



**BRIEFING PAPER**

Number SN 06705, 24 August 2018

# NEET: Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training

By Andrew Powell

PHOTO REDACTED DUE TO THIRD PARTY RIGHTS OR OTHER LEGAL ISSUES

**Contents:**

1. UK NEET Statistics
2. International NEET Statistics
3. Characteristics of people who are NEET
4. Policies to reduce the number of people who are NEET

# Contents

<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. UK NEET Statistics</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Trends for different age groups	4
1.2 NEET unemployment and inactivity	6
1.3 Gender	6
1.4 NEET by Region	8
1.5 NEET data sources	9
<b>2. International NEET Statistics</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3. Characteristics of people who are NEET</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1 Key characteristics	11
3.2 Risk Factors in becoming NEET	12
<b>4. Policies to reduce the number of people who are NEET</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Policies to encourage young people to continue in education or training	13
4.2 Policies to help young people find sustained employment	14
4.3 Policies to improve the employability of disadvantaged young people	16
4.4 Jobcentre Plus Support	18

## Summary

783,000 people aged 16-24 were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the second quarter of 2018, 11.2% of all people in this age group. This was a decrease of 25,000 from the previous quarter and a slight decrease from the second quarter of 2017.

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.

37% of the young people who were NEET in the second quarter of 2018 were unemployed. The remaining 63% were economically inactive, which means they were not working, not seeking work and/or not available to start work.

### NEET trends

The proportion of 16-24 year olds who were NEET remained relatively steady between 2002 and 2008, and at the beginning of 2008 13.4% were NEET. The proportion increased following the 2008 recession and peaked in July-September 2011 when 16.9% of 16-24 year olds were NEET (1.25 million people). Since then the number of people who are NEET has been falling.

### Gender

Historically more women than men have been NEET, but the gap has narrowed over recent years. In the second quarter of 2018, slightly more men were NEET than women.

The main reason why there has been a fall for women is a large fall in the number of women who are inactive because they are looking after their family or home.

The number of men who are inactive has been rising over the last couple of years mainly due to an increase in the number of men who were either long term sick or disabled.

### International NEET Statistics

In 2016, the proportion of 15-19 year-olds who are NEET in the UK was higher than the OECD average, but it was less than the OECD average for 20-24 year olds and 15-29 year olds.

Of the OECD countries, Iceland had the lowest proportion of 15-29 year olds who are NEET (5.3%) and Turkey had the highest (28.2%).

### Policies to reduce the number of people who are NEET

Some of the policies in place that aim to reduce the number of people who are NEET include:

- The September Guarantee entitles all 16 and 17 year olds to an offer of a suitable place in education or training, while the participation age was raised to 18 in 2013.
- Various steps have been taken to help young people find sustained employment, such as the expansion of the apprenticeships scheme, reforms to technical education, improved careers advice and the removal of Employer National Insurance Contributions to young people.
- The government is funding various schemes that look to improve the education outcomes for disadvantaged young people, and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Support for unemployed people to find work is provided through JobCentre Plus.

# 1. UK NEET Statistics

783,000 people aged 16-24 were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in the second quarter of 2018, 11.2% of all people in this age group. This was a decrease of 25,000 from the previous quarter and also a slight decrease from the second quarter of 2017.<sup>1</sup>

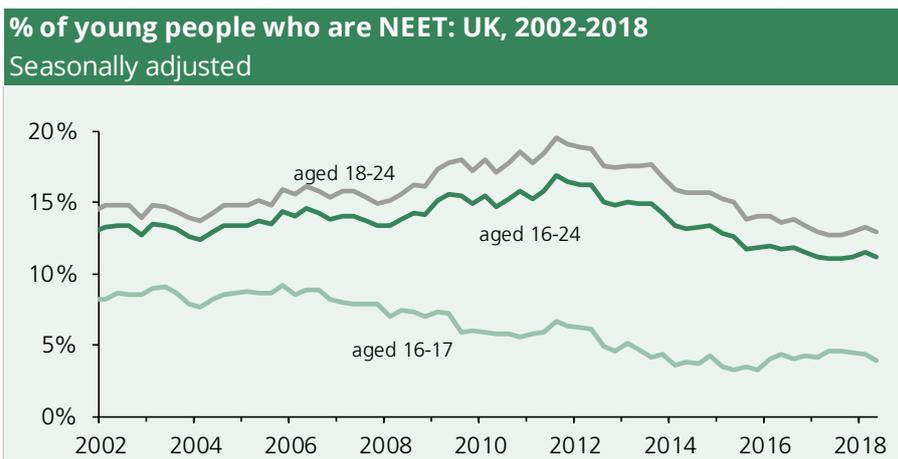
The proportion of 16-24 year olds who were NEET remained relatively steady between 2002 and 2008, and at the beginning of 2008 13.4% were NEET. The proportion increased following the 2008 recession and peaked in July-September 2011 when 16.9% of 16-24 year olds were NEET (1.25 million people). Since then the number of people who are NEET has generally been falling.

Of the 7.0 million people aged 16-24 in the second quarter of 2018:

- 3.8 million were in employment (55% of people aged 16-24%).
- 2.2 million were not in employment, but were in full-time education (31%).
- 0.2 million were not in employment, but were in part time education (3%).
- 0.8 million were not in employment or full-time or part time education (NEET, 11%).

## 1.1 Trends for different age groups

In April-June 2018, 729,000 18-24 year-olds and 55,000 people aged 16-17 were NEET. This represents 13% of 18-24 year olds and 4% of 16-17 year olds.



The trend for 18-24 year olds mirrors the trend for 16-24 year olds, with increases following the 2008 recession and a downward trend since July-September 2011. The number of people aged 18-24 who were NEET in April-June 2018 increased by 18,000 from the previous quarter, but remained at a similar level to April-June 2017.

<sup>1</sup> Data in this section are from ONS, [Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training \(NEET\)](#), May 2018, and ONS, [Labour Market Statistics](#), June 2018, and are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise stated.

The number of 16-17 year olds who were NEET had generally been decreasing since the mid-2000s until 2016. Since then there have been small increases for this age group. In April-June 2018, levels had fallen slightly from the previous quarter and were down 10,000 from the previous year.

### 16-17 year olds

The main reason for the fall in the number of 16-17 year-olds who were NEET was more young people continuing their full-time education. 89% of 16-17 year-olds were in full-time education at the end of 2015 compared to 76% a decade previously. This increase occurred after the introduction of the 'September Guarantee' in 2007, through which the government committed to offer all 16 and 17 years olds a place in education or training (see section 4.1).

In April-June 2018, 87% of 16-17 year-olds were in full-time education.

### 18-24 year olds

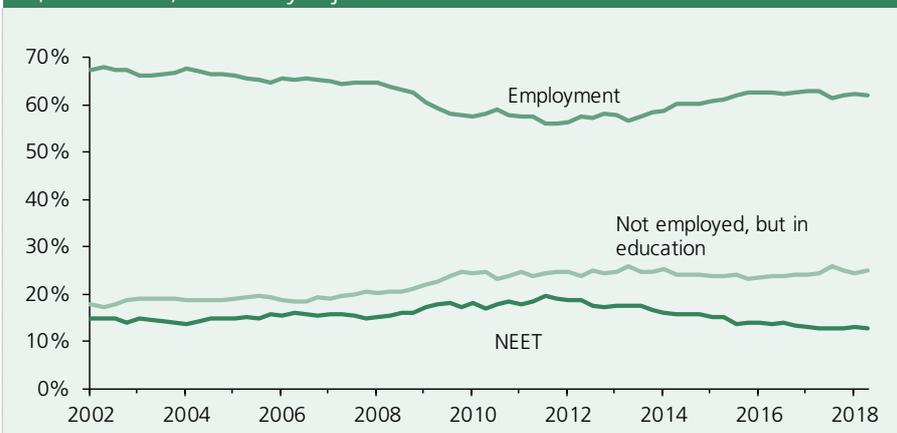
The trend for 18-24 year olds is primarily due to changes in the number of people of this age who have been in employment.

Between January-March 2007 and July-September 2011 the number of 18-24 year olds in employment fell, with the employment rate for this age group falling from 65% to 56%. Over the same period the number of 18-24 year olds who were not in employment but were in education increased, but by a smaller amount (from 19% to 24%). Therefore the number of people who were either employed or in education fell, and the number of people who were NEET increased.

Since July-September 2011 there have been steady increases in the number of 18-24 year olds in employment with the employment rate increasing to 62% in April-June 2018. Over the same period the number of 18-24 year olds who were not in employment but were in education remained relatively steady. Therefore the number of people who were either employed or in education increased, and the number of people who were NEET fell.

#### Economic activity and Educational status of 18-24 year olds

UK, 2002-2018, Seasonally adjusted



## 1.2 NEET unemployment and inactivity

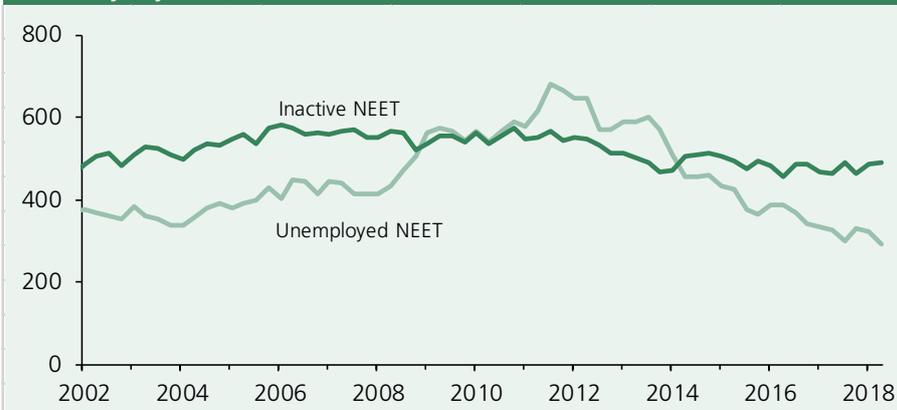
A common misconception is that someone cannot be NEET unless they are unemployed.

This is not the case. Only 37% of the 783,000 young people who were NEET in the second quarter of 2018 were unemployed (293,000). The remaining 63% were economically inactive, which means they were not working, not seeking work and/or not available to start work.

Since 2011 the proportion of young people who were NEET and were unemployed has been falling, following an increase after the 2007-2009 financial crisis. At the end of 2011, 55% of those who were NEET were unemployed.

### NEET 16-24 year olds by economic activity: UK, 2002-2018

Seasonally adjusted, thousands



Likewise, not all unemployed people will be NEET.

60% of the 492,000 unemployed 16-24 year-olds in April-June 2018 were not in education or training and were therefore NEET. The remaining 40% were in some form of education or training, and therefore were not NEET:

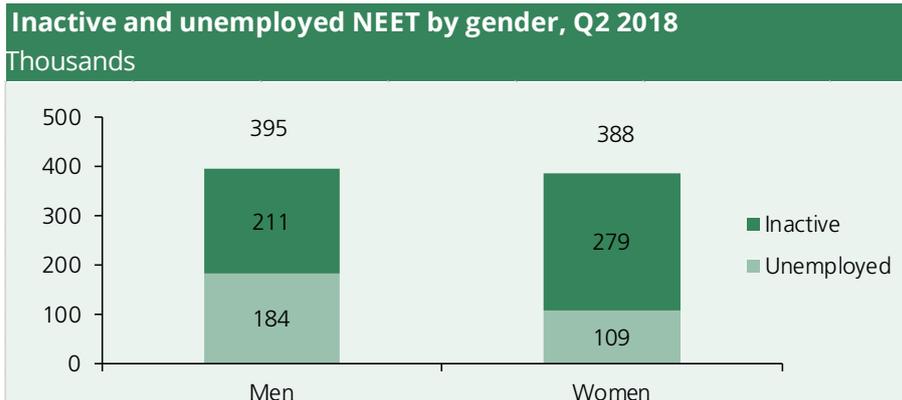
- 162,000 (33%) were in full-time education, but looking for work.
- 37,000 (6%) were in some other form of education or training, but looking for work.

## 1.3 Gender

In the second quarter of 2018, of the 783,000 people who were NEET, 395,000 were men and 388,000 were women.

### Economic Activity

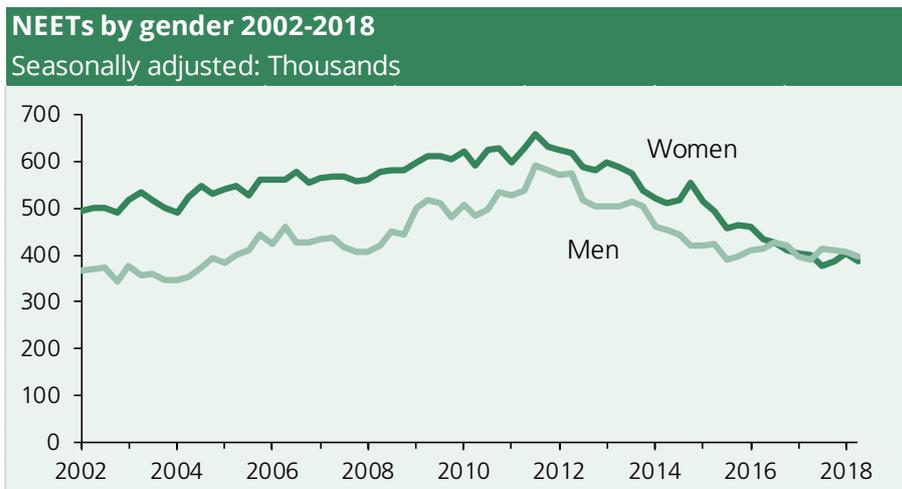
Women who are NEET are more likely to be economically inactive than men. In the first quarter of 2018, 72% of the women who were NEET were economically inactive. This compares to 53% of the men.



More women are inactive as they are more likely to be looking after family and/or home. In 2017, around half of those women who were NEET were inactive as they were looking after family and/or home, while less than 5% of NEET men were inactive for the same reason.<sup>2</sup>

### Gender gap

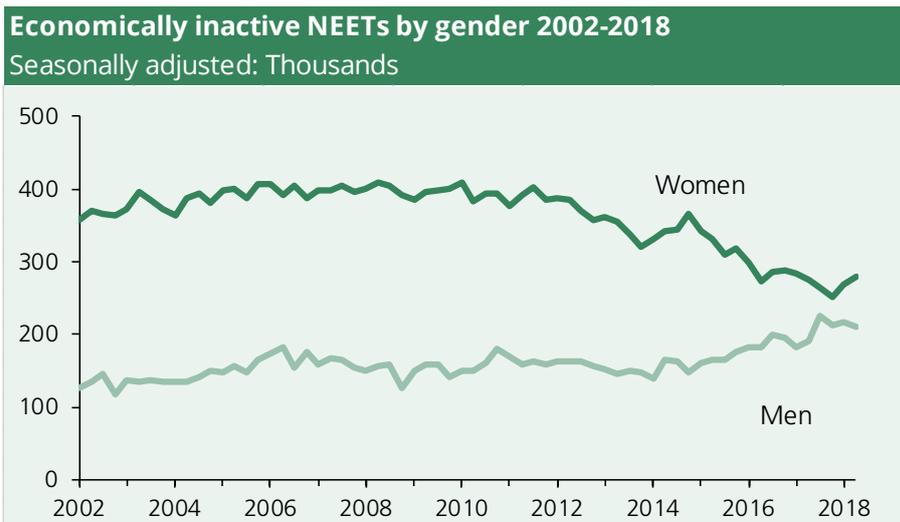
Historically more women than men have been NEET. Between 2002 and 2010 there were at least 100,000 more women who were NEET than men in almost every quarter. As the chart below shows, the gap between the number of men and women who were NEET has rapidly narrowed over recent years.



In the third quarter of 2016 more men were NEET than women for the first time since comparable records began, and since then the number of men and women aged 16-24 who were NEET have been at similar levels. In the second quarter of 2018, slightly more men were NEET than women.

The gap has narrowed because the number of economically inactive women who were NEET has been falling since 2012, whereas the number of economically inactive men who were NEET has been rising since 2014, as shown in the chart below.

<sup>2</sup> ONS Labour Force Survey microdata: Office for National Statistics. Social Survey Division, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. Central Survey Unit. (2017). *Quarterly Labour Force Survey, January - March, 2017*. [data collection]. UK Data Service. SN: 8195, <http://doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-8195-1>



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 substantially. In 2012, almost three quarters of NEET women were inactive for this reason, while only around half were in 2017.

The number of NEET men who are economically inactive as they are looking after their family or their home has also fallen over the last few years so this hasn't caused the increase in economic inactivity for NEET men.

One of the reasons for the increase was a large rise in the number of men who were either long term sick or disabled. Between 2014 and 2016 the average number who were inactive for this reason increased by over 20,000 men, an increase of 37%.

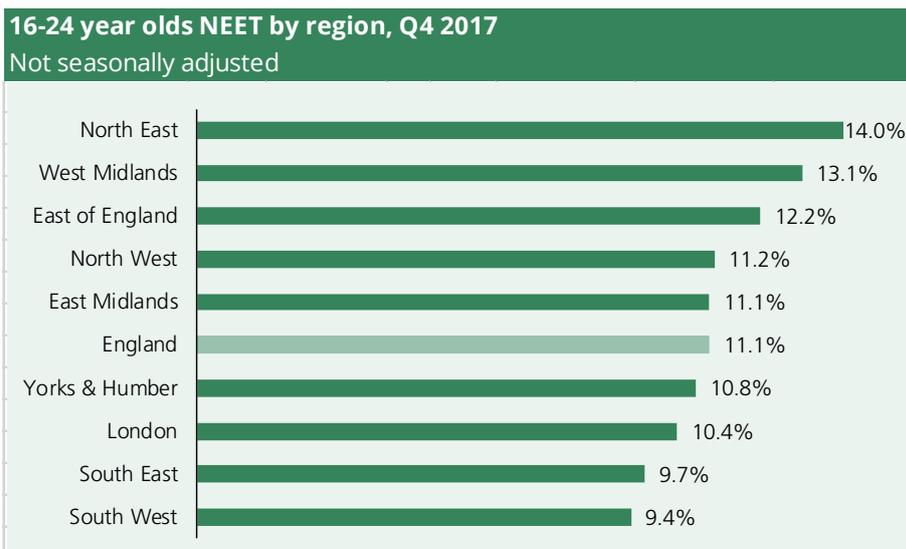
## 1.4 NEET by Region<sup>3</sup>

In October-December 2017, 11.1% of 16-24 year-olds in England were NEET (note that this figure is not seasonally adjusted).

Of the regions within England, the North East had the highest proportion of young people who were NEET (14.0%) and the South West had the lowest (9.4%).

From March 2018, NEET figures by region will be published annually rather than quarterly, and will next be updated for the October-December 2018 quarter.

<sup>3</sup> Regional figures published in the Department for Education's [Statistics: NEET and participation](#) (last updated June 2017)



## 1.5 NEET data sources

The Office for National Statistics publishes NEET estimates for the whole of the UK, but not for individual UK countries. NEET statistics are routinely published for England, Wales and Scotland, but as the definition of NEET varies by country they should not be compared.

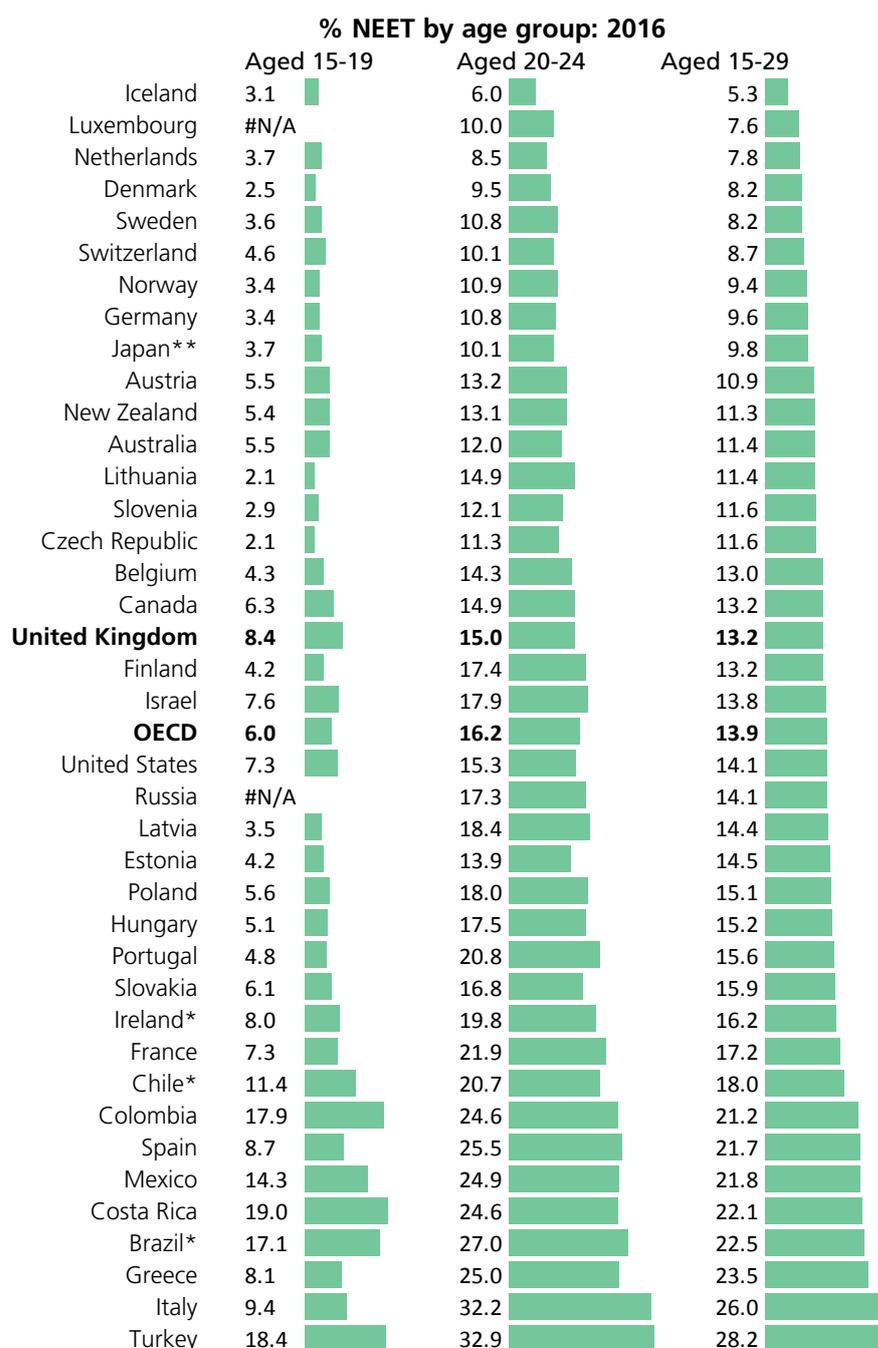
- England:** The Department for Education's [NEET and participation statistics](#) collection includes NEET statistics based on Labour Force Survey data for England for young people aged 16 to 24, as well as participation figures for those aged 16 to 18.
- Wales:** The Statistical First Release [Young people not in education, employment or training \(NEET\)](#) provides NEET estimates for Wales. As at the end of 2017, 16.2% of 19-24 year olds and 9.5% of 16-18 year olds were NEET in Wales.
- Scotland:** Scottish NEET estimates were published as part of the [Annual Local Area Labour Markets](#) publication up until 2014. The official measure of NEET in Scotland is based on those aged 16-19 and is now released through [Skills Development Scotland Participation Measure](#). In 2017, 4% of 16-19 year olds were not participating in education, employment or training in Scotland.
- Northern Ireland:** The Northern Ireland Assembly does not routinely publish NEET figures. In 2013, an estimate of the number of people who were NEET was produced by adding together the number of economically inactive and unemployed 16-24 year olds. In Quarter 1 2013, approximately 19% of 16-24 year olds were NEET in Northern Ireland.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> NI Assembly briefing paper, [Counting NEETs](#), 29 August 2013

## 2. International NEET Statistics

The OECD publishes NEET data by age group – though these are not directly comparable with UK national estimates.<sup>5</sup>

The proportion of 15-29 year olds NEET in the UK (13.2%) is below the OECD average (13.9%). However, the proportion for 15-19 year olds in the UK (8.4%) was above the OECD average (6.0%).



\* Data for 2015

\*\* Data for 2014

Source: OECD, Youth not in employment

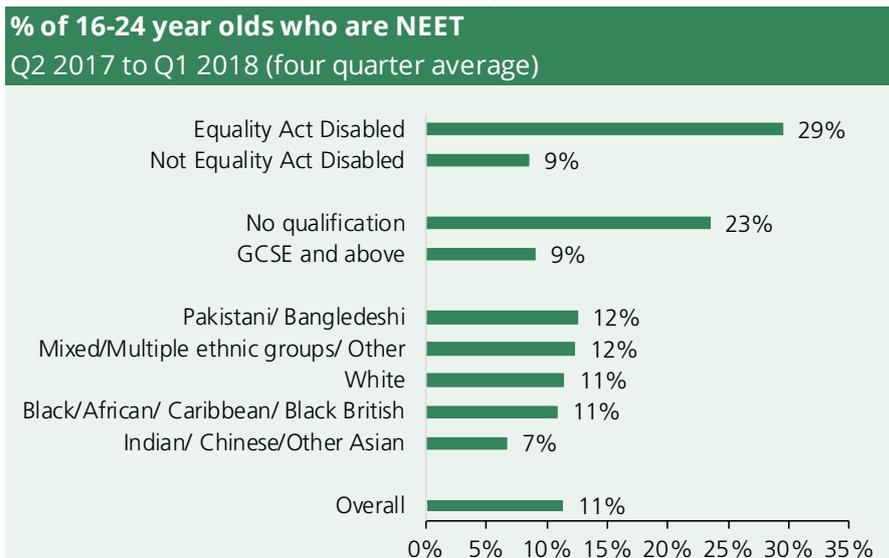
<sup>5</sup> OECD (2017), Youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) (indicator). doi: 10.1787/72d1033a-en (Accessed on 28 December 2017)

## 3. Characteristics of people who are NEET

### 3.1 Key characteristics

The chart below shows the key characteristics of people who are NEET using data from the **ONS Labour Force Survey**, over the four quarters to Q1 2018. It shows that:

- The proportion of 16-24 year olds who were NEET was higher for those with disabilities (29%) than those without (9%).
- A higher proportion of 16-24 year olds without any qualifications were NEET (23%) than the proportion of those qualified to GCSE level and above (9%).
- By ethnicity, the proportion of 16-24 year olds who were NEET was highest for those from either a Pakistani/Bangladeshi or a Mixed background (12%) and lowest for those from Indian/Chinese/Other Asian backgrounds (7%).



**Source:** ONS Labour Force Survey microdata and House of Commons Library calculations

**Notes:**

Disability is defined using the Government Statistical Service harmonised standard definition. This covers people reporting (current) physical or mental health conditions or illnesses lasting, or expected to last, 12 months or more, which reduce their ability to carry out day-to-day activities. Those who gave no response have been excluded from the analysis.

GCSE and above includes those with a highest qualification of GCSEs, A-Levels, Higher Education or Degrees.

The **Longitudinal Study of Young People (LSYPE)** in England interviewed a group of young people who were aged 19 at the beginning of the 2009/10 academic year.<sup>6</sup>

Of the people interviewed, 14% were NEET at the time of the survey, 35% had been NEET at some point between the ages of 16 and 19, while 14% had been NEET for a period of at least a year.

<sup>6</sup> DfE, [Youth cohort study and longitudinal study of young people](#), July 2011

The study found that participants with certain characteristics were more likely to be NEET. For each of the following groups, over half were NEET at some point between the ages of 16 and 19, and over a quarter were NEET for at least a year:

- Those with their own child.
- Those who been permanently excluded or suspended from school.
- Those who hadn't achieved 5+ A\*-C GCSE grades.
- Those who were eligible for free school meals.

It also found that disabled people were more than twice as likely to have been NEET at the time of the study than those without a disability.

### 3.2 Risk Factors in becoming NEET

The **Audit Commission** produced a report in July 2010, [Against the odds](#), which examined NEET characteristics, the geographic distribution of NEET people and how government can work effectively to help them. Contained in this report is a table (below) which summarises the increased likelihood of young people becoming NEET associated with certain risk factors.

#### Increased chances of being NEET

Factor	Increase in chance of being NEET for six months or more
Being NEET at least once before	7.9 times more likely
Pregnancy or parenthood	2.8 times more likely
Supervision by youth offending team	2.6 times more likely
Fewer than three months post-16 education	2.3 times more likely
Disclosed substance abuse	2.1 times more likely
Responsibilities as a carer	2.0 times more likely

Source: Audit Commission, analysis of Connexions data from fieldwork areas (approximately 24,00 people). 2010

The Department for Education funded a [Report on students who are NEET](#) by the **Institute of Education** which was published in September 2014 and which included a section on risk factors. Their conclusions were that:

- The most significant educational risk factor was low educational attainment at GCSE. Reasons cited for low GCSE attainment included a lack of motivation, poor health (physical and mental) and having Special Educational Needs.
- A range of personal risk factors were identified including health problems, caring responsibilities and difficult family circumstances (such as being in care or experiencing a breakdown in relationship with parents).
- Structural risk factors were also identified which included difficult labour market conditions, a lack of training and apprenticeship opportunities and welfare support providing a higher income than potential wages.

## 4. Policies to reduce the number of people who are NEET

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.<sup>7</sup>

This section outlines the policies that are in place to reduce the number of young people who are NEET.

### 4.1 Policies to encourage young people to continue in education or training

#### The September Guarantee

The September Guarantee was implemented nationally in 2007 for 16 year olds and extended to 17 year olds in 2008. All 16 and 17 year olds are entitled to an offer of a suitable place in education or training under the Guarantee regardless of what qualifications they had gained when they left school.<sup>8 9</sup>

Local authorities have a statutory duty to “encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education or training”. They need to ensure there is sufficient education and training provision within their area, and appropriate support for those with special educational needs and disabilities.<sup>10</sup>

The Department for Education monitors the performance of local authorities in delivering these duties, and specifically in their tracking and supporting of 16 and 17 year olds.

#### Raising the Participation Age

The participation age was raised in 2013 and young people are now required to continue in education or training until at least their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. Young people can choose to participate through full-time education, a job or volunteering combined with part time study, or by undertaking an apprenticeship or traineeship.<sup>11</sup>

92.3% of young people aged 16 or 17 at the start of the academic year were in education or training at the end of 2013. This proportion had increased to 93.7% at the end of 2017.

76% of 16-17 year olds were in full-time education at the end of 2015.

Since the introduction of the September Guarantee this proportion has increased, and in Q2 2018, 87% of 16-17 year olds were in full-time education.

<sup>7</sup> Public Health England/UCL Institute of Health Equity, [Local action on health inequalities: Reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training](#), September 2014

<sup>8</sup> DfE, [September Guarantee: education and training for young people](#), January 2017

<sup>9</sup> Children, Schools and Families Committee, [Young people not in education, employment or training](#), April 2010

<sup>10</sup> DfE, [Participation of young people in education, employment or training](#), pgs 5-6

<sup>11</sup> Cabinet Office/DfE, [Increasing opportunities for young people and helping them to achieve their potential](#), 5 September 2014

At the end of 2017, 77,000 young people aged 16 or 17 were not in education or training. 23,700 of these were in employment while the remaining 53,300 were NEET.<sup>12</sup>

### **16 to 19 Bursary Fund<sup>13</sup>**

The 16-19 Bursary Fund provides targeted funding support to help young people aged 16, 17 or 18 with the costs of staying on in post-16 education. This can help with the costs of books, transport, equipment or other education-related costs. The most vulnerable young people receive yearly bursaries of up to £1,200.

Schools, colleges and training providers are also given a discretionary fund, and they decide how this is allocated. Young people over the age of 18 may be eligible for this funding.

The 16-19 Bursary Fund replaced the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in September 2011. The EMA allocated a set level of funding support to pupils depending on their parental income, and allocated £564 million in England in 2010/11. £180 million was provided via the Bursary Fund in 2011/12.

Financial support worth £130 million will be provided by the Bursary Fund in 2017/18.<sup>14</sup>

A National Audit Office report on 16-18 education in September 2014 concluded that although financial support was reduced, the Bursary Fund “targets the remaining support better”.<sup>15</sup>

The Labour party has announced that it would restore the Education Maintenance Allowance.<sup>16</sup>

## **4.2 Policies to help young people find sustained employment**

### **Employer National Insurance Contributions**

To encourage businesses to employ young people, the Government abolished Employer National Insurance Contributions for those aged under 21 in April 2015 (with the exception of those earning more than the Upper Earnings Limit). They were abolished for apprentices aged under 25 on earnings up to the upper earnings limit from April 2016.

### **Apprenticeships and Traineeships**

Apprenticeships are paid jobs that incorporate on and off the job training. The Government has committed to reaching 3 million apprenticeship starts in England by 2020, with the aim of ensuring the apprentices gain job specific skills that will improve the chances of them finding long term employment.<sup>17</sup>

Further information on the 16 to 19 Bursary Fund is available in the Commons Briefing Paper [16-19 Bursary Scheme](#).

Further information on apprenticeships and traineeships are available in the Commons Briefing Papers, [Apprenticeship Policy](#) and [Traineeships](#).

<sup>12</sup> DfE, [Participation in education, training and employment: 2017](#), 28 June 2018

<sup>13</sup> Gov.uk, [16 to 19 Bursary Fund](#)

<sup>14</sup> [PQ 114570](#), 24 November 2017

<sup>15</sup> NAO, [16- to 18-year-old participation in education and training](#), 3 September 2014, p9

<sup>16</sup> Labour Manifesto, [Towards a National Education Service](#)

<sup>17</sup> DfE, [Apprenticeship reform programme: benefits realisation strategy](#), March 2017, pg 6

People aged under 24 who are unemployed and have little work experience, but can be prepared for employment or an apprenticeship within six months, are able to start traineeships. Traineeships provide education, training and work experience.<sup>18</sup>

The number of apprenticeship starts has fallen following the introduction of a new apprenticeship funding system in May 2017, as detailed in the library briefing note [Apprenticeship statistics for England](#) (July 2018)

### Technical Education Reforms

The 2015-17 Government's Post-16 Skills Plan, published in July 2016, set out proposed reforms to the technical education system in England which looked to create a more skilled workforce, and help "young people get the best jobs".<sup>19</sup>

Under the plans as they currently stand, a technical education option will sit alongside the academic option (e.g. A Levels) at age 16. Under the technical option, occupations with shared training requirements will be grouped together into 15 technical education routes. New level 3 classroom-based technical study programmes (referred to as T Levels) will be created for each occupation or cluster of occupations within a route (4 of the 15 routes will be delivered primarily through apprenticeships).

### Careers education and advice

In December 2014 the New Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) was created by the Department for Education to provide improved careers education and advice to school pupils aged 12 to 18. The company is employer-led and independent of government.<sup>20</sup>

The company set up the Careers and Enterprise Fund which is allocated to organisations who have "a proven understanding of how to increase the number of encounters young people have with employers". In 2016, £5 million was invested in 50 careers and enterprise programmes.<sup>21</sup>

The Government published its [Careers strategy](#) in December 2017 which set out a series of measures to be implemented between 2018 and 2020 to improve careers guidance in England.

Some of the key measures of the Careers strategy include:

- The CEC will launch a new investment fund of £5 million to support the most disadvantaged pupils.
- Schools and colleges will be expected to publish details of their careers programme for young people and their parents, and a named Careers Leader should lead the careers programme in every school and college.

Further information on the reforms to technical education can be found in the Library briefing note [Technical Education Reforms](#).

Further information on the careers guidance that is provided to young people can be found in the Library briefing note [Careers guidance in schools, colleges and universities](#).

<sup>18</sup> Skills Funding Agency, [Traineeships](#), December 2016

<sup>19</sup> BIS/DfE, [Post-16 Skills Plan](#), July 2016

<sup>20</sup> DfE, [New careers and enterprise company for schools](#), December 2014

<sup>21</sup> Careers and Enterprise Company, [Careers and Enterprise Fund](#)

- 20 careers hubs will be funded by Government and supported by a coordinator from the CEC.
- During 2018 and 2019, the CEC will triple to 150 the number of [‘cornerstone’ employers](#). These employers work with schools and colleges in areas in need of support.
- Training for 500 Careers Leaders will be funded for 500 schools and colleges.

By the end of 2020, the strategy intends that all schools and colleges will have access to an Enterprise Adviser. Schools should also offer every young person seven encounters with employers, including STEM employers (at least one each year from years 7 to 13), with support from the CEC.

Labour’s shadow skills Minister, Gordon Marsden, has raised concerns about the financial support being provided to the strategy, in particular the money committed for careers leaders, describing it as “frighteningly small.”<sup>22</sup>

### Destination Measures

Since January 2017, destination data has been included in national school performance tables so that schools “are held to account locally” and “place an even greater importance on helping their pupils to transition successfully to positive destinations”.<sup>23</sup>

Destination Measures statistics show, for each school, college and local authority in England, the number of young people going into education, employment or training the year after finishing Key Stage 4 or Key Stage 5. They also show the number of young people who were NEET.<sup>24</sup>

The Government also publishes statistics which show the destinations of those finishing FE learning. Comparison of this measure across different providers and qualifications show which courses have led to sustained employment or sustained learning.<sup>25</sup>

## 4.3 Policies to improve the employability of disadvantaged young people

### Adult Education Budget<sup>26</sup>

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) funds:

- a range of ‘second chance’ further education provision: 19-23 year-olds receive free training to attain their first full qualifications at level 2 (GCSE equivalent) or 3 (‘A’ level equivalent).
- free training for unemployed people aged 19+ up to and including Level 2, which helps those with few or no qualifications get into work.

---

<sup>22</sup> TES, [Careers strategy needs funding, says shadow skills minister](#), 7 December 2017

<sup>23</sup> [PO 65842](#), 2 March 2017

<sup>24</sup> DfE, [Destinations of key stage 4 and key stage 5 pupils](#)

<sup>25</sup> DfE, [Adult further education: outcome-based success measures](#), December 2016

<sup>26</sup> Skills Funding Agency, [Adult education budget funding and performance-management rules](#), July 2016

- free English and maths training up to Level 2 for anyone who has not achieved that level.

In 2017-18, £1.4 billion was allocated by the ESFA. From 2019/20, the government will devolve the AEB to several Mayoral Combined Authorities.<sup>27</sup>

### European Social Fund

The European Social Fund (ESF) provides funding for projects to increase employment levels, in particular among young people and those struggling to get a job. It focuses on disadvantaged groups, including disabled people, and aims to provide skills training and support to transition from unemployment into work.<sup>28</sup>

As of July 2018, £1.5 billion of funding has been committed to these projects under the European Social Fund Programme. The Draft [Withdrawal Agreement](#) means that, subject to final agreement, the UK will remain in the 2014-2020 European Structural and Investment Funds programmes (which includes the ESF) until programme closure. Additionally, the Government announced in July 2018 that funding for EU programmes that are agreed by the end of 2020 will be guaranteed even in a no deal Brexit scenario.<sup>29</sup>

The Work and Pensions Committee has stated that any gap in payments between the existing European Social Fund and a new fund “would be disastrous”.<sup>30</sup>

### Supported Internships

Young people with learning difficulties and disabilities have access to Supported Internships. These are structured study programmes based primarily at an employer which normally last for a year and include unpaid work of at least six months. Where possible, they will then support the young person to move into employment at the end of the programme.<sup>31</sup>

In November 2017 the Department for Education announced that it had set up a new £9.7 million fund to create new Supported Internships. Over 500 young people took part in these internships in 2016/17.<sup>32 33</sup>

### Youth Engagement and Fair Chance Funds

The Youth Engagement Fund was launched in May 2014 with an aim of improving the education outcomes of disadvantaged young people aged 14 to 17, and therefore improve their employability. It is being funded through social impact bonds, with service providers running projects aimed at preventing young people from becoming NEET. The

---

<sup>27</sup> [PQ 162981](#), 16 July 2018

<sup>28</sup> European Social Fund, [The ESF in the United Kingdom](#)

<sup>29</sup> HM Treasury, [Funding from EU programmes guaranteed until the end of 2020](#), July 2018

<sup>30</sup> Work and Pensions Committee, [Post-Brexit failure to replace European Social Fund would be disastrous](#), April 2018

<sup>31</sup> DfE, [Supported Internships](#), June 2017

<sup>32</sup> DfE, [£45m boost for young people with SEND](#), 30 November 2017

<sup>33</sup> [PQ 120168](#), 21 December 2017

government will only provide funding for successful projects that lead to positive outcomes.<sup>34</sup>

The Fair Chance Fund was announced in December 2014 and provides sustained housing, employment and educational support for homeless 18 to 24 year olds. This is also funded through social impact bonds, and the government only provides funding if positive outcomes are achieved.<sup>35</sup>

In 2016 the government reported that these projects are “helping to improve the prospects of 9,600 young people”.<sup>36</sup>

### 4.4 Jobcentre Plus Support

#### **Jobcentre Plus support for young people in school**

In January 2016 the Jobcentre Plus support for schools initiative was launched. As part of this initiative, local Jobcentre Plus advisers offered school pupils aged 12 to 18 advice on the labour market and advice on some of the job options available to them (such as apprenticeships and traineeships). Each school decides on the level of support that they get from the advisors, but this could include work experience schemes or one-to-one advice.<sup>37</sup>

#### **Work Experience and volunteering**

The Government has a number of schemes involving work experience placements as part of its wider welfare-to-work policies. These will be set up by a Jobcentre Plus work coach.<sup>38</sup>

Work Experience, the largest of these programmes, is targeted at young people who are getting Jobseeker’s Allowance and are aged between 16 and 24. The placements will last between two and eight weeks.

Work Trials give someone on Jobseeker’s Allowance the opportunity to try a job for up to 30 working days, and they may be offered the job at the end of the trial.

Work Together provides an opportunity for someone who is seeking work to volunteer with a local organisation.

#### **Welfare to Work Programmes**

Support to help unemployed people find a job has been provided through the [Work Programme](#) although referrals to the scheme ended at the end of March 2017. This has been replaced by the [Work and Health Programme](#).

The Work and Health Programme will target people who with specialist support are likely to be able to find work within 12 months. It takes the place of both the Work Programme and Work Choice (a voluntary support programme for people who are disabled), although many jobseekers who would previously have been supported by the Work

---

<sup>34</sup> Cabinet Office, [Youth Engagement Fund: prospectus](#), October 2014

<sup>35</sup> Cabinet Office/DCLG, [£23 million to help homeless turn around their lives](#), December 2014

<sup>36</sup> [PQ HL2563](#), 7 November 2016

<sup>37</sup> DWP, [Jobcentre Plus support rolled out to schools](#), January 2016

<sup>38</sup> Gov.uk, [Help with moving from benefits to work](#)

Programme will now receive support directly through Jobcentre Plus rather than the Work and Health Programme.

Further information on these programmes is available in the Briefing Papers, [Work Programme](#) and [Work and Health Programme](#).

### **Youth Obligation**

In April 2017 Youth Obligation was introduced in Universal Credit [full service](#) areas. Through this scheme, intensive support is provided for those 18 to 21 year olds who are expected to be looking for work within 6 months of making a Universal Credit claim. After 6 months they are expected to apply for an apprenticeship, traineeship, gain work-based skills or take up a work placement.<sup>39</sup>

### **New Enterprise Allowance**

The New Enterprise Allowance scheme provides money and support to help JSA or ESA claimants start or expand their own business. If someone has a business idea and is accepted onto the scheme, then they will get a business mentor and a weekly allowance for up to 26 weeks. They can also apply for a loan to help with start-up costs.<sup>40</sup>

Further details on the reforms to technical education can be found in the Library briefing note [New Enterprise Allowance](#).

---

<sup>39</sup> DWP, [DWP single departmental plan: 2015 to 2020](#), April 2017

<sup>40</sup> Gov.uk, [New Enterprise Allowance](#)

### About the Library

The House of Commons Library research service provides MPs and their staff with the impartial briefing and evidence base they need to do their work in scrutinising Government, proposing legislation, and supporting constituents.

As well as providing MPs with a confidential service we publish open briefing papers, which are available on the Parliament website.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in these publicly available research briefings is correct at the time of publication. Readers should be aware however that briefings are not necessarily updated or otherwise amended to reflect subsequent changes.

If you have any comments on our briefings please email [papers@parliament.uk](mailto:papers@parliament.uk). Authors are available to discuss the content of this briefing only with Members and their staff.

If you have any general questions about the work of the House of Commons you can email [hcenquiries@parliament.uk](mailto:hcenquiries@parliament.uk).

### Disclaimer

This information is provided to Members of Parliament in support of their parliamentary duties. It is a general briefing only and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific advice. The House of Commons or the author(s) shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice.

The House of Commons accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. This information is provided subject to the [conditions of the Open Parliament Licence](#).