear of rejection and ridicule. Life can be tough, and the right support needs to be provided to young people in order for them to start paving their own way of dealing with their decisions about education and employment opportunities. Again, what the support provision looks like will depend on the young person's personal circumstances. A suggestion would be to engage with various cohorts to understand their issues and challenges that would enable you to build a framework identifying key outcomes and indicators that are specifically aligned to each group. This will provide a great insight to designing a service provision that has involved young people, but also one that is directly relevant to them and their personal circumstances.

From previous experience of working on digital engagement projects with young people, it's difficult if not impossible to identify a single reason for them not engaging. For some there will be challenging personal circumstances (social or financial); others will feel that the education system (&/or wider society) has given up on them already, whilst others will lack the confidence to learn something new.

The root causes of this are complex, but the biggest issue in my experience and opinion is the way in which our education system has changed over the past 20 - 30 years. Schools, colleges and universities no longer prepare students for the world of work but focus on exam success which is in turn driven by the use of league tables and arbitrary rankings resulting from that. I will happily agree that exam success is part of the answer, but it's not the only answer. The consequences of this are that students (particularly in academies or other non-selective schools) who are unlikely to do well in exams are given less attention than those that are. This isn't in any way down to the teachers (almost all of whom are fantastic people, and certainly overworked and under paid), but the system in which they are asked to work, and the results by which they are judged.

As one thing that could be done differently, vocational skills, particularly tech related work place skills, have to be brought back to the core of education. To my mind, taking this one step will drive up engagement by making young people feel valued and that they have a future role to play, even if they are not as academically skilled as some of their peers.

All too often programmes for young people focus on what they need to be doing differently rather than what they want to be doing differently. Helping people break habits is a tricky, time-consuming and often expensive exercise at the best of times. The trick is to avoid investing in programmes that rely on exclusively on extrinsic motivation e.g. my teacher, my mum, my foster parent, my case worker says I should do it. All too often it's like pushing water uphill with a rake.

*Helping young people change behaviour starts by understanding what they are motivated by. If you can understand this and then help them take a few **small steps** outside their comfort zone (in the direction they are motivated by) then their web of habits starts to shift, and they become much more open to change full stop. This is because their experience of 'different' is that it's more of a positive experience than they thought it was.*

The ambition is that after a time the doing of something different becomes the intrinsic motivation. At that point they have a tool for life.

4. Do 'peer to peer' services help young people as much as we think? (ID: 5)

From our research with young people, one young youth offender stated, that if he could go back in time, knowing what he knows now, he'd knuckle down to Maths & English. However, he wouldn't have listened to anyone in authority but maybe a friend...

I agree developmentally young people individuate at around 12/13 and want to spend more time with and are influenced more by their peers than their parents. There is a lot of research around this. They are looking for a sense of belonging and peers know the culture they are trying to belong to and have the networks and connections. Where young people have conduct issues and low self-esteem they will gravitate to others like them. Trauma can mean it's difficult to regulate emotions and trust people and sometimes attachment difficulties can make any relationship very difficult whoever it is. Someone who has been through this will understand the confusing messages being given out more easily than someone who hasn't.

Peer to peer support can be important as the support is coming from a place of understanding but the question is can this always be productive? If someone who's been (and arguably is still) going through similar things is there a risk that the support won't move people forward?

In my experience of working with young people there is a need for adult engagement, unconditional support and a will to see beyond labels placed on people through school and where the potential lies. This may sound wishy washy and vague but the value of helping someone believe they have strengths and potential of their own is a huge part in helping people progress.

People will always look up to people they admire and respect and getting young people to talk to other young successful people will always help to inspire them to think about what they need to do to focus on their future.

Every person is different, and inspiration comes in different forms, so some people may prefer advice/coaching from other people at different age ranges.

5. What role can technology play in supporting young people? (ID: 6)

From our social media research, it seems many young people are very active on-line within social groups but frustrated by the lack of relevant jobs or out of date information. Surely, we can do better than online job boards though.

Social media can give the benefit of anonymity. Young people engage easily with technology and can meet other people like them. There are fears around it being safe, creating insecurities and of copycat behavior however that would need to be considered. Samaritans offers a text service which is very well used predominantly by young people so there is evidence that a listening role can be provided via technology.

If young people can be shown how to use online work sites such as Upwork and Fiverr in a way that they can engage with them then it could be a way for them to access work and start to build their CV without having to get the traditional 9to5 or shift job. For example, we've worked with young people who have used Facebook to get work editing dissertations, and worked with someone who was able to use Upwork to get his first IT project. Often these sites offer a lower barrier to entry and are easier to access than tradition jobs - but still offer valuable work experience.

Technology is already supporting young people through providing the opportunity to uploading content to free sites and having brands and organisations pay them for this ie Instagram and SnapChat.

Technology encourages entrepreneurship. The ability to adapt to new and emerging technology from personal initial observations suggest that the young people are early adopters and they can lead the way in using this to support their goals and dreams.

As more and more young people are spending most of their spare time using technology such as mobile devices and wearable technology, using technology to capture young people's attention and inspire them have a goal and go after their goal will change young people's mindset. Technology is a great tool to get them focused to do something good with their life, but technology on its own is not the silver bullet.

I think the majority of young people already know how to use most technology -it's just normal to them, they have almost always used it. Perhaps they would benefit from having more automated ways to look for jobs, without having to fiddle about with a computer to upload a CV etc.

What if there were an app that could help them put their CV together (is there one already?) they could follow the prompts to input their various experiences, choose layout options etc. Then the app would link them to job sites etc to upload it.

I really think that when we are talking about technology with younger people in mind, we're not really talking about computers anymore, it's more about using phones and tablets. If we can make it so that things are more accessible without having to use a laptop/desktop computer, I think that would really help