

**Encouraging Lads to Learn:
A Literature Review of Existing Models for
Engaging Young Men in Learning**

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Executive Summary

This literature review is in two parts; firstly covering aspects and reasons behind disengagement and secondly measures that have been implemented to engage young men in learning, both nationally and locally. In this way it is hoped that this literature review will produce a rounded understanding of the roots of disengagement and how knowledge of these can be used to tackle such issues and implement strategies to turn the tables and engage young men in learning.

Literature Review: Section 1- Identified issues of disengagement in young men

Many issues have to be considered when looking at how to engage young men in learning;

- q Poor experience of school
- q Low achievement
- q Masculine views of work
- q Low perception of learning compared to work
- q Poor understanding of work and qualifications relationship
- q Unrealistic expectations of life post 16

Key measures required to address such attitudes and perceptions include;

- q Attention needs to be given to pupil's experience of schools and their perceptions. Young males poor experience of school is likely to influence their preference of work over learning post-16 and the value they attach to education.
- q Promotion of education and training should be directed at parents as well as potential participants. Research suggests that parental influence should not be under-estimated and that young men are particularly influenced by their fathers roles.
- q Intervention programmes are essential to identify pupils at risk from dropping out of school. Young boys make up the majority of truancy and exclusions in both primary and secondary school education.
- q Comprehensive and coherent alternative provision for 14-16 year olds is required. Local research noted participants of such provision found it beneficial but problems were identified in the mismatch of provision and a wide variety of agencies involved.
- q Investigate different support mechanisms for young men in the career-decision making process. Many men indicated they had not heeded advice at school at this time and with hindsight regret not taking advantage.
- q The relationship between qualifications and employment needs to be explored within school, supported by labour market information to combat unrealistic expectations in the labour market post 16.

- q Trends in the 1990's found that increasingly more men entered the labour market as unemployed and were more likely to experience unemployment. When engaging young men in learning, their ultimate goal is likely to be securing employment, as a means to sustain independent living, and it is likely that unemployed men will be the target of any programme to engage young men in learning.
- q Many young men tend to feel regret about their lack of achievement at school and regarded it as a missed opportunity. Such men may be willing to discuss this issue with young men currently in school.
- q Vulnerable groups, such as those in care and those who have learning difficulties and basic skill issues are at risk of not being able to participate in education and training after 16. Problems need to be identified and addressed early, support needs to be in place before they reach 16.
- q A wider issue to be addressed is that many disengaged young men come from communities which see education and training as the 'poor' options, with no immediate benefits and low incomes. Work would have to be undertaken in these areas to change attitudes to learning amongst peers and family.

Literature Review: Section 2 – Models for engaging young men in learning

There are different types of programme designed to engage young people which follow distinct patterns of project type, where learning is just one of many issues tackled within the programmes, the idea being that often young people's problems are bound together. Many of the programme examples are not specifically aimed at young men as many of the funding and support agencies have to consider issues of equality. However, some of those listed are highly populated by young men. A common theme among these projects is that they aim to be relevant to the lives of the young people in order to secure their interest and consequent engagement. The projects detailed in this report surround common themes of music, sport, computer gaming, motor vehicles, enterprise and in one example the participant's children. Others, such as school related programmes operate around key and transferable skills, not academic skills, which are developed by making them meaningful by working in the community. Examples from around the Country also give other focus to alternative forms of learning, location (urban/rural), poverty, drugs and crime as a basis to engage young men. It is difficult to estimate exactly how far these projects replicate the key themes identified above without further study, but at a glance they do provide an indication that in some areas there is support available for engaging young men in learning.

1. Introduction

Before beginning to explore existing models for engaging young men in learning, it is important to establish why and how young men become disengaged from the learning systems we have. This literature review is in two parts; firstly covering aspects and reasons behind disengagement and secondly measures that have been implemented to engage young men in learning, both nationally and locally. In this way it is hoped that this literature review will produce a rounded understanding of the roots of disengagement and how knowledge of these can be used to tackle such issues and implement strategies to turn the tables and engage young men in learning.

The underachievement and disengagement of young men within the education system is not a new issue. In 1977, Paul Willis, wrote about the ways in which working-class boys often responded to the alienation and middle-class values of schooling through strategies of resistance and in the process, become embedded with the class status.¹ Although it is not the focus of this report to dwell on class issues, it is generally acknowledged throughout the sourced literature, that the disengagement of young men is a working-class issue.

‘ Overall, the underachievement of boys at school is a strongly classed and racialised phenomenon’.²

Compared to girls, boys leave school with fewer qualifications, are disproportionately excluded when they are there, truant more, get into trouble in larger numbers and with greater frequency, are more likely to have a criminal record, find it harder to find jobs in the new UK service economy and are more likely to take their own lives. It is clear therefore that something is ‘troubling’ young men.³

The strategy for the Learning and Skills Council Nottinghamshire (LSCN) encompasses the need to both extend participation in education, learning and training and to raise achievement in young people and although this covers all groups, young men's lack of participation and under-achievement make them a key group on which to focus. The purpose of this literature review is to draw attention to the issues that have to be taken into consideration when considering strategies for attracting young men into learning. This will inform LSCN's review of the strategic plan 2002-2004.

¹ Epstein et al, 1998, p.4

² Epstein et al, 1998, p.11

³ McDowell, 2001, p.1

2. Background

In 1999 the government turned its attention to the increasingly apparent alienation of young men and the associated social problems that that brought with it. In particular, policy was perceived to follow some outbreaks of violence amongst groups of young boys and men⁴. The problem of disaffection is as prominent as it was a few years ago⁵. Education is perceived as a central part of this process to reengage young men.

To put this into perspective and to tackle engaging young men it is necessary to identify and understand what is meant by 'disengagement'. Disengaged young people are characterised by non-participation in education, training or employment after leaving school. Such circumstances are seen to be influenced by: lack of GCSE attainment, socio-economic group, housing, family circumstances, ethnic background, gender and learning disabilities/difficulties. Indeed, and pertinent to this exercise, is the indication that the group who are most likely to be disengaged are white, working-class young men. This group above all others is also less likely to continue in full-time education and training at 16.⁶

Recent statistics indicate that boys generally have a lower achievement than girls in GCSEs, however that does not detract from the significant proportion of girls who are underachieving too.

Table 1: GCSE attainment⁷

	UK 2002			UK 2001		
	All	Girls	Boys	All	Girls	Boys
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5 or more grades A*-C at GCSE/ GNVQ equivalent	51.2	56.6	46.0	50.0	55.4	44.8
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5 or more grades A*-G at GCSE/ GNVQ equivalent	88.9	91.0	86.8	88.9	91.0	86.9
Percentage of 15 year olds achieving no passes	5.4	4.3	6.4	5.5	4.4	6.5

* Local level GCSE results are not available fro 2002 an do not breakdown by gender

Despite such figures, destination of leavers figures for Nottinghamshire (overleaf) indicate that a large proportion of young men are continuing in full time education and training or employment, and so the group of young men appears relatively small. However, we must consider that these figures only represent 16 year olds who have left school and we cannot see from them what occurs to these young men in the next few years.

⁴ McCurry, 1999, p.22

⁵ Crequer, 2002

⁶ Pearce & Hillman, 1998, p.37-38

⁷ Department of Education and Skills, 2002

Table 2: Destination of Leavers 2001⁸

Destination of Leavers 2001 – LSC Nottinghamshire	Male %	All Persons %
Cont'd in FT education in school 6 th form	30.8	32.4
Cont'd in FT education in college	32.0	36.9
In WBL excluding employed status	4.5	3.8
In employment with planned training	17.3	13.5
In employment and without planned training	5.3	4.3
Unemployed	5.5	4.6
Not responding to follow up – therefore unknown	1.2	1.0
Moved out of contact	1.7	1.7
Unavailable for work	0.9	1.1
Refused to participate in survey	0.4	0.4
Total	100	100

On closer inspection of LSC data on Work Based Learners and Further Education students⁹, information indicated that of the 320 male programme starters between 1/8/01 and 30/9/01, 64% were retained at 13 weeks falling to 55% at 26 weeks. This provides a snapshot that whilst a large number of young men are engaging in Work Based Learning, a large proportion are not staying on the course. Male FE enrolments for 2000/01 showed a smaller shortfall in numbers at 13 weeks, with 82% still participating. Male learners in these situations have at least attempted to engage in learning, even for whatever reason that particular course did not work out for them. However, as the chart below indicates, there are still significant numbers of young men affected by long-term unemployment (claimant count), superseding female unemployment in terms of distinct age and duration categories.

Table 3: Male long-term unemployment¹⁰

Claimant Count (Computerised) – September 2002	Nottinghamshire				UK			
	Male	% of Total Persons	Total Persons	%	Male	% of Total Persons	Total Persons	%
Aged 19 and under	1122	61.8	1813	15.2	58811	60.7	96851	14.9
Aged 24 and under	3192	68.0	4690	39.4	172385	66.9	257527	39.9
Aged 24 and under, unemployed over 12 months	51	57.3	89	0.7	3566	64.7	5511	0.8
Aged 24 and under, unemployed over 6 months	489	68.2	716	6.0	26913	68.8	39139	6.0
Aged 18-24, unemployed under 6 months	2645	68.3	3869	32.5	140200	67.2	208519	32.2
Claimants aged 18-24, unemployed over 6 months	486	68.2	712	5.9	26455	69.0	38294	5.9
Total	7985	67.1	11889	100	428330	66.3	645841	100

⁸ Guideline Careers Service/Connexions, 2001

⁹ Jagger, 2002, p.3-4

¹⁰ Nomis, 2002

3. Literature Review: Section 1 - Identified issues of disengagement in young men

Through the literature and research sourced for this review, key themes emerged that provide explanations for why disengagement may occur and how this manifests itself.

3.1 Masculinity

In a variety of the literature on this subject, it is unavoidable to discuss engaging young men in learning, without understanding how the complexity of masculinity shapes the views of young men on the post-16 landscape.

As will be discussed prevalent issues of masculinity are seen within education e.g. males tend to be more disenfranchised from school; boys view studying as un-masculine, and within work there is a male view of distinct male and female jobs. Young men moving into the post 16 arena, emphasise the importance and significance of employment rather than study, despite low-achieving young men finding themselves in temporary, casual or sometimes less than full-time work. Indeed, the main impression from some recent research was the dominant attitudes of a traditional, sexist, masculinity, which was out of synch with the dominant attributes of the service-based economy [and the educational system].¹¹

Head (1999) argues that masculinity has to be confirmed by conforming closely to a particular model of what men are like and do, which disadvantages them as they become inflexible in their attitudes to study and work, i.e. a reluctance to consider different school subjects and are less likely to think ahead and organise themselves. Head sees these as a consequence of peer group culture.

‘Boys cannot be seen to be taking ... work too seriously’.¹²

3.2 Ethnic Minorities

Although the disengagement of young men is primarily a concern of white young men in much research, ethnic minorities are still represented in the population of young men who are disengaged and low achievers. Research with Bangladeshi young men, actually found a low level of truancy, no opposition to school and felt well supported by their parents. However, most interviewees regretted not applying themselves more at school. The barriers to achievement in school were a lack of English language spoken by parents, which inhibited any help with homework and led to problems with parent-school liaison; serious over-crowding in the home and relative poverty, which meant that there was a pressure on young men to seek work as soon as compulsory schooling ended. For some racial harassment from peers was also identified as a barrier.¹³

Similar research with young men of African Caribbean origin found a similar regret about their low achievement at school. Over half those interviewed admitted to

¹¹ McDowell, 2001, p.37

¹² Head, 1999, p.65

¹³ Wrench & Qureshi, 1997, p.2

some truancy, identified as mainly to avoid certain classes or teachers. Indeed, many respondents indicated that many subjects were irrelevant to black people and made them feel alienated, including History and Religious Education. The other major issue was conflict with teachers, where there were indications of stereotyping and labelling.¹⁴ Indeed, boys of Caribbean origin are four times more likely to be excluded than white boys¹⁵.

Overall, ethnic minority 'commitment' to education is well illustrated by the fact that members of all of the other ethnic groups were more likely to remain in secondary education (at ages 17 and 18) than white boys and girls. However, this perhaps is more the commitment of ethnic minority females than males.¹⁶

Indeed the Post 16 landscape for ethnic minority young men show higher percentages than their white counterparts. This indicates that there are a number of ethnic minority young men who are available to both work and/or learning.

Table 4: Unemployment rates (%) of young men, by age group¹⁷

Age	White	Caribbean	African	Indian	Pakistani/ Bangladeshi
16-17	18	41	58	44	46
18-19	17	42	37	21	48
20-24	14	34	35	20	32

3.3 Achievement in school

It is a common notion that boys' achievement in school, specifically GCSE attainment is often less than girls. Young men are leaving school in a disadvantaged position to get on in the labour market and get on in some forms of education, although this is not a new story and it is noted that such a 'trend' began before GCSEs.¹⁸ The boys who do 'fail' are not from the middle-classes but are from the working class life of the inner cities and peripheral local authority estates and are disproportionately populated by African Caribbean boys.¹⁹

This poor achievement has been explored, focussing on different aspects of education to begin to understand why boys' underachieve, these included curriculum and assessment, teaching and learning, organisational factors in schools, personal and social development, including the role of language in boys' achievement.

It was concluded that literacy and language have been emphasised as key in raising attainment, and boys are seen to be behind girls in this major aspect of learning from an early age. In addition, it is suggested that recent curriculum and assessment changes tend to favour the traditional strengths of girls (although not unequivocally). Factors of assessment include boys' tendency to do better in assessment by multiple-choice questions and less well in coursework and essays. Male behaviour

¹⁴ Wrench & Hassan, 1997, p.2

¹⁵ Head, 1999, p.103

¹⁶ Berthoud, 1999, p.14

¹⁷ Berthoud, 1999, p.43

¹⁸ Macdonald et al, 1999, p.

¹⁹ McDowell, 2001, p.1 & 2

was also suggested as a factor in assessment, particularly high confidence and risk-taking.²⁰ In addition an OFSTED report in 1996, found that girls were more likely to be now taking traditional boys' subjects, however boys were less likely to take traditional girl's subjects, confirming an inflexibility of many young men in dealing with a changing world.²¹

The role of the teacher was identified as central to a pupil's academic performance and use of stereotyping impacted directly on achievement. However, evidence seems to be inconclusive as to whether teacher practices reinforce or contradict negative stereotyping. Pupil perceptions of teachers indicated that pupils thought teachers supported and paid more attention to girls and were more lenient and tolerant than with boys. Indeed further research found that teachers commonly perceived boys as reluctantly involved or disengaged within the classroom.²²

Additional research shows that boys tended to have, on the whole, negative attitudes to school – a negative view of school work and homework, poor attentiveness in class, lower standards of behaviour within class, reluctance to embark on extra work and the focus on simply passing examinations, not excelling or even doing well.²³

School organisation is also an important factor, particularly the use of setting and banding, which could lead to 'labelling' and 'self-fulfilling prophecies'. In addition, team working, said to be beneficial to boys learning was not practised very often within the classroom.²⁴

Societal issues such as the growth of home media technology are seen to impact on achievement, through the (unintentional) discouragement of reading and socialising.²⁵ Although, a contradictory argument also suggests that the greater freedom granted to boys, to be allowed out of the home to socialise, often on the streets leads to the rejection of learning through the embracing of masculine values on the streets.²⁶

Indeed there are a range of factors that indicate pupils are more likely to underachieve if they had home factors such as: entitlement to free school meals, coming from a large family or single parent family, having parents engaged in manual occupations or were unemployed, from an ethnic origin and had problems with English language fluency.²⁷ Another possible social factor has been identified as the influence of the local culture valuing or not, the participation in further education.²⁸

Warrington and Younger (1996) propose that a possible reason for boys' underachievement was that what boys considered important (sporting prowess,

²⁰ Macdonald et al, 1999, p.

²¹ Head, 1999, p.65

²² Macdonald et al, 1999, p.

²³ Macdonald et al, 1999, p.

²⁴ Macdonald et al, 1999, p.

²⁵ Macdonald et al, 1999, p.

²⁶ Head, 1999, p.30-31

²⁷ Macdonald et al, 1999, p.

²⁸ McDowell, 2001, p.37

physical aggression and sexual conquest, according to the authors) did not match what the school considered as important (academic success).²⁹

As discussed there are numerous issues that could contribute to the disengagement and disaffection of boys' within the school environment, linking directly to underachievement at GCSE level. Macdonald et al proposed strategies to address pupil's (not only boys) underachievement in school including;

- q Establishing perceptions and giving pupils a voice
- q Staff expectations – high expectations should be made explicit at all times and stereotypes challenged. A consistent, firm behaviour management policy needs to be established.
- q Curriculum – should be evaluated and option choices monitored
- q Support for learning
- q School organisation - assess whether bandings work, in terms of ability and gender.

Not unsurprisingly, some research has found that educational attainment is a key factor as to whether young people stay on in education after school. However, they also found that this was also affected by whether the young person's mother also possessed educational qualifications. The research stated that the influence of parents should never be underestimated and that any programmes aimed at promoting education and training for young people should also be directed at their parents.³⁰

3.4 Truancy, Exclusion and Crime

Head (1999) identifies the main cause of truancy as students entering a 'cycle of learned helplessness', where those who are not doing very well academically and feel discouraged, 'bunk off' in order to escape criticism. However in doing so they fall further behind in lessons and often gain status among their peers as a demonstration of independence from authority. Head sites a gender difference, where low-achieving girls are more likely to sit quietly, and go unnoticed. Furthermore, non-attendance also exposes them to the temptations of anti-social behaviour, which in some cases will lead to criminal activity.³¹ Such behaviour in turn is likely to lead to under-achievement and future non-participation in education or the labour market post 16.

Pearce et al report that there were 12,500 permanent exclusions from primary, secondary (83% of exclusions) and special schools in 1995/96, an increase of 13% on the previous year.³² Recent figures for Nottinghamshire LEA had 149 permanent exclusions from primary (15 exclusions) and secondary schools (134 exclusions) for the school year 2001/2002. 86% of exclusion from both primary and secondary schools were male exclusions, 13 primary and 115 secondary³³. Nottingham City LEA recorded 70 permanent exclusions from primary (15 exclusions) and secondary

²⁹ Warrington and Younger, 1996, p.

³⁰ Stafford et al, 1999, p.28-34

³¹ Head, 1999, p.102

³² Pearce et al, 1998, p.14 & 15

³³ Nottinghamshire LEA, 2002

schools (55 exclusions) for the school year 2001/2002, 91% of exclusion from both primary and secondary schools were male exclusions, 15 primary and 49 secondary³⁴. These numbers do not seem particularly large, and there is a suggestion that this is just the tip of the iceberg, with many pupils being categorised and counted in other ways, such as long-term absentees. Boys tend to be in the majority of those pupils who are excluded³⁵ (as illustrated locally), in particular Pearce identifies those of Caribbean origin, who are four times more likely to be excluded than white boys³⁶. Other groups prone to high levels of exclusion are those from poorer families, those from disturbed and disrupted families, those in care and those with special educational needs³⁷. The danger for these young men is that they often opt for truancy, again open to exploitation and temptation. Their academic progress is likely to cease and they enter adulthood, unskilled, lacking in discipline, with no sense of routine to attend the workplace on a regular basis.³⁸ There is some alternative provision available for young people aged 14-16 year olds at risk from disengaging from education, in the form of school collaborations with FE Colleges and Training Providers. The provision around Nottinghamshire is varied, with different collaborations offering different initiatives and programmes. Recent interviews with participants and institutions noted some relative success, although improvements were necessary to create a coherent and successful programme to capture these pupils³⁹.

3.5 Post-16 Transition and Choices

Transition into post-16 life, from school to education, training or work and from parental dependence to independent living, with few or no qualifications and a disenchanting view of education coupled with a uninformed knowledge of the labour market, can be expected to make this a difficult period of change. Many young men in Lloyd's 1999 study had had a poor experience of this transition, where they felt poorly informed by school and held an unrealistic view of the workplace. However, they also admitted they thought they knew best and had been reluctant to take advice whilst at school.⁴⁰ This is a precarious position to be in with respect to the plethora of options available in the post-16 landscape. This is perhaps reflected in research with young people who had dropped out of Work-Based Learning (WBL) and Further Education (FE). Male respondents reasons for leaving their Modern Apprenticeship programme revolved around wanting a different occupation, poor pay or lack of money and boredom, the female respondents also cited a different occupation but also lack of support by training supplier and employers. Male respondents in FE cited some similar reasons – decided to get a job, different expectations of the course and boredom⁴¹. This information supports the notion that young males favour employment over learning, but also indicates that more guidance is needed for males (and females) in regards to their choices and expectations of post-16 learning.

³⁴ Nottingham City LEA, 2002

³⁵ Pearce et al, 1998, p.16

³⁶ Head, 1999, p.103

³⁷ Pearce et al, 1998, p.16 & 17

³⁸ Head, 1999, p.103

³⁹ East Midlands LSRN, 2002, p.9-29

⁴⁰ Lloyd, 1999, p.2

⁴¹ Silversides et al, 2002, p.51 & 70

As raised young men have been found to favour employment over further study. Indeed, local focus group research with Year 11 pupils, found that a large number of pupils were planning to enter employment post-16. These were mainly males who expressed the desire to leave home and therefore needed employment and an income to establish independent living. In addition, the male participants had obtained a greater level of work experience⁴². However, in a research project that explored the attitudes to leaving school, through interviews with low-achieving young male pupils, discussions found that young men's views of the labour market were seriously lacking, influenced very much by their fathers roles, the idea of masculine and feminine work, and a lack of familiarity with the current labour market i.e. the dominance of the Service sector, dominated in turn by females and part-time and flexible working patterns⁴³.

'Not yet faced with the reality of leaving school and the movement into the labour market or into forms of training, these young men felt that their future prospects, were at least reasonable, if not rosy. In general, they felt that both young men and young women had a good chance of employment in the local labour market, even if they were not among the highest achievers in their age cohort.'⁴⁴

Coupled with a trend that has seen employers concentrating their recruitment on women and the experienced aged 25 and over and the fall in the relative earnings of young men under 25 means that many men are ill prepared for work⁴⁵.

McDowell also adds that none of the interviewees had not even considered permanent full-time work in the retail, leisure and tourism or the hospitality sectors, which were the fastest growing sectors for less well-educated workers, even though these young men had been engaged in temporary employment in these areas. This was because such jobs were not seen a masculine enough, for the white, working-class male.⁴⁶ Further research with adolescents also revealed that the majority of boys still believed that the man in the family should be the primary wage earner.

'They still see that [primary wage earner] as their role yet at the same time they are taking very few steps to realize it. They are working less diligently and successfully at academic subjects than their female peers and they have less clear and precise career plans'.⁴⁷

Aside from problems of low achievement, young men are leaving school with problematic view of the world of work that awaits them, however for them, work still takes priority over further education. Again, research with male students in FE, had young men describe how many of their peers saw college as a last resort, an inferior

⁴² WM Enterprise, 2002, p.20 & 30

⁴³ Canny, 2002

⁴⁴ McDowell, 2001, p.16

⁴⁵ Meadows, 2001, p.v-vi and 27

⁴⁶ McDowell, 2001, p.21

⁴⁷ Head, 1999, p.53-54

alternative to a job, a step down⁴⁸. Recent local research⁴⁹ with work-based learners asked why they chose the training programme they were on, the highest proportion of males 18.3% said that it appealed to them, compared to the highest proportion (23.1%) of females suggesting that the training would gain them a qualification. Furthermore, around half of the male respondents (50.8%) were engaged within Skilled Trade occupations, supporting McDowell's findings of young men remaining in traditional vocational pathways. Respondents were also asked what they thought they would be doing in three years time male respondents indicated the following routes; Engineering (including Welding) - 14%, Construction (including Joinery, Painting & Decorating, Plumbing) –13%, Mechanics – 7%, Retail – 4% and Administration – 4%. Small numbers of respondents also cited:-

Accountancy	Landscape Gardening
Agriculture	Law
Architecture	Leisure
the Armed Forces	Library Services
Butcher	Machinists
Cabinet Maker	Nursing
Call Centre Operator	Police
Care Worker	Printing
Catering	Recruitment
Customer Service	Sales
Data Inputting	Security
Design	Teaching
Hairdressing	Upholstery
Hospitality	Veterinary Nursing
ICT	Warehousing
Journalism	Youth Work

As can be seen there is a fraction of these respondents seeing their future in occupations that are not typically 'masculine'.

Nevertheless, further interviews post-16 by McDowell, highlighted that the interviewees had matured quite considerably and thought more about their futures, regardless of the destination they had taken at 16.⁵⁰ Despite this, many of the interviewees from this study had ended up in service-sector employment without training, and were dominated by low wages that would make it difficult for them to establish an independent life for themselves. In this research and many other studies that interview young men, there tends to be general feeling of regret about their lack of achievement at school and regarded it as a missed opportunity.⁵¹ This indicates that some men may be willing to address their lack of educational achievement and thus engage in learning post 16.

Research on underachievement in the labour market, focusing on young men aged 16-24, found that increasingly through the 1990's more young men entered the labour market as unemployed and that their chances of experiencing unemployment

⁴⁸ Kirkman, 2000, p.17

⁴⁹ Welsh et al, 2002

⁵⁰ McDowell, 2001, p.35

⁵¹ Lloyd, 1999, p.2

were greater than females and previous generations. However they were also more likely to stay on in full-time education than previous generations.⁵²

This research also identified factors associated with those who are able to move from unemployment towards employment;

- q Living with a parent or relative (not a spouse or partner)
- q Having vocational qualifications
- q No health problems
- q Possessing a driving licence
- q Previous work experience⁵³

Such illustrations need to be taken account of when engaging young men in learning as their ultimate goal is to secure employment, as a means to sustain independent living, and it is likely that unemployed men will be the target of any programme to engage young men in learning.

Possession of academic and vocational qualifications directly increases an individual's chances of obtaining employment, indeed the more GCSEs attained the more the risk of unemployment goes down⁵⁴.

Indeed those who failed to make a successful transition from school into education, training or employment, were found to fall into three categories;

- q Low attainers
- q Underachievers
- q People with learning difficulties

Although, the report that identified these dates back to 1997, the message is still relevant today. The report also highlights vulnerable groups such as those in care and those who have learning difficulties and basic skill issues, who are at risk of not being able to participate in education and training after 16. Again, the needs of such groups must be taken into account for any programme attempting to engage young men in learning.

‘ Many young people are simply unable to take their places in society at a critical stage in their transition into adult working life’.⁵⁵

Evidently, there is much research that seems to establish that some young men have serious misconceptions about life post 16, particularly in terms of work and the relationship between qualifications and work.

One further issue to address is with those disengaged young men from communities where there has been a historical culture of not working or participating in education or training. Williamson argues that such communities see education and training as the ‘poor’ options, with no immediate benefits and low incomes. Casual employment in the service and ‘informal’ economies pays better, and the illegal economies in

⁵² Stafford et al, 1999, p.7-12

⁵³ Stafford et al, 1999, p.24

⁵⁴ Stafford et al, 1999, p.42

⁵⁵ Bewick, 1997, p.15

particular offer the richest and most immediate rewards.⁵⁶ Indeed earlier it was stated that men looked down on education as inferior to work, Williamson argues that there are some who also look down on work,

They become part of a culture which sees 'straight' people with (low paid) jobs as fools who are exploited victims of the 'system', or undergoing the penury of employment schemes and training courses for apparently little return.⁵⁷

In these communities there is little support or infrastructure to support other 'ways of living' and for the young people who live there, it is the only 'culture' they have experienced. Williamson adds that evading participation becomes a valued skill, a coping strategy that has evolved into a counter-culture. As such, Williamson suggest that for any scheme or programme to engage young men into learning must be supported by a wider dialogue with the community, in an attempt to change the 'culture' that has developed into a more constructive agenda.

3.6 Conclusions

Some of the issues explored reflect wider societal concerns that would take an exceptional shift in social thinking to ensure any changes. In particular the relationship between masculinity, work and education would need to radically change, so that young men felt able to engage in employment in a wider variety of jobs and in learning without the fear of feeling 'less male' because of their choices. To some extent we have seen how this has begun to change i.e. data from the Work Based Learning Youth Survey, which showed a number of respondents training in a wide variety of work including that in the Service Sector.

However, other issues still remain and require addressing to have an affect on attitudes post-16. As we have seen males are more likely to under achieve, truant and be excluded from school more than girls. These attitudes need to be tackled to engage young men in learning before they leave school. In addition, much more needs to be done to prepare young men (and women) for life post-16, breaking down myths of success without qualifications and that a good job will be waiting for them even though they have no GCSEs.

Overall, the main problems seem to be linked to the disappearance of traditional male route of school through to work (e.g. into engineering, manufacturing, mining), where the alternatives - the Service Sector, which dominates industry (although it seems is acceptable as a temporary source of work for young men) and further education are seen as too feminine. Obviously, these are generalisations but are particularly significant in understanding the problems faced by young men after 16.

The table overleaf charts the sectors in which males and females work, illustrating that the sectors that employ the most people – Public Administration, Education and Health and Hospitality and Distribution are dominated by women.

⁵⁶ Williamson et al, 1998, p.15-16

⁵⁷ Williamson et al, 1998, p.16

Employee by Industry in Nottinghamshire 2000	Total		Female		Male	
	No.	%	No.	% of total	No.	% of total
Agriculture and fishing	-	-	-	-	-	-
Energy and water	7676	1.8	1392	18.1	6284	81.9
Manufacturing	76738	17.9	23348	30.4	53390	69.6
Construction	18762	4.4	2418	12.9	16344	87.1
Distribution, hotels and restaurants	102577	24.0	58378	57.1	44199	43.0
Transport and communications	19587	4.6	3860	19.7	15727	79.2
Banking, finance and insurance, etc	65087	15.2	31805	48.9	33282	51.1
Public administration, education & health	115463	27.0	82687	71.6	32777	28.4
Other services	19555	4.6	11174	57.1	8380	42.9
Total	425445	99.4	215063	50.5	210382	49.4

*Shaded section indicates Service Sector industries ** Figures subject to rounding

However, 52% of female employment is part time work, which is around 4 times higher than for males (13%). Of the 28,308 males working part time, the majority (39.3%) are employed in manufacturing. Some of the literature (particularly McDowell and Meadows) refer to female 'success' in the labour market, could in part be reflected in their willingness to participate in flexible employment, as well as pursuing employment in a variety of occupations.

As a consequence of this information, anyone designing programmes to engage young men in learning, has to consider that their ultimate goal will be to gain employment. Until the barriers are broken down, for many men, education and training will always be inferior to actual work. Much will have to be done on marketing the benefits of learning in securing and maintaining a successful life in the labour market.

To summarise, key issues for consideration include:-

- As explored, young men are keen to establish independent living and this is not a possibility from current training allowances or low wages, which do not pay for basic living expenses. Bewick points to an inflexible school curriculum, which does not adequately address the relationship between learning and earning, lack of contact with employers or work experience while at school by which young men would be able to establish a realistic view of life post-16.⁵⁸ As such young people need to have a greater awareness of the labour market that awaits them, information is key.
- Work to reengage young men needs to begin before 16, not just through school but through alternative provision, which at the moment is a set of incoherent programmes, but widely enjoyed by those who participate.
- Ways to encourage, enhance and support the combination of employment and study/training in different forms should be explored.

⁵⁸ Bewick, 1997, p.16

- q Work Based Learning seems to be an ideal route for young men intent on pursuing traditional male occupations – although problems are associated with this route including low pay, key skill assessment and young men unable to see a means to an end – i.e. no immediate benefits.

Several of the reviewed texts highlighted proposed recommendations for addressing these issues:-

- q Use Careers Service to target education and training resources on vulnerable young people and encourage parents with no formal qualifications to reengage in learning (thus attempting to break down the wider social barriers).⁵⁹
- q Encourage young people to learn to drive, as this increases chances of employment.⁶⁰
- q Young people need help in building up a belief in their own abilities and more opportunity needs to be given for personal development needs i.e. competence, confidence and experience.⁶¹
- q Clearer connections between life and work, and ongoing support and counselling to address underlying problems and encourage the flexibility of learning.⁶²
- q There should be ways of funding some education and training suppliers for other outputs apart from vocational qualifications. Funding should recognise and support contributions that promote learning, including non-vocational routes.⁶³
- q As research has indicated many men see their schooldays as a wasted opportunity, therefore schools need to do more to change the patterns of young male behaviour, perhaps by encouraging young men with regrets to share their views and experiences with boys still at school.⁶⁴
- q Strengthened dialogues between schools and support organisations that identify those young people who are at risk from disengagement post-16, to ensure mechanisms are in place to offer alternatives.
- q Flexible educational and training schemes to accommodate individual preferences and needs, including support facilities to accommodate personal issues, such as housing and finance.

⁵⁹ Stafford et al, 1999, p.51-52

⁶⁰ Stafford et al, 1999, p.51

⁶¹ Aspire Consultants, 1996, p.9

⁶² Aspire Consultants, 1996, p.10-11

⁶³ Aspire Consultants, 1996, p.10

⁶⁴ Meadows, 2001. p.v

- q Tailor-made courses in FE, aimed at young men, using community venues or male-dominated spaces such as football clubs and working men's clubs, and learning centres in the workplace.
- q Funding of learning is key. There must be support to make it economically viable for young people to attend, particularly those with living expenses. In addition there must be awareness raising of the long-term economic benefits of learning.

4. Literature Review: Section 2 – Models for engaging young men in learning

This part of the literature aims to provide examples of work being undertaken to address the needs of young men, which have a learning element involved. As will become apparent learning is not the only focus of many of these examples, but is part of a wider framework that try to address the complex needs of these young people. A key driver of these projects is establishing and maintaining interest in the programme, which tend to revolve around interests and relevant issues to the participants, that makes their involvement seem worthwhile and meaningful. It is difficult to estimate exactly how far these projects replicate the key themes identified above without further study, but at a glance they do provide an indication that in some areas there is support available for engaging young men in learning.

There have been five themes identified with successful practice in engaging young people in learning⁶⁵. These include:

Outreach – Since disaffected young adults are a particularly difficult group to attract to formal learning programmes, outreach work with informal contacts is a good way to reach them. It's strength lies in building up trusting relationships with individuals, as well as incentives and attractions. It requires publicity, targeting, patience and persistence on behalf of the project and its workers.

Bringing In – Projects need to be as different from school as possible. Successful projects consist of practical, vocational and life skills relevant to the young people's lives and interests. They have a focus on doing rather than just listening.

Putting Across (Teaching and Learning Methods) – The right people are needed with the right personalities to teach and lead young people. Qualities identified for success the need to be caring, enthusiasm, genuine, trustworthy, perseverance, commitment, respect, belief in the young people, sense of humour, ability to listen and provide constructive non-judgemental responses.

Achieving Together – Recognition and accreditation of achievement is important, although any assessment is often seen as a barrier by young people. There should be no focus on winners and losers; any achievement should be followed up with individual support. In-house accreditation is often used, alongside flexible external variations.

Working With – This refers to partnership and inter-agency support. Support networks for any programme are important to cater for issues such as social services, careers, housing and employment.

4.1 Local Case Studies

There are a wide and varied number of projects aimed at young people and engaging them onto programmes that encourage learning and ways into employment around Nottinghamshire. The following information provides a snapshot of some of the work being undertaken. However, there are only a few

⁶⁵ Merton, 1999, p11-60

projects, which are specifically aimed at young men for reasons of equality. As such some of the projects detailed below are open to both sexes but have a high number of young men participating.

Project: HUB Music Project, Nottingham

Following on from a project based within the City, this project has been running from August 2002 and open to young people. The project offers two days per week of studio work and two half days of voice classes and basic skills tutoring, which is made relevant to the music industry by covering such issues as copyright law and album covers. They also take turns to experience different aspects of music production, where team working is encouraged. There are six young people on the project as the moment, five of whom are boys and almost all from a minority ethnic background. Whilst the project is open to young women, the project mainly attracts young men.

Project: The Unique Café Bar, Newark

Aimed specifically at young men from the Travelling community and provides one-to-one tuition in basic skills. The majority of participants left school at around age 11. The project has been running for approximately 2-3 years and was set up in a response to a request by the Traveller community. The café runs from a local youth centre.

Project: Rahnama Sports Project, Nottingham

The project has two elements; firstly they ran a series of Sporting Coaching session in Cricket and Football during the October half term. The age range was diverse and ran from 10 to 20 male participants with the majority in 13-16 age range. Apart from sport, sessions where run on citizenship and their future education and training options where discussed, with sessions undertaken by the Police Force and Connexions. The aim was simply to keep people in organised activities and raise the issue of education and training for those of secondary age. The second element of the programme will be a weekly follow up sporting event - which will keep the young people in contact with Rahnama. The project mainly operates in the Forest Fields area of Nottingham City but they do not turn people away from other areas. Their main target group is from the Muslim community.

Project: Men United, Nottingham

A project bringing men, specifically fathers together on community learning programmes, primarily key/basic skills type activities that in some cases led onto becoming outreach workers themselves. Services provided include: weekly drop-in group with topic led discussions determined by the group, befriending service to provide emotional and practical support, outreach work where fathers are visited in the home, personal support and advocacy - assisting with social services, court cases, housing, child welfare and educational matters, personal development through training and social activities. Examples of projects include, workshops to encourage men into childcare and demonstrate how they are role models for their

children and recently with support from the Greater Nottingham Learning Partnership an ICT workshop for fathers and their children

Project: City of Nottingham E-games

This project is currently underway to begin in March 2003. The project aims to establish a City competition league for computer based 'simulation games' for 14-19 year olds which facilitates ICT supported learning in the context of vocational qualifications and Key Skills. The project has adopted a new way to engage young people in learning in a fun and interesting way, and although not specifically directed at boys it is certain to attract young male attention as computer-game culture is much more embedded in boys culture and generally boys are likely to play more games⁶⁶.

Project: The Re-Education Programme, NG7 area of Nottingham

This project has just begun and provides an educational provision for young people, aged between 12-16. This provision is essentially for pupils who have been excluded, at risk of exclusion or frequently truant from school. The provision covers Maths, English, ICT and Social based studies (raising self-esteem and health education) which are taught for a number of hours depending on the needs of the young person. The provision is located in a safe and informal environment where sporting and social activities are available such as the Duke of Edinburgh award schemes. The classes are small with a maximum of 10 pupils per group and their academic ability is assessed through a diagnostic assessment in the initial stage. The learning undertaken is accredited, to OCN level and for those who are able, to undertake GCSEs. Eventually, as the project progresses, they will be including work placements and vocational studies through local colleges.

The provision welcomes working with various social groups and is committed to providing a balanced education. The aim of the provision is to encourage the pupil back into mainstream education and equip them with the necessary skills to cope at the same time. This is achieved through the following:-

1. Raising attendance levels,
2. Sustaining the retention of the pupil
3. Prescribing achievement that reflects progress,
4. Working in partnership with families and external agencies
5. Action planning to focus the direction of the pupil.

Although open to all clients who are referred to them, the make-up is presently all male, from a mixed ethnic background.

Project: Self Second & Taking Off, Nottinghamshire

The Self Second project targets Year 10 pupils at risk of being excluded from school. While not specifically aimed at young men, it is widely populated by this group. The project is led by the Lifelong learning Team and supported by Nottinghamshire LEA through their Inspectorate and Environmental Support Service Teams who work with

⁶⁶ McFarlane, 2002, p.22

3-4 schools per academic year. Activity aims to develop pupil's attitudes towards themselves and others through teamwork and working on community projects such as building a public/school garden. The Taking Off programmes operates with Year 11 pupils.

Project: Acorn 3, Worksop, Retford and Newark

An inter-agency project working with disaffected young people. Again, while not specifically aimed at young men, it is largely populated by this group. The aim of this project was to work with young people in a holistic way through an interagency approach to issues. A number of the young people from projects took part in youth award ceremonies often attended by the Heads of Schools.

Project: Kick Start, Ashfield, Mansfield and Bassetlaw

Working with young offenders referred through the Probation Service, again not specifically male, but mainly men. Revolves around goal setting and personal capabilities training and achievement, focussing on their existing skills.

Project: Skills Force, Ashfield

The Nottinghamshire Education Business Alliance has worked with the Ministry of Defence to deliver one of eleven national 'Skills Force Pilots'. The pilot was intended to enhance the employability of young people in full-time education. This will be achieved through a focus on life-skills with a particular emphasis on enhancing those skills and attributes recognised and required by employers. Skills Force is targeted onto those pupils who are at most risk of disaffection. The three schools selected for the pilot were all from the Ashfield area. The target group are 14-16 year olds (years 9, 10 and 11) who lack self-esteem and ambition and who would benefit from a more vocational education based upon life skills. At the core of the initiative is preparation for employment. The majority of the course content had been developed in order to achieve the ASDAN Silver award. ASDAN is the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network. There is particular attention placed on Information Handling, the Community, Sport and Leisure, the Environment, Number Handling, Health and Survival and World of Work modules. It is intending to roll a further three projects out into Nottinghamshire. The first will start in September 2002 for three years.

Project: Breakaway Motor Project, St. Ann's - Nottingham

Started in 1994 as part of City Challenge, the programme is now a part of Nottingham City Council and is a Centre of Excellence for training. There are two areas of training, firstly motor vehicle maintenance and repair and secondly, Go-Karting maintenance and repair and driving sessions. These are both combined with life and key skills, basic education and personal development. The focus is on non-formal learning in a workplace environment, as distinct from school as possible, with the rule that the young people are engaged on it only if they want to be. The target group are disaffected, disadvantaged and 'at risk' young people aged between 13-19 of both sexes, but has a high proportion of males.

4.2 Non-local Case Studies

The following projects are further examples of engaging young men in learning from around the Country.

Project: Vocational GCSEs with Industry partnership, Barking and Dagenham⁶⁷

Within schools there are a number of measures that are being implemented to tackle under-achievement, truancy and exclusion in a bid to reduce the effects of disengagement and improve the prospects of young people. Vocational qualifications are seen as way to undertake this, and this is particularly effective for young men who have a propensity towards the work-based learning route (see Table 2). Barking and Dagenham LEA introduced six vocational GCSE options for its students in the mid-90s, all involving a high degree of hands-on learning in local industry, Ford lending their workshops in some cases. Over 600 students in the LEA (by 2001) have taken up the option. Disaffected students with high truancy rates are given first preference on vocational courses. This programme has managed to increase GCSE attainment for the area and reduce truancy levels. DfES research also supported such programmes, identifying almost 20,000 pupils taking part in schemes around the country, with the majority showing signs of disaffection and low achievement.

Project: Action to reduce Exclusions amongst Afro-Caribbean Boys, Birmingham⁶⁸

The LEA worked with and provided support for community initiatives involving mentoring to tackle Afro-Caribbean exclusion from school. They also adapted an American programme promoted by the Coca-Cola Foundation, which aims to improve behaviour of teenagers through entrusting with responsibility for helping younger children. The Birmingham Second City Second Chance programme has been running since 1997 and by 1999 had involved 100 secondary school pupils, many of who are from ethnic minorities, in tutoring primary school pupils. The secondary school pupils receive vouchers as rewards. The impact of these programmes reduced exclusions by 23%, 60% of which was in ethnic minority groups.

Project: Into Work, South London

The aims of this project were to:

- Develop approaches that would impact on socially excluded young men in their preparation for the workplace;
- Develop and publish resource materials for teachers and careers officers to use in their work with young men;
- Produce guidelines for schools for appropriate careers advice to socially excluded young men;
- Identify individual needs and additional help for groups of young men;

⁶⁷ Penlington, 2001, p.32

⁶⁸ Pearce et al, 1999, p.52

- Develop criteria for identifying young men who would benefit from a more extended careers curriculum.

Schools and careers services were involved, each with a number of underachieving young men, from socially deprived areas and from all ethnic backgrounds. Programmes delivered included; school-based sessions that gave advice about training options after school, informed about looking for jobs and applying for them and information about the changing workforce and workplace; workplace visits to a college, job centre and careers office. The programme was offered as a 'course' and assessment was based on attendance and competence, by an evaluation of interview and phone skills, knowledge of the workplace and attendance. Feedback from participants was good and the young men cited interview techniques, phone experience and college visit as the most useful components. In relation to the college visit many expressed that they now understood how a college works, what to expect and the need and type of qualifications required for certain occupations. Overall, the programme seemed to increase their understanding and knowledge, identify a career path, increased their confidence and identified barriers to be overcome.

'The most essential factor, however, was the nature of the relationships developed with young men. Young men engaged with the material, the subject matter and us, and we engaged with the young men.'⁶⁹

Project: The LADS Project, Knowsley - Merseyside⁷⁰

The project works with disengaged and disaffected young men aged 13-19. Youth work methods are employed to engage the target group in activities that develop their confidence and equip them with practical skills and knowledge. The aim is that when they leave the project they are better placed to re-engage with mainstream education and training opportunities or move into employment. In the designing the project local community views were taken into account as well as perceptions of masculinity and how this may affect their willingness to engage and how to combat this. Ground rules and structured lesson plans were useless, trust was developed by undertaking recreational activities and the young men were encouraged to direct the activities they were involved in. The most common interest in the group was found to be in motorbikes and cars, through partnership the project was able to establish a ten-week programme around motorbike maintenance and safe driving practices. Three-hour sessions covered riding the bikes, fixing the bikes and discussions with the mechanic (to focus on one activity at a time lost their attention). Alongside this the young men learnt, team building, safety awareness, motivation, commitment, self-confidence and self-esteem which fitted into accreditation. All the young men went onto other things including further training, work and volunteer schemes.

⁶⁹ Lloyd, 2002, p. 42-43

⁷⁰ Smedley, 2002, p.27-29

Project: Byte Project 1999-2000, Blackburn/Bacup⁷¹

This was an action research project that offered a range of activities and a residential to 25 young men, as well as counselling, support and advice. The researchers held a series of interviews with the men through the project. These young men were known to have 'disappeared' from the system of contact and referral agencies, they were also involved in drugs, alcohol, petty crime and prone to aggressive and violent behaviour. The programme offered activities and social outings and informal chats could be arranged. The interviews revealed poor experience of school, a lack of motivation, unrealistic aspiration that focussed on what they wanted to have, rather than what they wanted to do and a common interest in cars. The project had partial success, seeing several participants move onto the Learning Gateway, employment, college and 'informal' employment.

Project: Workers Education Association, North Yorkshire⁷²

This project was specifically tailored to engage rural male farmers (young and old) in the Yorkshire Dales in learning. Many young men who enter the industry do so straight from compulsory education into family business and so require few formal qualifications. However, due to recent large-scale problems with the industry, which have led to farm closures and poverty, the realisation is that many young men are at risk of having problems within the labour market, should they be forced out of work. The learning devised was made relevant to the agricultural industry, through shaping the learning to help farmers deal with the large quantities of bureaucracy they have to deal with in terms of record-keeping and tracing animals. This began with computing courses that trained the farmers how to use software for business letters, spreadsheets for recording veterinary visits and expenditure, databases of animals and web design. Such training was combined with ideas about how to diversify their businesses into such areas as rare breeds and holiday cottages, and bed and breakfasts. Classes were run in village halls, church rooms, the auction marts and local museums. The success of the project was maintained in part by word of mouth, where farmers would relay their new found skills to neighbouring farmers.

Project: The Clay Partnership Project, Cornwall⁷³

Cornwall has seen a decline in its economic prosperity due to its main industries closing down. This has led to an increase in unemployment and a lack of opportunities for young people with very few qualifications. Five young men (aged 17-21) were recruited onto the programme that offered them a range of training opportunities, personal development and activity based learning. All the young men were unemployed and had left school with very few formal qualifications, and all tended to have had a bad experience of school. During the programme the young men were encouraged to work with other young men from the area, acting as positive role models, peer educators and working alongside youth workers to organise activities and schemes for other young people. The focus of the training was in leisure and tourism, one of the growing industry sectors in the area, and covered a variety of physical and practical subjects (e.g. Archery Leader Awards).

⁷¹ Reid, 2001, p.21-25

⁷² Kirkman, 2000, p.18-19

⁷³ Smith, 2002, p.14-17

As well as specific training such as First Aid. All the initial training led to NVQs, which brought them into a college environment and made a direct link between occupations and qualifications. While they required a lot of support at this stage, the young men's self-esteem and general personal development increased, engendering a positive attitude towards their futures, which included work and for some, further study at college and university. Part of this programme was that the young men do something with the training and qualifications they had achieved, e.g. they fundraised their own mobile archery unit to take round local villages to involve young people and facilitated workshops with young people on such issues as drugs.

Youth Skills Preparation, Bolton⁷⁴

Aimed at Asian young men, this project persuaded young men onto a short college course, of ten-fifteen weeks, covering key and life skills, communications, maths and IT. This was coupled with tasters of existing courses in IT and sports, work experience and individual tutorials. Different elements offered accreditation. A small monetary incentive (on top of benefits), free meals from the college canteen and contribution to travel costs. Initially, 40 places were provided but demand has out-stripped supply. Most of the work is done in small groups. Learning outcomes are agreed at the start and each student develops an action plan. Individual sessions are key to the course and used as a means of reviewing progress and providing continuous support.

Newham Docklands Motorcycle project⁷⁵

This project was set up following research that found that more than anything young people wanted access to motorcycles. The project aims to 'empower young people in their own development and assist them in maximising their potential and focusing their energies positively'. Key areas of development include technical (mechanics, moto-cross, mountain biking, pre-driver, road safety) and inter-personal skills (team working and problem solving). The target group is local young people with special education needs, young people not attending school or those at risk. In the main these tend to be white, working class boys. Although the content of the programme is modified to meet individual needs, training usually leads to formal City and Guilds accreditation.

4.3 National and General Programmes

There are no specific national programmes aimed at young men and so the following outline national and general programmes to aid young people in general back into education or employment.

Entry to Employment (E2E) – Nottinghamshire

To implement a coherent, flexible and inclusive vocational programme within the Nottinghamshire 14-19 learning framework to meet the learning needs of all young people who are not yet ready to directly enter apprenticeship level training or

⁷⁴ Merton et al, 1999, p.27

⁷⁵ Merton et al, 1999, p.29

employment in order to reduce the numbers not engage in learning or employment. Aimed at those who obtained low qualifications at GCSE (F and G's) and those who are unable to make a vocational or educational choice. There is a training allowance available linked to attendance, learner bonuses and travel and childcare costs. One to one tuition is available in some subjects and group work to improve key and personal skills and work tasters and placements. Overall learners will be encouraged to achieve an NVQ Level 1 qualification and encouraged to continue with further learning.

New Deal for Young People 18-24 (NDYP)

Targeted at those young people aged 18-24, who have been unemployed for six or more months claiming Job Seekers Allowance, implemented in 1998. The scheme includes each participant having a personal advisor, a gateway process which should lead to paid employment, and if not, onto one of a variety of programmes, which includes full-time study for 12 months. Each option, however, includes at least one day's education or training leading to an accredited qualification. Young people who refuse to take part have their benefit withdrawn.⁷⁶ Some participants may also receive basic education in literacy, numeracy and IT skills. Evaluation of the NDYP in 1999 showed that the scheme is viewed positively by all concerned. However, it has been described as a treatment to a problem rather than preventative measure.⁷⁷ Although this not gender specific programme, significantly more males are on the programme in Nottinghamshire than females.

Table 5: The New Deal for Young People – Statistics to March 2002⁷⁸

	1998 to March 2001			1998 to March 2002		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Total entering NDYP	9492	3640	13145	11759	4580	16348
Total leaving NDYP	7751	3029	10784	10433	4121	14556
Total on NDYP	1741	611	2361	1326	459	1792

The Learning Gateway

The Learning Gateway aims to reduce social exclusion amongst young people, providing a service for 16-18 year olds in need of support, focussing on those who are unable or unwilling to enter or remain in education, training or employment without additional support. Nationally, this was around 100,000 young people in the year 2000. The 'menu option' is a central feature of the Learning Gateway, allowing the participant to structure the programme to their needs, within a minimum framework of 16 hours per week. The Life Skills option provides key skills tuition, a pre-vocational element that provides work tasters etc and personal development.

Millennium Volunteers

Focussed on 16-24 year olds who have been socially excluded to play a more active role in their communities and also to develop relevant vocational skills demanded by employers and local education establishments.

⁷⁶ Stafford et al, 1999, p.2

⁷⁷ IER Bulletin, 1999

⁷⁸ Nottinghamshire Research Observatory, 2002, p.79

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

Piloted in September 1999 until July 2002, the EMA's were a means-tested allowance brought about to encourage more 16-19 year olds from low income families to participate in full-time, post-compulsory education and improve their attainment levels.⁷⁹

Dads and Sons website - www.dfes.gov.uk/dadsandsons

A national project aimed at encouraging fathers to become more involved in their son's education and development. The site offers practical advice for fathers for example, on how to help with homework, careers and how to talk about bullying. It is also a signpost to other social aspects of the father/son relationship. Although the website is aimed at fathers with sons aged 11-14, it illustrates an attempt to positively involve parents in their children's lives to help challenge the issues that could lead to disaffection their later teens. The site also provides information for fathers on their own educational development.

4.4 Conclusions

Many of the reviewed texts and programme examples have illustrated key methods of best practice to obtain successful programmes. They are listed below.

- Although it cannot be controlled, word of mouth is a useful tool by which promotion of projects can be achieved.
- Breaking down the barriers placed around young men by their perceptions of masculinity requires a thick skin, patience and an understanding of why this challenging behaviour is being exhibited.
- They need to feel they have support e.g. if they don't turn up, go and find them, call them, write to them.
- Flexibility is required. The young men are often disengaged from formal practices such as ground rules and training structures, ways have to be found round this.
- Trust is essential for them to continue with any programme they have been recruited to.
- Allow the young men to be involved in organising their own learning activities.
- Retention on a programme is very clearly linked to motivation, often by daily reinforcements.
- Many projects identified are open to young women also, to adhere to equal opportunities policy upheld by the organisations involved.

⁷⁹ Stafford et al, 1999, p.51

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