RESEARCH

Post-16 Transitions: a Longitudinal Study of Young People with Special Educational Needs (Wave Three)

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Institute for Employment Studies

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Research Report RR655

Research Report
No 655

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ISBN 1 84478 519 X

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A Longitudinal Study of Young People with Special Educational Needs: Wave Three

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Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank the many young people, parents and carers who took part in the survey, and all those participating in the case studies without whom this research would not have been possible. Thanks are also due to other members of the research team, in particular, Karen Akroyd, Alice Sinclair and Rebecca Willison who were responsible for the case studies, Jane Stevens and her team from MORI, and staff at the Department for Education and Skills who have steered this project.

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Executive Summary

Introduction

This is the third wave of longitudinal research with young people with special educational needs (SEN) to record and track their progress as they move from compulsory schooling to early adulthood. The first wave of research with young people with SEN, and their parents and carers, was undertaken in 2000/2001 when they were in curriculum Year 11. The second wave of research went back to these people in the 2002/2003 academic year. This third wave caught up with the young people again in 2003/2004 when they were aged 19 or 20, and has sought to update the earlier studies and to map their activities and achievements over time.

Aims and objectives of the study

The overall aims of the research have been to:

- Provide a comprehensive overview of experiences, achievements and attitudes of young people with SEN during post-16 transitions and beyond.
- Identify strengths, weaknesses and barriers to further education, higher education, training, employment and independent living.

This research is based on:

- a literature review update
- a follow-on quantitative survey with young people, and
- a series of 16 in-depth qualitative case studies with young people, their parents and carers, and others involved in the post-16 transition process, such as Connexions advisers, tutors, and social workers.

The sample

Interviews were carried out with 1,020 young people at Wave Three, three years after they had completed compulsory schooling. Most young people interviewed as part of Wave Three were White (91 per cent), and approximately two-thirds of the sample were young men. The majority of young people responding to the survey had difficulties relating mainly to cognition and learning (55 per cent). Around one-fifth of young people had communication and interaction difficulties, and a similar proportion presented behavioural, emotional or social development needs. Just over one in 20 young people in the survey had sensory and/or physical disabilities. Whilst 47 per cent of the sample overall had a statement of SEN at school, young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were most likely to have a statement, whereas young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs were the least likely to do so. Seventy-six per cent of the sample had attended a mainstream school. Forty per cent of young people responding to the Wave Three survey described themselves as having a disability. This proportion was much higher for young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities (70 per cent of whom said they were disabled) than for young people with behavioural, emotional or social development needs. Just 31 per cent of these young people reported any sort of disability.

Key findings

Wave Three activity

- Half of all the young people taking part in Wave Three were in employment when they were surveyed. Young men were more likely to be in work at Wave Three than young women.
- Young people who presented behavioural, emotional or social development needs at school were most likely to be in employment or training at Wave Three.
- Most young people who were in employment at Wave Three were in jobs without training (69 per cent).
- Just under a quarter (24 per cent) of all young people were in education at the time of the Wave Three survey. Young women were more likely to be in education than young men.
- Young people who had statements of SEN whilst in school were more likely to have continued in education to Wave Three as were young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities.
- There is some evidence of progression for young people in education since Wave Two. One-fifth of all young people who were in education at Wave Three were studying at university.

Just over half of all young people who were in education at both survey points were now studying at a higher level.

- Over a quarter (27 per cent) of those taking part in Wave Three were not in education, employment or training (NEET) when they were surveyed. Young men and women were more or less equally likely to be NEET at Wave Three.
- Young people with cognition and learning difficulties were most likely to be NEET at Wave Three.
- There is some evidence of churning amongst young people in education, employment and amongst those who are NEET.

Support received

- Most young people have had some sort of contact with professional services since Wave Two, the majority of which have been medical.
- Almost a quarter of all young people had come into contact with a Jobcentre Plus adviser since they were last surveyed.
- Only one-fifth of all young people taking part in Wave Three could recall seeing a Connexions Personal Adviser or a careers service adviser since they were last surveyed.
- Almost a quarter of all young people taking part in Wave Three said that they had not had any contact with any professional support services over the previous 18 months, *ie* since the time of the Wave Two survey.
- Where they could recall receiving support, most young people were satisfied with the service they had received.
- In terms of usefulness, most young people taking part in Wave Three thought that the professional support they had received since leaving school was as useful, if not better or much better, as the support they had received when they were at school.
- However, more than one in ten young people reported that the professional support they had received since leaving school was worse or much worse than the support they had received at school (14 per cent).
- Most young people thought that everyone who had helped and supported them since leaving school, including professional support services, agencies and family and friends had worked well together (73 per cent).
- Parents continue to act as major sources of support for the young people taking part in the Wave Three survey and the case studies.
- Most young people reported that they did not require any additional help or support (64 per cent).

Leisure activities and social life

- Many young people taking part in Wave Three appear to have varied leisure activities. Most young people reported that they watched television, listened to music and spent time with friends. Many reported that they played with video and computer games, and went clubbing and dancing.
- Most young people spent time with friends at weekends and in the evenings. Young people who had attended a special school, and those who had presented communication and interaction difficulties at school were the least likely to do this.
- Evidence from the case studies illustrates that for some young people (and particularly those with more severe needs), their leisure activities and social life are often facilitated by adults, and provided by statutory and voluntary agencies. Whilst this provides a relatively rich social life, it tends to be restricted to other people with difficulties and disabilities, and to some extent, to be dominated by adults.

Autonomy and independence

- Just over half of all young people reported that wages from their employment formed the main source of their income.
- One-fifth of all young people said that Jobseekers Allowance or Incapacity Benefit was their main source of income.
- Sixteen per cent of all young people taking part at Wave Three received Disability Living Allowance.
- Most young people (86 per cent) received their income directly, *ie* it was paid straight to them and most reported that they managed their own money on a day-to-day basis. Parents and carers were the most likely recipients and holders of income for those young people who did not receive their income directly.
- The majority of young people surveyed at Wave Three continued to live with their parents or carers (82 per cent).
- More young people are now living independently than at the time of the Wave Two survey. At Wave Three, one in ten young people reported that they now lived with a partner, with friends or alone.
- Most young people stated that they were happy with their current living arrangements, although many hoped and expected to be living independently in two years time.
- The case studies presented a mixed picture of independent living. Some young people had already achieved or were on the brink of achieving a high level of independent living. For a couple of young people, independent living was out of the question because of the high level of support they required and would continue to require. The main issue for these young

people was when and how far this support could be provided independently of their families. The third group of young people was those who had a reasonable prospect of independent living but who would require further support and intervention to help them to do so. These young people were, however, the exact people who tended not to trigger high levels of support and whose needs remained largely invisible.

Past and future

- On reflection, most young people reported that the course, jobs or training that they had undertaken since Year 11 had generally worked out for them. Young people who had behavioural, emotional and social development difficulties whilst at school were the least likely to agree that this was the case.
- Most young people were hopeful about the future (89 per cent). However, young people who considered themselves to be disabled were less likely to be optimistic about the future than young people who were not disabled.
- Less than one in three young people thought they had all the qualifications they needed for the job or course they wanted to do and three-quarters of all young people taking part in the Wave Three survey wanted to do more education or training in the future.
- Just over one in ten young people said that they did not know how to find out about future work, education or training opportunities.

Conclusions

The main conclusions coming from this third wave of research with young people with SEN are:

- Four sets of factors seem important in determining the outcomes of the transition process: young people's capacities and characteristics; the purposefulness of familial support; the nature and effectiveness of local support systems; and, the range of local opportunities available to young people, such as college courses, employment and training options. Not surprisingly, outcomes are diverse and unpredictable given the multiple interactions that may occur between these factors.
- There is some indication that the various agencies and support systems involved with young people operate on very different models of transition. One is a developmental model which works with the individual over time to plan and facilitate progression whilst offering support and guidance throughout the process. The second model operates more as a 'booster' and relies more heavily on the young person navigating their

own way through the complexities of the education system and the labour market. In so doing, this model is more reactive, providing advice and guidance when requested or when obvious difficulties arise.

- Many young people with difficulties and disabilities are potentially supported by a multiplicity of systems, *eg* FE colleges, Jobcentre Plus offices and the Connexions Service, and individually, each of these systems may be very effective. However, there is some variation in the presence and strength of the support these services provide. More dependent young people are likely to fall within the purview of one or other system and will be well supported, particularly if they have involved, well-informed and assertive parents. However, for a number of young people taking part in the research, particularly those who are more capable of making their own way, the systems in place to support their transitions have not operated as well as they could.
- Many young people have made little or no progress whilst others lacked adequate support or have received uncoordinated support. Many young people have had to battle to get the support they need. It appears that the help and support that is available to young people often operates along the lines of the booster model, with clear evidence of unmet need for this type of support. Moreover, there is no clear or systematic evidence of any individual, organisation or agency having overall responsibility for assisting young people to identify and source appropriate options, nor to co-ordinate service delivery. There are many opportunities for young people to fall down the cracks between services and there is a very real risk that some young people will wander beyond the reach of support.

1. Introduction

This report presents the findings from the third wave of research with young people who were classified as having special educational needs (SEN) whilst in compulsory schooling, to record and track their progress as they move into early adulthood. The study, which has been commissioned by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), has been carried out by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES), Professor Alan Dyson from the University of Manchester and MORI. This third survey builds on two earlier surveys, the first undertaken by the Centre for Formative Assessment Studies at the University of Manchester in 2000/2001, and the second undertaken by IES, Professor Dyson and MORI in 2003/2004.

1.1 Aims and objectives

The overall aims of the research have been to:

- Provide a comprehensive overview of experiences, achievements and attitudes of young people with SEN during post-16 transitions and beyond.
- Identify strengths, weaknesses and barriers to further education, higher education, training, employment and independent living.

The key objectives for this third wave of research were to:

- Identify outcomes and activities for young people as they continue to make their post-16 transitions from school.
- Identify the support mechanisms available to young people with SEN as they begin early adult life, and establish the sources of this support (*eg* support in work, education, training, careers advice/Connexions, health and community services *etc.*).
- Identify any intermediate outcomes from their post-16 activities. These may include hard outcomes, *eg* qualifications,

job moves *etc.*, and soft outcomes, *eg* improved motivation, confidence, independence *etc.*[1]

- Identify current living arrangements.
- Identify the extent of inclusion into mainstream society.
- Review the expectations and aspirations of young people with SEN to ascertain if they have been met.

1.2 Methodology

This study is based on:

- a literature review update
- a follow-on quantitative survey with young people, and
- a series of 16 in-depth qualitative case studies with young people, their parents and carers and others involved in the post-16 transition process, such as Connexions advisers, tutors and social workers.

The literature review was intended to update the earlier review and to provide the policy context for this study.

1.2.1 Wave Three survey

In Wave One of the research, carried out in 2000/2001, interviews were conducted with 2,313 young people and 2,365 parent/carers. These young people were then in Year 11 of compulsory school and were aged 15 and 16. During the Wave Two survey, follow-up interviews were undertaken in 2003/2004 with 1,876 young people, then aged 18 and 19, and 1,688 parent/carers. Wave Three focussed solely on young people and achieved 1,020 interviews during October to December 2004, from an issued sample of 1,552 (giving an adjusted response rate of 76 per cent). The young people included in Wave Three were aged 19 and 20 at the time they were surveyed. A full technical appendix is supplied (Appendix 1).

Weighting

All data have been weighted to correct for sample bias and response bias, using cell-based weighting. All percentage figures in this report relate to weighted data, whilst all total figures (N) are unweighted, unless otherwise stated.

[1] Dewson *et al.*, *Measuring Soft Outcomes and Distance Travelled: A Review of Current Practice*, 2000, DfES Research Report RR219

1.2.2 The case studies

As in Wave Two of this study, the data from the main survey were supplemented by more detailed case studies of 16 young people. These case studies comprised, so far as possible, extended interviews with the young person, their parents/carers, the person responsible for their current activity (*eg* employer, supervisor, college tutor) and any other person identified by these respondents as prominent in the transition process (*eg* Connexions Personal Adviser, Disability Employment Adviser, voluntary agency worker). In all cases, the young person had indicated their willingness to participate in the case study work and their permission was sought before interviewing other respondents. Where possible, young people and their parents/carers were interviewed separately. However, this was not possible where the young person relied on their parents/carers for communication and in some cases respondents wished to be interviewed together.

So far as possible, the sample of young people was the same as in Wave Two, so that it was possible to trace the transition process over a sustained period of time. The Wave Two sample was constructed so as to reflect different school backgrounds (*ie* special or mainstream school, with and without statements) and a range of types and levels of special educational needs, as well as gender and ethnic differences. However, the sample was weighted towards young people who might reasonably be expected to progress towards employment and independent living but whose progression might call for significant and effective intervention from statutory and voluntary agencies. Typically, these young people had moderate levels of learning and/or behavioural difficulties. Where Wave Two respondents were unwilling to take part, they were replaced by young people with similar characteristics or, where this was not possible, by young people who matched the criteria on which the Wave Two sample had been constructed.

It follows, that the case study sample is not fully representative of the main survey sample or of the population of young people with special educational needs from which that larger sample was drawn. By and large, young people who had relatively low levels of need at school or had 'simple' physical and sensory impairments were excluded. As a result, the case studies tend to focus on more problematic cases and may present a slightly gloomier picture than the main survey. Moreover, the cases were drawn from young people who could be accessed relatively easily from the research team's bases in the South East and North East of England. In practice, this focus gave a wide range of geographical and labour market contexts and there is no reason to believe that this biases the findings to any significant extent. However, there was no attempt to represent the full range of contexts in the sample and it seems likely that there may be issues in some very

particular contexts (for instance, in relatively remote rural areas) which are not evident in our data .

Interviews sought to amplify the information collected in the main survey. Interviewees were asked to talk about the young person's activities since the Wave Two fieldwork, the reasons for any changes and decisions that had been made, the outcomes (in terms of accreditation, skills acquired and personal development) of these activities, the sort of support that had been provided, and plans and expectations for the future. Where young people had participated in the Wave Two case studies, interviews picked up the story from the time of our previous visit. Where young people were newly recruited at Wave Three, interviews traced the transition process from the final year of statutory schooling.

The principal characteristics of the sample are set out in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Characteristics of the case study sample

Name (All names have been changed)	Gender	Ethnicity	Reported principal SEN	Current main activity	Living arrangements	Case Study in Wave Two?
Matthew	M	White British	Dyslexia & Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties	Unemployed	Family home	Y
Toby	M	White British	Moderate Learning Difficulties (and health problems)	Employed	Shared flat	N
Marcus	M	White British	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties	Attends Adult Centre	Family home	Y
Tania	F	White British	Moderate/Severe Learning difficulties	Attends College	Family home	N
Andrea	F	White British	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties /Autism	Unemployed	Family home	Y
Stuart	M	White British	Visual Impairment	Attends College	Residential college	Y
Devesh	M	Indian	Learning Difficulties	Unemployed	Family home	Y
Ben	M	White British	Moderate Learning Difficulties /Dyslexia	Employed	Family home	N
Peter	M	White British	Moderate Learning Difficulties	In Training	Family home	Y
Paul	M	White British	Dyslexia/Attention Deficit Disorder	Employed	Family home	N
Emma	F	White British	Medical, Learning and Social-emotional Difficulties	Unemployed	Family home	Y
Rosie	F	White British	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Unemployed	Living with boyfriend's family	N
Gareth	M	White British	Moderate/Severe Learning Difficulties	Attends College	Family Home	Y
Li	M	Chinese	Moderate Learning Difficulties	Attends College	Family home	Y

Table 1.1: Continued

Name (All names have been changed)	Gender	Ethnicity	Reported principal SEN	Current main activity	Living arrangements	Case Study in Wave Two?
Charlotte	F	White British	Moderate/Severe learning difficulties	Attends College	Family home	N
Sophie	F	White British	Severe Learning Difficulties	Attends College	Family home	Y

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

1.3 Report structure

This report is structured as follows:

- Chapter 2 explores the characteristics of young people taking part in the Wave Three survey, including their demographic characteristics, SEN type, school attended and disability status.
- Chapter 3 presents an overview of the current policy context for young people with SEN.
- Chapter 4 looks at young people's current activities and examines the evidence for any churning over time.
- Chapter 5 examines the support that young people have received since they were last surveyed, and assesses the role of parents, carers, friends and peers.
- Chapter 6 goes on to assess the social lives of young people and their use of leisure time.
- Chapter 7 reports on issues of independence, autonomy and aspirations for the future amongst this group of young people.

2. Characteristics of Young People

This chapter briefly describes the characteristics of the young people who participated in the Wave Three survey, in terms of their demographics, the SEN type at school, whether they received a statement at school, and the type of school they attended. It also looks at whether the young people consider themselves to be disabled, and their awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and their rights under it.

2.1 Demographic and household characteristics

Two-thirds of the young people taking part in the survey were male and one-third were female. In terms of ethnicity, the majority of respondents were White (91 per cent), whilst the remainder came from non-White ethnic groups (Table 2.1).

2.2 Type of special educational need(s) in Year 11

Looking at the main type of special education need (SEN type) that these young people were presenting in Year 11 (according to their parents'/carers' classification at Wave Two), just over half of all young people taking part in the Wave Three survey had cognition and learning difficulties at school. Around one-fifth each had communication and interaction difficulties, or

Table 2.1: Gender and ethnicity of young people

Gender	**N**	**%**
Male	675	66
Female	344	34
Total	1,019	100
Ethnicity		
White	938	91
Non-White	81	9
Total	1,019	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2004

behaviour, emotional and social development difficulties, and six per cent had sensory and physical difficulties (Table 2.2).

Just under half (47 per cent) had received a statement of special educational needs when they were at school (Table 2.3). Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were the most likely to have received a statement when at school (Table 2.4).

Slightly over three-quarters of the young people in the Wave Three survey had attended a mainstream school and just under one-quarter had attended a special school (Table 2.5). Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities and those with communication and interaction difficulties were the most likely to have attended a special school (Table 2.6).

Table 2.2: Main SEN difficulty at school

	N	%
Cognition and learning	532	55
Communication and interaction	203	21
Behaviour, emotional and social development	145	19
Sensory and/or physical	73	6
Total	953	100

Base: All young people for whom Year 11 SEN is known
Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2004

Table 2.3: Statement of special educational needs at Year 11

	N	%
Statement	681	47
No statement	299	53
Total	980	100

Base: All young people for whom Year 11 statementing information is known
Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2003/2003; Pupil Information Form, 2004

Table 2.4: Main SEN difficulty at school, by incidence of a statement at Year 11

	Total (N)	Statement (%)	No statement (%)	Total (%)
Communication and interaction	198	54	46	100
Cognition and learning	520	50	50	100
Sensory and/or physical	72	71	29	100
Behaviour, emotional and social development	138	36	64	100
Total	928	49	51	100

Base: All young people for whom Year 11 SEN and statementing information is known
Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2003/2004; Pupil Information Form, 2003

Table 2.5: Type of school attended

	N	%
Special	343	24
Mainstream	676	76
Total	1,019	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2004

Table 2.6: Main SEN difficulty at school, by Year 11 school type

	Special		Mainstream		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Communication and interaction	90	34	113	66	203	21
Cognition and learning	163	23	369	77	532	55
Sensory and/or physical	32	40	41	60	73	6
Behaviour, emotional and social behaviour	48	22	97	78	145	19
Total	333	26	620	74	953	100

Base: All young people for whom Year 11 SEN is known

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2004

2.3 Disability status

Given that young people taking part in this third wave of research were now aged 19 or over, it was important to ascertain how many considered themselves to have a disability. Interestingly, 40 per cent of young people responding at Wave Three felt that they had a disability, whilst the remaining respondents said they did not (56 per cent) or did not know (four per cent of all young people responding at Wave Three). There were few differences in the incidence of reported disability by gender or ethnicity.

Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were the most likely of all (Year 11) SEN types to report that they had a disability (70 per cent of these young people reported this was the case). Forty-nine per cent of young people with communication and interaction difficulties and 39 per cent of those with cognition and learning difficulties said they were disabled. Young people with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties were the least likely to report that they had a disability with just 31 per cent saying this was so (Table 2.7).

Unsurprisingly, there are stark differences in the incidence of reported disability when type of school attended is taken into account (Table 2.8). Almost three-quarters of those attending a special school said they had a disability, compared to less than

Table 2.7: Self-reported disability, by Year 11 SEN type

		Disabled		
	Total	Yes	No	Don't know
SEN type	N	%	%	%
Cognition and learning	532	39	57	4
Communication and interaction	203	49	46	5
Behaviour, emotional and social development	145	31	68	1
Sensory and/or physical	73	70	30	0

Base: All young people for whom Year 11 SEN is known

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2004

one-third of those attending a mainstream school. Table 2.9 shows the young people's main disability by their SEN type in Year 11.

Table 2.8: Self-reported disability status, by Year 11 school type

	Special		Mainstream	
	N	%	N	%
Disabled	254	73	233	30
Not disabled	67	21	425	68
Don't know	22	6	18	3
Total	343	100	676	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2004

Table 2.9: Main disability, by Year 11 SEN type

	All		Cognition and learning	Communication and interaction	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Sensory and/or physical
Disability	**N**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**	**%**
Severe or specific learning difficulties	201	41	45	45	41	13
Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism)	24	4	3	2	2	20
Difficulty in hearing	19	4	1	9	1	5
Epilepsy	19	4	2	4	5	3
A speech impediment	14	3	1	6	3	5
Difficulty in seeing	13	3	2	1	1	13
Depression, bad nerves or anxiety	11	3	2	5	4	2
Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism)	10	2	0	1	7	9
Problems or disabilities (including arthritis or rheumatism)	7	2	1	3	0	0
Chest or breathing problems, asthma, bronchitis	7	2	3	0	0	2
Mental illness or phobia, panics or other nervous disorders	7	1	2	1	2	2
Progressive illness (*eg* multiple sclerosis, symptomatic HI)	5	1	1	1	0	2
Severe disfigurements, skin condition, allergies	3	1	0	2	0	0
Heart, blood pressure or blood circulation problems	3	0	0	0	2	2
Stomach, liver, kidney or digestive problems	3	0	0	1	0	1
Diabetes	3	1	0	1	3	0
Other health problems or disabilities	138	29	35	19	30	21
Total (N)	487	100	241	110	61	54

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI 2004

Awareness of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) was not particularly high, with just under half of all young people who reported that they were disabled (*ie* 47 per cent of those who considered themselves to be disabled) saying that they had heard of the Act. Forty-eight per cent of those who considered themselves to have a disability said they had not heard of the DDA, and five per cent did not know (Table 2.10). There were no significant differences in awareness of the DDA by gender or ethnicity. Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities seem to be more aware of the DDA than young people with other types of SEN. Young people with behavioural, emotional and/or social development difficulties were the least likely to be aware of the DDA.

Those who had heard of the DDA were asked about their levels of awareness of their rights under this piece of legislation (Figure 2.1). Just over a quarter (28 per cent) said they were very much aware, with a further 37 per cent reporting that they were a little

Table 2.10: Awareness of the DDA, by Year 11 SEN type

	All		Cognition and learning		Communication and interaction		Behaviour, emotional and social development		Sensory and/ or physical	
Awareness of the DDA	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Yes	220	47	105	44	59	53	22	37	34	63
No	219	48	124	52	45	43	33	55	17	31
Don't know	27	5	12	4	6	4	6	8	3	6
Total	466	100	241	100	110	100	61	100	54	100

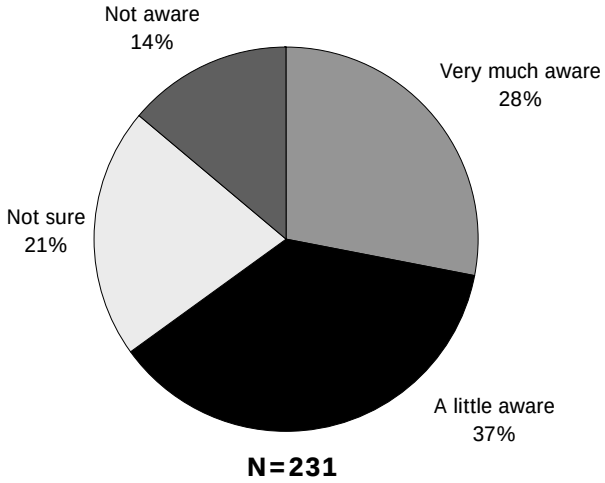
Base: All respondents for whom Year 11 SEN is known and who have a self-reported disability

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2004

aware. The remainder were not aware of their rights under the DDA (14 per cent) or were not sure (21 per cent).

Figure 2.1: Level of awareness of rights under the DDA



Base: All respondents who had heard of the DDA

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source IES/MORI, 2004

3. Policy Context

3.1 A changing picture

A thorough review of the literature on special educational needs, disability and transition was undertaken for the report of Wave One of this study (Polat *et al*., 2001) and this was briefly updated for the Wave Two report (Dewson *et al*., 2004). The purpose of this review is, in part, to offer a further update of policy developments and of the research literature. However, what we have chosen to highlight is selected in the light of another aim of this review. This study is longitudinal and tracks young people over a considerable period of time, from late childhood to young adulthood and from school into further education, training and — for some at least — into employment. It seems to us important, therefore, to step back a little from the detail of the most recent developments and to look at the bigger picture of how thinking about transition is itself in transition. In particular, we wish to suggest that, as the young people in our study have gone through schooling and now begun to emerge into the adult world, thinking about three issues that bear directly on their experience has changed considerably. Those three issues are disability, disadvantage and transition.

3.1.1 Changes in the understanding of disability and citizenship

It is worth remembering that the young people in this study began their schooling in the mid-1980s, at a point when the 1981 Education Act — which created the modern framework for special needs education — was still bedding down, when 'inclusion' was a term that had not yet come into widespread use and when special school placement remained the standard form of provision for children with moderate to high levels of special educational needs in many parts of the country. In the intervening 20 years, however, there has been a significant shift in the way that the education system and public policy more generally understand and respond to disability.

Those years have seen a shift — however partial and incomplete — from what some disability scholars have called a 'personal tragedy' to a 'public issue' view of disability (Barton & Oliver, 1992). Put simply, disability has been increasingly seen as caused

by the exclusive and unresponsive social arrangements in which people with physical, sensory or cognitive impairments find themselves, rather than by those impairments themselves. For young people in the process of transition to adulthood, for instance, this 'disablement' (Oliver, 1990) arises not because of what they can and cannot do, but because of limitations in employment opportunities, in financial and personal support for young people and their families, in accessible leisure and social opportunities, in support for independent living and so on. Disability is thus very much a 'public issue' because the social arrangements which impose these limitations could, in principle, be changed by social action and, in particular, by changes in national legislation and policy.

At one time in the not-too-distant past, this view of disability would have been seen as radical and challenging. There are clear signs, however, that it now informs at least some important aspects of mainstream public policy. Two examples illustrate this point. One is the renewed impetus towards inclusive education which began in 1997 (see, DfEE, 1997; 1998), and has more recently been reaffirmed in the Government's special educational needs (SEN) strategy document, *Removing Barriers to Achievement* (DfES, 2004). Although the arguments for and motivations surrounding this public commitment to inclusion are complex, the debt to a 'public issue' view of disability is clear. For instance, the new strategy document clearly locates the reasons for children's difficulties in schooling in the educational arrangements that are made for them as much as in their own characteristics:

> *'Difficulties in learning often arise from an unsuitable environment — inappropriate grouping of pupils, inflexible teaching styles, or inaccessible curriculum materials — as much as from individual children's physical, sensory or cognitive impairments. …We are committed to removing the barriers to learning that many children encounter in school.'* (DfES, 2004:2.1-2.2)

On such a view, of course, the key task of the education system is not to remediate children's difficulties, but to remove the barriers that are created by these inappropriate arrangements.

The second example takes the form of the disability discrimination legislation that was introduced in 1995 and was extended by the SEN and Disability Act 2001. This legislation is based, of course, on an assumption that disabled people have the same rights and entitlements as all other citizens. Treating people less favourably because of their disability, therefore, constitutes a form of discrimination, in precisely the same way as treating people less favourably on the grounds of race or gender is now seen as discriminatory. Indeed, the equivalence of disability discrimination with other forms of discrimination has recently been underlined by the proposal to establish a Commission for Equality and Human Rights which would consolidate the work of the Disability Rights Commission with that of the Commission for

Racial Equality and the Equal Opportunities Commission under the aegis of a single body (DTI, 2004).

In both of these examples, the focus has moved sharply from the ways in which people's characteristics — in this case, their impairments — limit their ability to participate fully in social benefits and processes to the ways in which social arrangements act as barriers. Both also show how policy-makers have become proactive in changing those arrangements on the basis of some notion of rights and entitlements.

3.1.2 Changes in the understanding of disadvantage and equality

In recent years, there have also been changes in the way in which notions of disadvantage and equality have been understood. These changes are particularly important for the young people in this study. This is, in part, because disabled young people are likely to experience disadvantage. However, it is also because many children who are identified as having special educational needs experience a range of socio-economic disadvantages, regardless of whether they are identified as disabled or not (see, for instance, DfES, 2005, Dyson *et al*., 2004).

In this context, it is significant that the notion of 'social inclusion / exclusion' has played a major part in shaping government policy. The debates around this notion are complex, but the classic definition, used by government since 1997 and recently restated, is that:

> '*Social exclusion is what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime, poor health and family breakdown.*' (Social Exclusion Unit, 2004a): 2)

The concept of social inclusion / exclusion defined in this way marks a change from uni-dimensional explanations of disadvantage to multi-dimensional explanations. The emphasis shifts from underlying structural causes of disadvantage (such as poverty) to a series of more specific problems. Social exclusion, the argument goes, can result from many causes and these causes can, themselves, interact. The corollary, of course, is that if the specific problems which face different social groups can be overcome, the result is social *in*clusion. Radical — and arguably unattainable — aims, such as the creation of an 'equal' society are abandoned, in favour of the more modest — and arguably more realistic — aim of enabling all citizens to participate in a series of mainstream social processes and goods (see, for instance, Giddens, 1998: 102ff).

With this in mind, policy has been directed towards addressing the multiple potential causes of social exclusion in a co-ordinated

manner. A recent Social Exclusion Unit progress report, for instance, talks in terms of government policy having developed:

> *'…a completely **new approach**, emphasising prevention and joined-up working, and partnerships with a wide range of organisations, including a much stronger voice for local communities. It focused particularly on supporting disadvantaged areas where social problems are concentrated, and it put particular effort into tackling some of the most severe and intractable causes and symptoms of social exclusion, such as teenage pregnancy and rough sleeping.'* (Social Exclusion Unit 2004b: 2; emphases in original)

Although this report stresses particularly the spatial dimension of social exclusion — that is, the tendency for problems to interact in particular locations — it is clear that exclusion can equally result from characteristics such as disability and low educational attainment. Moreover, the transition from school to adulthood is identified as a time of particular vulnerability (Social Exclusion Unit 2004b: 15-16).

The young people in this study, therefore, are likely to be the focus of a good deal of intervention directed at the sort of preventive, joined-up and partnership approaches which are deemed necessary to address the multiple causes of exclusion. Perhaps the most obvious example of this in this study is the presence of the Connexions Service, intended (at least in some aspects of its work), as an intensive support service for vulnerable young people, guiding them around the pitfalls of transition and brokering their access to a range of other services. If interventions such as Connexions are successful, of course, the implication is that these young people will have access to employment (or at least purposeful occupation), to financial independence, to leisure and social activities and so on. They have the potential, in other words, regardless of their difficulties and disabilities, to become 'socially included'.

3.1.3 Changes in the understanding of youth transitions

The establishment of the Connexions Service is also an indication of the third change that has informed thinking and policy in recent years. This is a change in the nature of youth transitions and in the way those transitions are understood. When the young people in this study were born some 20 years ago, it was still just possible to think in terms of relatively brief periods of transition along clearly-defined and separate pathways leading young people to employment, training or further and higher education. In the intervening years, however, it is clear that transitions have become more protracted and risky and that they constitute times of particular vulnerability for many young people (see, for instance, Furlong *et al*., 2003, Johnston *et al*., 2000). Reviewing a recent major ESRC-funded research programme into youth

transitions, Catan describes how the understanding of this new situation became apparent in the 1980s and 1990s:

> *'There was growing awareness among researchers and policy makers that young people were spending ever-longer periods in a transitional state — in further and higher education, in a plethora of training schemes and that this had important consequences for the development of post-16 education and training. It also affected the material and financial support needed by young adults during this extended period of dependency, since the prospect of earning a sufficient income to support independent living was receding ever further into their twenties. There was, and still is, concern about the intractable core of young people who leave school with few or no qualifications, moving between part-time or sporadic, low paid, unskilled work, out of work, and not in substantive education or training.'* (Catan, 2003: 1)

In this context, much attention has been focused on understanding how far young people's pathways are shaped by their own choices and how far they are determined by the wider socio-economic contexts within which they live. There is no simple answer to this question, but the emerging consensus seems to be in terms of the importance both of choice and of the constraints which young people experience in choosing. In the new, more open landscape, young people do indeed have opportunities to shape their trajectories in ways that a more stable situation historically made difficult. However, identifying, making and following through on choices requires young people to have access to considerable personal and social resources, particularly in a context where making the 'wrong' choice carries significant risk. For young people who lack such resources, the process is particularly risky (see, for instance, Ball *et al*., 2000, Furlong *et al*., 2003, Lehmann, 2004). This, of course, has significant implications for young people such as those in this study, who may be variously characterised by low educational attainment, impairment, social and emotional difficulties, and/or social and family disadvantage — and who may, therefore, have relatively few resources to bring to bear on managing their own transitions.

3.2 Recent policy interventions and young people with disabilities and difficulties

The three changes we have outlined interact in ways which have major implications for young people such as those in this study. The image of an open landscape full of pitfalls is, perhaps, a useful one for understanding their situation. The landscape is more open than has historically been the case because they have new opportunities — to shape their futures, to participate as full citizens and to be 'included' in all that mainstream society has to offer. Moreover, they are supported in accessing these opportunities by government policy which aims to combat the discrimination to which they are subject, overcome the barriers they experience and guide them through the complexities of the

transition process. On the other hand, the landscape is full of pitfalls precisely because the old certainties have gone and vulnerable young people are required to make their way in a more demanding and competitive situation.

In this situation, some young people, despite having been regarded as having special educational needs at school, will have considerable personal, peer and family resources on which to draw and will navigate their way successfully through the transition to adulthood. There are ways in which support systems can be strengthened without intervention from central government or other public bodies (see, for instance, Bethell & Harrison, 2003). However, there are many others who cannot draw on such resources and are thus particularly vulnerable (Jones, 2002). For them, the quality of support (in its widest sense) that can be marshalled more formally through public policy initiatives is likely to prove crucial.

There have undoubtedly been very significant policy developments in this field in recent years. The formulation of the learning disabilities strategy (DoH, 2001), the establishment of the Connexions Service (DfEE, 2000), the development of transition planning processes in the revised SEN Code of Practice (DfES, 2001) are cases in point. However, the Social Exclusion Unit, in a recent report on transitions for vulnerable young people (Social Exclusion Unit, 2005), is typical of many commentators in wondering whether such developments have, as yet, achieved a fully effective transition-support system. There are, the report suggests, at least three areas where more development is needed: a move away from age-limited towards vertically-integrated services which offer consistent support for as long as it is needed; the development of more holistic services resting on strong personal relationships between young people and their advisers; and the development of policy interventions which are based on a clearer understanding of how young people actually think and behave.

These issues are reflected in the various evaluations of the Connexions Service which are now becoming available (see, for instance, Brunwin *et al*., 2004, Coles *et al*., 2004, Hoggarth & Smith, 2004, Ofsted, 2002, Rodger & Cowen, 2005). In principle, Connexions should play a key role in guiding vulnerable young people through the complexities of transition. Moreover, there is good evidence that in some cases, it achieves precisely this. By and large, young people are aware of, and reasonably satisfied with, Connexions and there are personal advisers who are knowledgeable, skilful and form strong supportive relationships with the young people who use their service.

However, there are also some significant problems reported in the evaluations. It seems that some of the unevenness in Connexions provision which was reported in Wave Two of this study may

well have stemmed from more widespread teething problems in the new Service (Ofsted, 2002). The capacity of the Service to be at the hub of a network of co-ordinated provision for vulnerable young people seems in doubt, given some rather standard problems in relation to inter-agency working and some uncertainty as to the new Service's role (Coles *et al.*, 2004). Moreover, the best practice which characterises the work of some Connexions Partnerships and PAs is by no means universal, nor indeed, can the higher levels of support be accessed by all of those who need them (Hoggarth & Smith, 2004).

The issue here is whether we are looking at the teething problems of a large and complex Service, at some more fundamental design flaws which can nonetheless be remedied in time, or at a fundamental contradiction between the deep-seated disadvantages which some young people experience and the necessarily limited and individualised interventions which Connexions can muster. This last point is epitomised in the fate of the Connexions Card, a discount card given to young people in order to incentivise them to participate in learning and reduce some of the financial barriers to such participation. Despite some considerable successes in raising awareness and usage of the Card, a recent evaluation (Rodger & Cowen, 2005) was able to find little evidence that the project was achieving its ambitious goals in relation to promoting learning.

Moreover, some quasi-longitudinal studies of vulnerable young people's transitions also point to the intractability of the barriers they experience. For instance, Furlong and Cartmel (2004) have revisited young men who experienced lengthy periods of unemployment earlier in the transition process. The findings are not encouraging: young men who were vulnerable in labour market terms early in the transition process continue to be so in their late twenties, with few marketable skills and only a tenuous hold on low-status employment. Likewise, another recent study by a team suggests that the trajectory of disadvantaged young people beyond immediate post-school transitions is by no means always an upwards one (Webster *et al.*, 2004). In other words, the disadvantages they experienced when younger may persist into adulthood and, in some cases, may result in a deterioration in status. In such circumstances, the study suggests, policy initiatives to combat social exclusion are welcome, but may be inadequate to address the deep-seated disadvantages which such young people experience.

3.3 New policy initiatives

In this situation, it is clear that transition continues to be a risky business for the sorts of young people included in this study and that further policy development is likely to be necessary. Indeed, such developments are currently taking place. Since Wave Two

and the present report, for instance, a working group set up by government to review the whole of 14-19 education and training provision reported (the 'Tomlinson Report', Working Group on 14-19 Reform, 2004). Although the working group was concerned with the overall structure of the 14-19 system, rather than specifically with provision for those with difficulties and disabilities, it was much concerned with the particular difficulties of young people who become disengaged from learning whilst still at school. Essentially, therefore, its recommendations were concerned with creating a coherent post-14 system which would engage even those young people with very low attainments, which would offer them flexible pathways (not rigidly differentiated between academic and vocational routes) to meet their needs and interests and which would lead them through a series of interlocking diplomas to the highest level of achievement of which they were capable.

The Government's response took the form of a 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper (DfES, 2005a). It has a number of themes which are relevant to the group of young people who are the subject of this study:

- A new emphasis on the achievement of functional levels (defined as GCSE level) in English and maths, either by the age of 16 or in the post-16 transition period.
- A diversification of learning pathways through the creation of a series of specialised Diplomas relating to different occupational sectors of the economy.
- Increased flexibility in the timing of assessments so that young people attempt qualifications when they are ready rather than at fixed points.
- Increased opportunities for learning at work and outside school.
- An individually customised vocational learning pathway (similar to Entry to Employment) for some young people pre-16.

A parallel set of proposals have emerged from a recent Skills White Paper (DfES, 2005c) focused more on the needs of the adult population and of the economy. These are proposals for: a more flexible and individually-responsive training system; an emphasis on the acquisition of minimum functional skills in literacy and numeracy; better guidance for individuals; and support for vulnerable individuals who might otherwise not access training. In both cases, there is a clear rationale which rests on the importance of education and training for promoting both the social inclusion of individuals and the conditions under which social inclusion on a large scale is likely to be achieved. As the Skills White Paper puts it:

> *'Skills are fundamental to achieving our ambitions, as individuals, for our families and for our communities. They help businesses create wealth, and they help people realise their potential. So they serve the twin goals of social justice and economic success…Those goals are at the heart of the Government's vision for the future. We seek a fair society which ensures that every individual, irrespective of background, ethnicity, gender, faith, disability or postcode, is helped to realise their own capability for learning, and raise their quality of life.'* (DfES, 2005c): 1)

This is, of course, a declaration of faith in the possibilities of what we have described as the more open landscape in which young people now make their transitions, and in the capacity of public policy to create conditions and support systems which enable young people to avoid the pitfalls in that landscape. However, the young people who form the focus of this study present a significant challenge to this essentially optimistic view. If any group is likely to be vulnerable to failed transitions, it is these. As we begin to examine their status and trajectory in young adulthood, therefore, we should perhaps bear three questions in mind:

- Are these young people navigating the transition process smoothly and are there signs that they are now becoming 'socially included'?
- Are the policy supports and interventions adequate to helping them navigate the transition process and, if not, how might they be developed further?
- If some or all of them are failing to make a smooth transition, is this because policy is not yet quite right, or are there more fundamental problems which require a different kind of approach?

4. Wave Three Activity

This chapter explores the activities of young people taking part in the Wave Three survey. It identifies their main activity at the time of this last survey and looks at any changes over time, *ie* since the Wave Two survey, and ascertains the key reasons for any changes. Importantly, the chapter begins to gather some evidence of 'churning' for (some) young people who were classified as having special educational needs whilst in compulsory education.

4.1 Wave Three activity

Table 4.1 below shows that many more young people are in employment at Wave Three than was the case at Wave Two. Fifty per cent of all young people taking part in the Wave Three survey were in employment compared to 28 per cent of young people in the Wave Two survey. Twenty-four per cent of young people were in education at Wave Three, which constitutes a marked decrease on Wave Two when 46 per cent of young people were in education. Twenty-seven per cent of young people were not in education, employment or training (NEET) at the time of the Wave Three survey which represents an increase on Wave Two when 19 per cent of all young people reported that they were NEET.

There are some key differences in activity amongst the young people participating in the survey (Table 4.1 and Figure 4.1), the most notable of which are that:

- Young women are more likely to be in education than young men, whilst young men are more likely to be in work.
- Young people from non-White ethnic groups are more likely to be in education than those from White ethnic groups. Young people from non-White ethnic groups are more likely to be NEET than young White people.
- Young people with (self-reported) disabilities are more likely to be in education than those without disabilities, who are conversely more likely to be in work. However, young people with disabilities are also more likely to be NEET than those without disabilities.

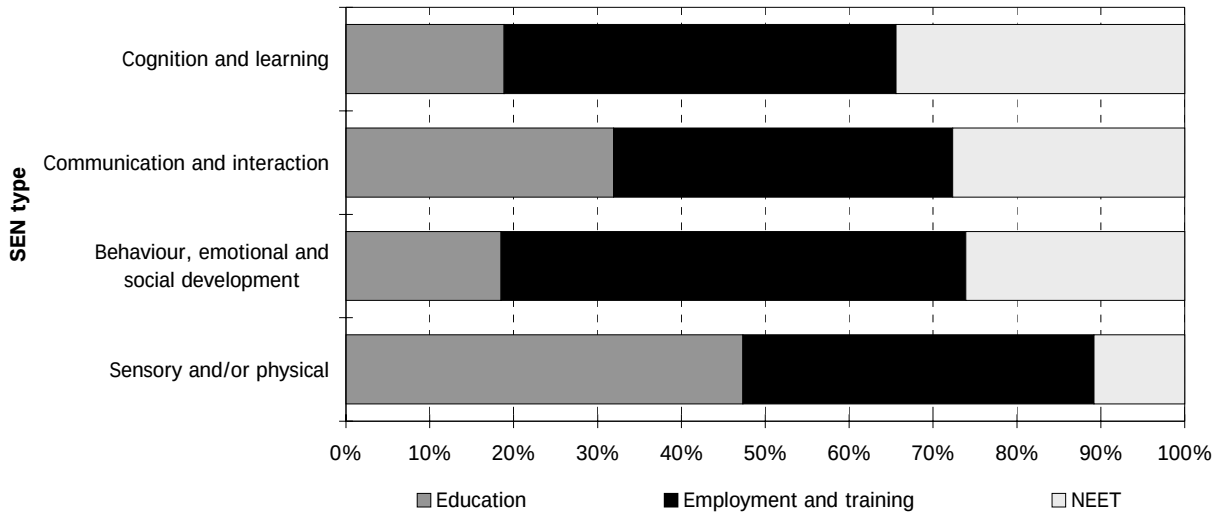
- Young people who had statements of SEN whilst at school were more likely to still be in education compared to those without statements. Young people with statements were also more likely to be NEET than those without statements. This latter group were far more likely to be in work at Wave Three than young people with statements.
- Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities (whilst at school) were most likely to still be in education at Wave Three.
- Young people with behavioural, emotional and/or social development difficulties were most likely to be in employment or training at Wave Three.
- Young people with cognition and learning difficulties were most likely to be NEET at Wave Three.

Table 4.1: Wave 3 activity

	All		Gender		Ethnicity		Disability			Statement	
	N	%	Male	Female	White	Non-White	Yes	No	D/K	Yes	No
Education	281	24	20	30	21	47	34	15	35	32	17
Employment and training	447	50	54	41	53	17	32	63	30	35	63
NEET	291	27	26	29	26	35	34	21	36	33	21
N	*1,019*	*100*	*675*	*344*	*938*	*81*	*487*	*492*	*40*	*681*	*299*

Source: IES/MORI, 2005

Figure 4.1: Activity at Wave 3, by Year 11 SEN type



Base: N=953

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.2: Place of study

	N	%
College of FE or tertiary College	159	55
University	42	19
Specialist college for students with disabilities	44	13
Other college	17	6
Other place of study	12	5
Sixth-form at school	4	1
Private training centre	2	1
Residential training centre	1	0
Total	281	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

4.2 Education

Table 4.2 shows that 86 per cent of those in education are studying full-time and the majority of all young people in education are studying at a college of further education or a tertiary college. Almost one-fifth of all young people who were studying at the time of the Wave Three survey were at university (Table 4.2).

When asked why they had chosen their particular course (Table 4.3), almost half of the young people in education (43 per cent) said that they had chosen their course because they were interested in the subject. Just over one-third (36 per cent) of young people in education reported that they had chosen their courses

Table 4.3 : Reasons for choosing course

	N	%
Interest in the subject	109	43
To train for a particular career	87	36
To gain qualifications or access to other education	67	24
Advised by family or friends	41	12
Didn't know what else to do	12	3
Advice from school/college/teacher	6	2
Follow on from previous course/school	6	2
Don't know	5	2
Necessity/further life skills/general living	3	1
Keep busy/occupied	2	1
Help get work/job	2	1
Advice from professional/Connexions Advisor	2	1
Other	21	6
Total	281	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

with training for a particular career in mind, and just under a quarter said that they wanted to gain qualifications or access to other education. Just over one-tenth had chosen their course on the advice of family or friends. Only three per cent had chosen their course because they did not know what else to do (Table 4.3).

As in Wave Two, it was important to ascertain who or what organisation had been the most helpful to young people when they made their course decisions. For one-fifth of young people in education at Wave Three, the most helpful people when choosing their course had been their parents or carers, but a wide range of people had been consulted by other young people. Of these, the most commonly cited were: people at college (nine per cent) and previous schools (seven per cent), Connexions advisers (six per cent), careers service advisers (five per cent) and friends (five per cent). Fourteen per cent of young people in education at Wave Three said that no-one had helped them when choosing a course (Table 4.4).

The young people who had received help from people when choosing their course were asked about the kinds of help they had

Table 4.4: Most helpful person when choosing current course

	N	%
Parents/carers	61	20
No-one	35	14
Someone at my current college	25	9
Someone at my previous school	23	7
Connexions adviser	21	6
Tutor	16	6
Friends or partner (boyfriend/girlfriend)	12	5
Careers service adviser	15	5
Someone at my previous college	9	4
Teacher	13	4
Someone else in the family	6	3
Other careers adviser, *eg* IAG adviser	7	3
Employers/people I worked with	3	2
Someone at my current school	4	1
Social Worker	5	1
Learning Disability worker	2	1
Head Teacher/Head of School	3	1
Myself/my choice	2	1
Other	7	2
Don't know	8	3
Total	281	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.5: Reasons why they found person/organisation helpful

	N	%
Provided information	157	66
Explained options available	120	53
Helped young person to make decisions	108	44
Planned how young person would be supported	37	15
Advised young person	4	2
Discussed it with young person	3	2
Gave encouragement	2	1
Arranged a college visit	4	1
Other	13	5
Don't know/can't remember	4	1
Total	238	100

Base: All those receiving help from someone

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

received. Two-thirds reported that they had been given information, and more than half said that the people who had helped them choose a course had explained the options available. Nearly half had help with making decisions. Fifteen per cent had help with planning how they would be supported (Table 4.5).

Young people were also asked whether there was any additional information that they required. Forty-two per cent felt that there was not, but just over a quarter said they would have liked more information about the course, and around one-tenth each said they would have liked more information about the support available, about finances, and about transport and travel (Table 4.6).

The majority of the young people had found it very or fairly easy to start their course (67 per cent in total) but 17 per cent (or just

Table 4.6: Additional information required

	N	%
Nothing	124	42
More information about the course	70	28
More information about support available	32	13
More information about finances	33	12
More information about transport/travel to school	30	10
Help with decision-making	24	9
Other help or advice	9	3
Don't know	18	5
Total	281	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.7: Ease of starting course

	N	%
Very easy	62	21
Fairly easy	126	46
Neither easy nor difficult	29	11
Fairly difficult	49	17
Very difficult	7	2
Too early to know	3	1
Don't know	5	1
Total	281	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

under one in five) had found it fairly difficult (Table 4.7). Looking at the factors easing the transition onto the course (Table 4.8), parents and carers, and family support in general were most widely cited. Transport availability, tutors and teachers, friends and partners, and other people's attitudes were also mentioned by relatively large proportions of the young people in education at Wave Three.

4.2.1 Young people at the same school or college

Most young people who were studying at the time of the Wave Three survey had also been in education at Wave Two (92 per cent). Fifty per cent of these young people were in education at their Wave Two school or college whilst the remaining 50 per cent were now studying at a different school or college.

Forty per cent of those who continued at their Wave Two school or college also continued to do the same course. The remaining 60 per cent of these young people, although not changing their school or college, had actually changed their course, and the majority of these students (65 per cent) were now following a course at a higher level. About one-quarter (24 per cent) of those at the same school or college but on a different course, were studying at the same level as they were at Wave Two.

It appears that most young people who have remained at their Wave Two school or college have seen some progression since the last survey, although for some, this seems to be slow.

Table 4.8: Factors easing transition to course

	N	%
Parents/carers	64	32
Family support	41	20
Transport availability	41	17
Tutors	28	17
Teachers	30	14
Friends or partner	25	13
Other people's attitudes	20	11
Being able to get around	12	6
Availability of equipment or facilities	11	6
Health was good	11	6
Someone at previous school	7	5
Having enough money	10	4
Follow on to previous course	5	4
Connexions adviser	9	3
Someone else in the family	5	3
Lecturers	3	3
Learning Disability worker	7	3
Someone at current college	5	3
Was local/nearby	2	2
Employers/people from work	3	2
Knowing students/people at college/Uni	4	2
Other careers adviser, *eg* IAG Adviser	4	2
Social worker/Services	5	2
Careers service adviser	5	2
Other	20	11
Don't know	13	7
Total	188	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

4.2.2 Young people at a different school or college

The main reasons young people gave for changing school or college between the last two survey waves were because:

- they had finished their previous course (56 per cent of those who had changed school or college since Wave Two said this was the case)
- to start a new course (39 per cent), or because
- they had become too old, or gone beyond school leaving age (six per cent).

As with those young people who had remained at their Wave Two school or college but who had changed course, the majority of young people who had changed to a different college were following courses at a higher level (62 per cent of those at a new college were studying a higher level course). However, a quarter of young people who were studying at a new college continued to follow courses at the same level as they had at their previous (Wave Two) school or college.

Again, this is essentially a positive story of progression for most young people in education, although there is evidence of some stagnation, and deferred transitions for a few.

4.2.3 Evidence of churning

A key issue for young people generally, and young people with SEN in particular, is the extent to which they 'churn' or engage in different activities. Whilst this is common to most young people, it is of particular concern if young people are engaged in unrelated activities that are often unplanned and without future prospects.

A small proportion of young people who were in education at Wave Three had been in employment at some time between the last two survey waves (38 young people or 13 per cent of those in education at Wave Three). About one-fifth (or seven) of these young people said that none of these jobs had been full-time, whilst just over half (or 22 young people) said that they had just one full-time job during this period. These jobs may have been holiday positions but they may also indicate that (an albeit small) number of young people are switching activities, and may be an indication of some 'negative' churn.

4.2.4 Case studies — deferred transitions

In Wave Two, we found a number of young people who had effectively deferred the transition process in that they had stayed in their school sixth-form or moved onto a basic skills course in a local FE college. In these cases, there was no expectation that they would move into any form of employment in the near future, either because their difficulties were so severe as to make employment unrealistic or because they were judged to need more time for maturation and basic skills development.

Some of the young people were still being held out of any meaningful contact with the labour market at the time of the Wave Three case study interviews. In some cases, however, the hoped for personal and skills developments seemed to be taking place. Marcus, for instance, is a young man with profound and multiple learning difficulties who, at Wave Two, had transferred to a satellite provision of his special school based on an FE college site. From the start, there were difficulties in the transition process, largely because the college was not used to catering for someone with Marcus' level of difficulty. His mother felt that he was 'more or less left' to fend for himself and was becoming progressively less happy. However, she had managed to find a place

for him at an independent centre that was geared up to meet Marcus' needs.

Again, the transition process had been far from smooth since there were problems in sorting out an appropriate funding package. As in the move to the FE college, the severity of Marcus' difficulties means that standardised packages of provision which may be appropriate for other young people with difficulties and disabilities need to be extended and customised in this case – and this evidently causes difficulties for the systems in which professionals work. However, at the time of the Wave Three interview, an appropriate package was in place, Marcus was being provided with a range of services and his mother was delighted with the result:

'...he's just having a lovely time. He can't talk, but he vocalises and tells us such a tale. It's just his whole persona, it's just happy.'

It seems that at the heart of the transformation is the greater capacity of the new centre to customise and co-ordinate provision around Marcus' needs and wants. This ranges from managing practicalities – for instance, the centre organises wheelchair repairs whereas, previously, Marcus' parents were responsible for this – to devising a developmental programme based on Marcus' interests, and above all, finding a key worker for Marcus who has taken the trouble to get to know him, understand his wishes and act as an advocate on his behalf. As his mother explains:

'He's now got a voice.'

As an added benefit, it seems likely that Marcus will have a place in the centre for as long as he wants it.

Stuart had likewise moved to specialist FE provision (in this case a specialist college for people with visual impairment) on leaving school. Initially, he had been happy with his placement until he decided that he wanted to change his career path from work in retail to work in childcare. He had approached the tutors at his specialist college to see if they could help him find a childcare course. His mother takes up the story:

'I went back to the tutors and said could you facilitate this and they said leave it with us; nothing happened. Then they told me that they weren't running the course, they told me that the mainstream college wasn't running the course because they didn't think Stuart was suitable and I had a tortuous month of trying to get them to be positive to get them on board supporting Stuart in going to mainstream and trying to do childcare. I was working for [a Health] Trust at the time and I saw the short staff advert, they were showing a chap using crutches, I don't know what his disability was, but he was playing basketball with children. So I talked to the tutors about this, the short staff advert was saying whatever your disability, there's a place for you in childcare and you would be supported, etc. So I talked to the tutors again and they said that in reality that might not happen because we won't take people with disabilities because of the health and safety aspect so it's extremely difficult for people with disabilities to actually get employed, so what's the point of the training. They said their culture was that they shouldn't give false hope.'

Eventually, the specialist college did find Stuart a part-time course in childminding, though he found this less than perfect :

'It was totally the wrong course; they sent me on totally the wrong course. It was introductory to child minding practices; I have no interest in child minding.'

He also successfully completed his NVQ2 and a Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award, but continued to feel frustrated and was eager to move on. With support from a Disability Employment Adviser, Stuart and his mother eventually found what they were looking for – a place at a residential centre for people with visual impairment and access to a BTEC course in social care at a nearby mainstream college.

Stuart's view is that the course is highly relevant to his interests:

Stuart: *'What we're taught is the proper way of preparing for people, obviously health and safety, differences in people, disabilities, impairments, stuff like that. So it's actually quite interesting, apart from health and safety but you have to do that, but that in itself has become a little bit interesting because you get to find out things that you didn't know, like certain employers' responsibilities and stuff like that.'*

Interviewer: '*So are you enjoying what you're doing at the moment?'*

Stuart: *'I am, yeah. I'm trying to understand how to do it and stuff like that.'*

His tutor is also able to identify ways in which Stuart is learning and developing:

'It's very well suited. Stuart is at the right level; his confidence is growing which is good. He's developing confidence in relating to other people, he's managing on his own in quite a lively group... He's done very well on placement as well. He coped very well with that and his confidence has grown enormously in terms of placement. He received a positive placement report from the supervisor and he's looking forward to the next placement.'

As with Marcus, the reasons for this current success are not difficult to find: his course is relevant to his interests, while his tutors and residential workers understand him well and build provision that is customised to his needs. There are still challenges to overcome and much that can go wrong. For the time being, however, while Stuart is being held out of the labour market (he did indeed decline the offer of employment since he felt, as yet, unready for this), he is making evident progress within the education and training system.

For others, the unevenness of provision continues. Sophie, for instance, has made a transition from her special school sixth-form to a specialist learning difficulties and disabilities programme in an FE college. Her mother is delighted with how this transition was managed:

'She went one day a week to college, which she thoroughly enjoyed and, fine, the college transition was managed, I think, as well as it could have been …She did one day a week, thoroughly enjoyed it, looked forward to it, somebody went with her, no problems and when she actually went to college even the transport worked out very well

…so college-wise, brilliant. I don't think it could have been managed any better really. We're very happy with that. Actually she's very happy at college.'

However, as part of her package she also spends one day each week at a Social Services day centre and here the transition has been much less smooth. Sophie's mother is keen not to blame anyone, but it is clear that she felt ill-informed about the work of the centre, that arrangements were left to the last minute and that the centre was not prepared for someone with Sophie's level of difficulties. The manager of the centre has a clear view as to why the quality of provision might not be as good as in the college:

'I must say in general terms I'm really quite concerned about school leavers coming to us. When we go to school leavers meetings and that sort of thing, it's very obvious that the level of support we can give as social and caring services, is nowhere near — because the money's not there — nowhere near what education can provide and that does concern me a lot really, because there's got to be a different service but there's got to be a drop in resources…I think [the centre's] got a lot of merits. Like most centres of our type, I think we're trying to be all things to all people and Sophie probably comes on the end of the scale where she probably needs more support than we would like to give her really, or able to give her, sorry.'

For Sophie, the severity of her difficulties mean that her personal happiness and development in very basic skills are the touchstones of progress. For others, there are more realistic prospects of progression towards some kind of employment, but the extent to which this is happening may not be evident. Charlotte, for instance, has been through a series of non-accredited basic skills and pre-vocational courses at her FE College. At one point, she attempted an NVQ level 1 course in catering but this proved a step too far. He current tutor explains:

'…she's dropped out. She just said she didn't like it. I don't know whether she found it too hard but the tutor had withdrawn it as her attendance wasn't too good.'

She now attends college part-time, still taking basic skills and employability courses, but with an uncertain future as the college hands over to the DEA (who is currently suggesting yet more basic skills courses). Whether she has made, or is making, progress is, as her tutor explains, difficult to ascertain:

'…we don't really work towards qualifications at this level…She certainly hasn't moved up a notch. She's E1 (entry level 1). She was E1 when she came so academically she's the same. Certainly her organisational skills and communication and confidence have certainly increased. She's very able but because she's so quiet it's quite difficult to assess how able she is because she's not one for putting herself forward.'

Given that Charlotte's difficulties seem to be in the area of confidence and self-presentation rather than in basic skills, it is difficult to see what is being provided for her that is likely to help her make progress.

Something similar could be said about Tania. She is now in her fourth year at a local FE college, taking basic skills and employability courses.

Indeed, as her mother explains, she is retaking a course she had previously attended:

'…they found in college that Tania and another student needed an awful lot of support for numeracy and so they moved her back to a course that she did a couple of years ago, but there were different students on the course and the tutor is different, so they felt that she would get something from it.'

Both Tania and her mother are happy with this arrangement. As Tania says:

'I like working hard…and seeing my friends. I've made a lot of new friends at college.'

Indeed, she is, in her mother's words, 'very reluctant to miss college' and her provision there is supplemented by work experience, time spent in an adult day centre and other activities organised by her parents, such as Riding for the Disabled. However, it is not clear what progress has been made in the past four years (Tania still has little functional literacy, for instance) and a forthcoming review of her provision may make no significant changes. Her mother is currently thinking in terms of a further three or four years attendance at college, perhaps accompanied by some form of supported employment. However, it is clear that no specific plans are yet in place.

Gareth too is a young man who has remained at college — and is very happy so to do. At the time of the Wave Two interviews, he was placed in a PF college and his mother was trying to steer him away from a Performing Arts course which, she suspected, Gareth wanted to attend because his girlfriend was in the same faculty. In the event, Gareth got his way, with very positive results. He describes the course as 'brilliant' and there does indeed seem to be a stimulating mix of performance, basic and personal skills work, group tutorials and opportunities to work alongside students from other courses. There is no doubt that in some areas Gareth has made progress. As his tutor comments:

'It's early days with Gareth and he does improve week on week and I haven't seen a slip back yet. Every week there's something that shows he's moved on…'

However, it is less clear that this progress is moving Gareth closer to employment:

Interviewer: '*Are there good employment prospects for leaving?'*

Tutor: *'I wouldn't say in performing Arts at all. There's never massive employment opportunities… I was talking to some other people the other day who are training to be midwives and employment is something like 99.9 per cent and it completely changes the whole nature of how the teaching is received. Everything is different because people have got a guaranteed future from the minute they start, whereas, Performing Arts it's not very tangible.'*

As a result, Gareth's only realistic option is to stay on at college. He may be able to move to a higher level course, but even this is uncertain, and in any case, he had to step down a level when he transferred from his initial college course.

For other young people, not only is progression in doubt, but it is less clear that their current provision is customised to their needs or wishes. At the time of the Wave Two interviews, for instance, there was some disappointment that Peter, having successfully completed two years of a work preparation course, was still unlikely to find employment. He therefore took a one year NVQ level 1 course with a business administration focus. However, the planned work experience element of the course never materialised. The tutor explains:

'…it was a whole group of them that unfortunately when we asked for placements they couldn't find any.'

Peter and his mother are convinced that the reason he was unsuccessful in getting work experience was that he was given insufficient help in drawing up a CV. However, there may be a more fundamental problem. Peter moved onto an Entry to Employment scheme which is also supposed to have work experience elements — but which have also not materialised. Moreover, according to his former Connexions personal adviser:

'…there aren't huge amounts of vacancies at the moment and I think it's very difficult for, you know, most young people. Even 'A' level students can't find work…'

The lack of work experience seems to be particularly unfortunate since Peter's pattern of skills and difficulties means he is on the borderline of being able to access open (but supportive) rather than sheltered employment. His former Connexions PA explains:

'Peter kind of fits between both areas really, because in the right situation he could go into a straightforward apprenticeship. That needs to be very supportive so it could go either way. He could either go that way or he could go into some sort of sheltered employment placement instead initially… It's very difficult. Obviously, someone with [special needs] it's getting an employer that will actually take them on and have an understanding of what they're taking on really.'

As it is, Peter seems to be making some progress in terms of his personal skills. However, as his mother argues, it is unclear whether, in a highly competitive labour market, this will be enough to secure his progression to open employment:

'It seems to be more the group work and going out and having fun, really, than what I would have considered are things that help with employment. I know that social skills are important, but it can be very unfocused, can't it, if it's just going out.'

Like Peter, Li has had no meaningful work experience during his level 1 Painting and Decorating course at an FE college. Moreover, he has remained at level 1 whilst his peers have progressed more rapidly to other levels. His tutor is confident that he is, nonetheless, making progress in the sort of personal skills he will need in the workplace and that he stands a realistic chance of finding employment:

'I think Li will do fine outside now and working out there full-time. As I said, his confidence has improved, his social skills are fine and he works very hard and he's motivated to earn money and to support himself, as well as help out with the family.'

As with Peter too, the outcomes for Li are as yet not entirely clear. Another one of his tutors claims that:

'...he's changed. He's changed as a person.'

He is confident that the college will, in time, find him a temporary work placement which will lead to full-time employment, perhaps with some time back in the college to complete his training. In the meantime, however, the transition needs to be deferred further:

'I think that he should do at least another year at college, then we should force him to — not force him — we should encourage him to get a job.'

4.3 Employment

Half of all respondents to the Wave Three survey are in employment, which is a much higher proportion than at Wave Two. The majority of these young people (88 per cent) are engaged in permanent positions with ten per cent of employed young people reporting that they are in temporary jobs (the remainder are not sure about their employment status). Table 4.9 shows the main reasons why young people are in temporary work.

Very few young people are in jobs with training. Table 4.10 shows that over two-thirds of all young people who were in employment at the time of the Wave Three survey had jobs without any formal element of training. Just one in ten young people were engaged in an apprenticeship with a further eight per cent of young people reporting that their job included some other element of work-based training.

Young men seem to be more likely to be following an apprenticeship than young women (12 per cent of employed young men are on an apprenticeship compared to just four per cent of employed young women).

Table 4.9: Reason for temporary position

	N	%
The job or training is for a fixed period or fixed task	16	30
Casual type of work or not permanent in some other way	13	27
Agency temping	11	24
Seasonal work	11	19
Don't know	2	2
Total	51	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.10: Status of employment, by gender

	All		Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employment without training	304	69	220	68	84	73
Apprenticeship (Foundation or Advanced)	45	10	39	12	6	4
Other work-based training	36	8	23	7	13	12
Work-based training through the New Deal	10	3	6	2	4	4
Supported employment	11	2	9	3	2	1
Other government supported training	7	1	6	1	1	0
Other	27	6	21	6	6	6
Don't know	7	1	5	1	2	1
Total	447	100	329	100	118	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Of all young people in employment, nearly half reported that they had found their job through friends or family (47 per cent), 17 per cent had applied directly to employers, and around one-tenth had each found their jobs through newspaper adverts or through Jobcentre Plus (Table 4.11). Very few young people had found their jobs through the Connexions service or a Careers Adviser.

When asked why they had decided to find work, young people most commonly reported that they had wanted to earn money (50 per cent overall) although males were more likely to report this than females (Table 4.12). Conversely, females were more likely than males to cite wanting to work in a particular area or career as a reason for choosing their job. One-fifth of all young people reported their main reason for getting work was to gain experience.

Table 4.11 Method of finding the job

	N	%
Through friends or family	205	47
Applied directly to employers	80	17
Applied for jobs advertised in newspapers	39	10
Through Jobcentre Plus	43	9
Training and Employment Agency Office	11	2
Other careers service	9	2
Worked there/worked there before	8	2
Through college/school	9	2
Connexions Service	11	2
Work experience	6	2
Applied for jobs using the internet	8	2
Other	15	3
Total	447	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.12 Reasons for finding work

	All		Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
To earn money	255	57	200	60	55	50
Want to work in this area/career	164	36	111	33	53	43
To get experience	83	19	61	19	22	20
No other options	15	3	10	3	5	3
Parents wanted young person to find work	11	2	10	3	1	1
It's local/close to home	6	2	4	1	2	3
Hours/flexible/allow for study	8	2	4	1	4	3
Interest/enjoyment	8	2	7	2	1	1
Other	17	4	11	3	6	6
Total	447	100	329	100	118	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Parents or carers were again commonly cited as the most helpful sources of advice when looking for work (by 38 per cent of all those in employment), followed by friends or a partner, or someone else in the family. Jobcentre Plus and Connexions advisers were reported as being the most helpful person when looking for work, by five and four per cent of employed young people respectively. Seventeen per cent of young people in work reported that no-one had helped them to find their jobs (Table 4.13).

Table 4.13 Most helpful source of advice when looking for work

	N	%
Parents/carers	180	38
No-one	73	17
Friends or partner (boyfriend/girlfriend)	43	11
Someone else in the family	42	9
Other Jobcentre Plus adviser	25	5
Connexions adviser	19	4
Careers service adviser	12	3
Employers/colleagues	8	3
Someone from previous college	12	2
Other careers adviser, *eg* IAG adviser	4	1
Someone from previous school	3	1
Disability Employment Adviser at Jobcentre Plus	2	0
Other	17	3
Don't know	5	2
Not stated	0	0
Total	447	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.14: Additional advice required

	N	%
More information about employment/training opportunities	107	26
More help to look for employment/training opportunities	81	19
Help to make decisions about taking up employment/training	50	11
More information about support in employment	43	10
Other help or advice	19	3
Nothing	191	41
Don't know	16	4
Total	447	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.14 shows the additional advice that young people who were in employment said they required. Two-thirds of these young people said that they had not needed any additional advice, but a quarter would have liked more information about employment or training opportunities, and one-fifth would have liked more help to look for such opportunities. One-tenth of all young people in employment would have liked help to make decisions about taking up employment/training, and one-tenth would have liked more information about supported employment.

When asked why these people or organisations had been helpful when looking for work, more than half of young people said it was because they had provided information. More than one-third of young people who had received some help to find work said that they had been helped to make decisions, and one-quarter had appreciated having the options available explained to them. Six per cent had help with planning how they would be supported in work (Table 4.15).

Nearly two-thirds of young people in employment or training had found the transition to work/training very or fairly easy to do (65

Table 4.15: Reasons why they found person/organisation helpful

	N	%
Provided information	201	54
Helped young person to make decisions	130	36
Explained options available	92	25
Planned how young person would be supported	25	6
Helped with letters/application forms/CVs	12	4
Supported/encouraged young person	10	3
Told young person about job	9	3
Other	31	7
Don't know	6	2
Total	369	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.16: Ease of making transition

	N	%
Very easy	112	26
Fairly easy	177	39
Neither easy nor difficult	58	13
Fairly difficult	68	15
Very difficult	32	7
Total	447	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

per cent in total), although 15 per cent had found it fairly difficult and seven per cent had found it very difficult (Table 4.16).

Of the factors easing the transition into employment or training, young people most commonly cited parents or carers, family support, or friends or a partner. Employers, or the people they worked with, were also cited by fairly large proportions of the young people (11 per cent) and eight per cent reported that other people's attitudes had helped ease their transition into work. Transport availability had helped the transition for seven per cent of young people in employment or training (Table 4.17).

Table 4.17: Factors easing transition to employment

	N	%
Parents/carers	83	27
Family support	55	16
Friends or partner	37	12
Employers/people at work	31	11
Someone else in the family	28	9
Other people's attitudes	21	8
Transport availability	19	7
Local/close to home	9	4
Being able to get around	9	3
Knowing someone who worked there	10	3
Careers service adviser	7	3
Health was good	9	3
Previous experience/work experience	8	3
Tutor	9	2
Other Jobcentre plus adviser	6	2
Having enough money	5	2
Connexions Adviser	6	2
Teacher	5	2
Other	39	15
Don't know	29	10
Total	289	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.18: Factors making transition to employment difficult

	N	%
Lack of transport	18	21
Lack of jobs/locally/in this area	18	21
Lack of experience	9	11
Lack of suitable jobs	9	9
Other people's attitudes	11	9
Young person's age	5	8
Lack of qualifications	7	7
Employers/people young person worked with	7	5
Lack of jobs with training	4	5
Lack of confidence/shyness	5	5
Difficulty getting around	4	4
Lack of money	4	3
Other Jobcentre Plus adviser	3	2
Lack of equipment or facilities	1	2
Other	24	24
Don't know	3	2
Total	100	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Conversely, young people were asked about the factors which had made their transition to employment difficult, and these are shown in Table 4.18. A lack of transport and lack of local jobs were the most commonly reported factors (by 21 per cent each). A lack of experience, lack of suitable jobs and other people's attitudes were each reported as difficulties by around ten per cent of young people experiencing difficulties. Smaller proportions reported factors such as their age, employers, lack of jobs with training, and lack of confidence as being problematic. Difficulty getting around was also an issue for four per cent of these young people.

Young people's satisfaction with their employment is shown in Table 4.19. It is clear that most young people are very or fairly

Table 4.19: Satisfaction with activity

	N	%
Very happy	216	47
Fairly happy	154	36
Neither happy nor unhappy	44	10
Fairly unhappy	19	4
Very unhappy	11	2
Too early to know	3	1
Total	447	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

happy with their situation (83 per cent in total) although a small proportion are unhappy with their employment (six per cent).

4.3.1 Case studies — main activity

At the time of the Wave Two fieldwork, some young people were still in school sixth-form provision and others were just embarking on their post-school careers. In most cases, the transition process had gone well, at least to the extent that they were in a purposeful activity which might in time lead to progression towards some form of employment and independent living. However, it was not yet clear that the transition from statutory schooling would necessarily, and in every case, lead to such progression. The most that we could say was that the immediate post-16 phase was a kind of holding operation where the hope was that something positive would happen which would help the young person to progress. By Wave Three, the pattern has become much clearer. All of the young people had left (compulsory) school and their direction of travel was now becoming evident.

Employment

Some young people have made an early transition into employment. Paul, for instance, was reported as having dyslexia and some behavioural difficulties whilst at school, and describes his experiences in the following terms:

'When I had my dyslexic class, I would get up and leave my class and go and sit in this class and do nothing because she'd sit there and talk to us about words and stuff and that …oh you're skiving blah, blah, blah …But now I'm not really bothered about it but then you were because you're younger, you want to be in with the people don't you? I just broke out of it after a while and just thought, sod you, I can't be bothered. That's why I didn't really stay in school. I had loads of friends there but I just couldn't be bothered with it.'

By his own admission, Paul selected the lessons — those with a practical and outdoor focus — that he wanted to attend and was only too happy to leave the education system and look for work. He seems to have been fortunate in finding work immediately — though he also has positive social and personal qualities and evident intelligence which undoubtedly helped him. His first job — as a shop worker — was not entirely to his taste. He was always clear that he wanted work with a sporting connection and his certainty and perseverance paid off when he found work as a swimming pool attendant. Now, he is a trainee groundsman and maintenance worker in a health club. Asked whether he enjoyed his work, his answer (and his determination) were unequivocal:

'No one's taking my job away from me, definitely not, no way. This is something that I want to stay with all my life whether it's within England or not. I want to stay within the ground-keeping situation. Yes, it is good.'

Paul's ultimate ambition is to work on a prestigious golf course in America and, whether this is realistic or not, the delight of his current employer with his efforts is clear:

'As I say, it couldn't have worked any better really and it's good to have somebody that wants to do it and is keen to learn and can also take in the information….He's quite bright…Paul will take it on board and everything and usually once he's shown it, or taught it, it's basically locked in there, so it's all you can ask for.'

Indeed, it would seem that Paul is an example of a young person with many positive qualities but with difficulties which made his experience of school more negative than it might otherwise have been. As he put it:

'I didn't like school at all. It was all right, the people I had in my class and that were brilliant but it was just the work, sitting down writing and stuff, I didn't like it at all.'

Of course, his progression is, as yet, provisional. He has not long been in his new job and may eventually become bored with it. Moreover, although he is receiving training, this is workplace-based, non-accredited and may be difficult to transfer to other situations. Currently, Paul deals with the limited literacy demands of his work by seeking help from his workmates, but presumably this strategy will become less viable if he undertakes formal training with a literacy component or is promoted to more senior positions where literacy tasks are required. Nonetheless, we seem to have here a case of someone whose 'special needs' relate much more to the school situation than to the workplace and who is now functioning effectively in the adult world. As he says:

'… I'm not a writer person. Physical work I'll do but sitting down and doing paperwork, I don't want anything to do with it, reading or anything.'

Paul's experience is repeated to some extent in the transitions made by other young people. Ben, for instance, was one of the higher-attaining pupils in his special schools and, like Paul, his principal difficulties were in reading and writing. Like Paul, too, he went through a period immediately after school where he sampled new experiences. He wanted to work in catering but had not performed well enough at school to access a level 1 course in catering. Instead, he was placed on a lower level programme designed specifically for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities but nonetheless enjoyed the more adult ambience of college. As part of his course, he had a work experience placement working in a canteen and impressed his employers so much that his time there was extended and eventually he was offered full-time employment. Unfortunately, he began to experience relationship problems with other staff and his supervisors and handed in his notice. After a temporary job at a supermarket, he was contacted by a Disability Employment Adviser (DEA) at his Jobcentre who helped him find his current job as a kitchen assistant at a nursing home.

Ben, like Paul, has achieved his ambition and works somewhere where he is happy and where his difficulties are less important than his positive attributes. As with Paul, those positive attributes are many and adults who know him speak of his determination and social skills. Moreover, as with Paul, his progression is, as yet, provisional: his job is a temporary one; he is receiving no accredited training; and there is no guarantee that the problems which soured his previous extended spell in work may not surface again here. It is also noticeable that the

progression into and through work for both of these young men was fortuitous rather than planned. Although they had a clear sense of what they did (and did not) want to do, both made false starts and both were dependent on the right sorts of opportunity becoming available.

Much the same could be said of Toby, who has found himself a job as a clerical assistant in a double glazing company. As with Paul and Ben, his success (if such it is) is due to his determination to find something which played to his strengths rather than his weaknesses. As he put it:

'I found that not everybody is the type of person to learn, learn and learn. Yes, it's going to be of benefit in a couple of years but I've always been the type of person to earn and get the money in.'

Like Paul and Ben, he has had false starts. At school, he wanted to join the armed forces, but he had health problems (which still trouble him) whilst in the Territorial Army and was medically discharged. He then churned between short-term employment, college courses and unemployment, becoming increasingly frustrated with the sense of drift in his life before finding his current job.

Toby's own perseverance has had much to do with his ability to negotiate this far from straightforward trajectory. As his mother explains:

Mother: '*It's not ideal for what he wanted to do, because he wanted a career. He's got the next best thing. He likes it and he has weekends free. They're putting him through his test and he'll get a company car. So you can't say he hasn't made it, when you consider some haven't been to work really…'*

Interviewer: '*Would you say he is a person with a lot of perseverance?'*

Mother: '*Yes, definitely. He's like my youngest daughter. She's done much better since she left school and not all that clever. She's bluffed her way through school and early career.'*

Again, it would seem, we have a young person who feels that the workplace offers him better prospects than do schools and colleges and who has had the perseverance to find something which, if not perfect, is more than acceptable. Again, however, the progression is provisional. Toby has some low level qualifications from the courses he has taken previously, but the price of entering the workplace (relatively) early is that he is now only receiving unaccredited, on-the-job training. For him, as for Paul and Ben, all may work out well and their evident personal characteristics may secure long-term unemployment. However, it is also possible that their current employment will break down and they will find themselves in a constant cycle of unemployment and short-term positions.

4.3.2 In work at Wave Two and Wave Three

Forty-three per cent of young people who were in work at Wave Three had also been in work at Wave Two. Just over half of all young people who were in employment at both survey points (56 per cent) reported that they were still with the same employer

with the majority stating that they were also in the same jobs (86 per cent of those working for the same employer at both survey points had continued in the same job). Whilst this may be interpreted as stability for these young people, it may also indicate a lack of progression, particularly as most young people who are in work are in jobs without training. Only a handful of young people (seven) had stayed with their employer and had received some sort of promotion.

Forty-four per cent of young people who were in employment at Waves Two and Three had changed their employer and young people with (self-reported) disabilities seem to be slightly more likely to have changed employers between survey waves than those without disabilities (54 per cent of those with a disability have changed employers between survey points compared to 41 per cent of those reporting no disabilities).

The most commonly reported reason young people gave for moving to a different employer between survey waves was that they had 'fancied a change' (28 per cent of young people switching employers said this had been the case). However, a few young people reported, more negatively, that they had changed employment between survey waves because of disagreements with the boss (eight young people), because they did not get on with other work colleagues (four young people) or because they were sacked (three young people) or made redundant (three young people).

Having said this, the change to a different employer for most of the young people making such a move seems to have had positive results. Well over half of all young people who had been in work at both survey points but who had changed employers between the Wave Two and Wave Three survey (64 per cent) reported that they were now in jobs with more responsibility. One-fifth (or 19 per cent) of young people who had changed employers had moved to new jobs with similar levels of responsibility whilst a slightly smaller proportion (14 per cent) said they were now in new jobs with less responsibility.

4.3.3 Evidence of churning

Just over half (51 per cent) of young people who had been in employment at Waves Two and Three had experienced some sort of change between the two survey points either in their employer or in the job they were doing. Of these young people, just over one-third (or 37 young people) reported that they had also done something else in between making these changes. The main activities they reported included:

- other full-time jobs (15 young people)
- other part-time jobs (nine young people), and

- a period of unemployment (seven young people).

Fifty-seven per cent of all young people in work at the time of the Wave Three survey had changed their main activity since Wave Two, *ie* they had started work at some point in time since they were last surveyed. In the main, young people moving into employment for the first time had done so as a result of completing their education or training. However, 42 per cent of young people who had started work since Wave Two, reported that they had also done other things since finishing their Wave Two activity and before starting their current job. As above, the main activities they reported being engaged in included:

- other full-time jobs (41 young people or 37 per cent)
- other part-time jobs (28 young people or 28 per cent), and
- a period of unemployment (nine young people or 11 per cent).

4.3.4 Case studies — churning

Whatever the potential problems of an early move into employment, there is a sense that such young people had at least made some sort of progress from school. However, this sense of progress is much less evident in the cases of young people who have moved from activity to activity without any very clear outcome.

Matthew, for instance, is one who tried to move into employment but without the same success as some of his peers. At the time of the Wave Two interviews, Matthew had left an FE college course and was trying, unsuccessfully, to find work, supported principally by his mother. Little had changed when he was interviewed for Wave Three and he was still engaged in an unsupported and fruitless search for work. He had by now abandoned his original aim of working in catering:

'I love cooking, but it's not going nowhere, so just going to squash the whole chef business and start somewhere different.'

The 'somewhere different', it seems, might be almost any line of employment:

'Warehouse work, labouring, electrician. I've gone into some supermarkets and asked in there. I've even asked to go back and do a course in [name of college]…I've been trying to do a plumbing course [or] a plastering course. But they're saying there's no vacancies… I think it's because I left it too late to try and get into it. But I just keep trying, that's just the way I am now. Before that when I was little and I left school, I couldn't be bothered with nothing, but I just want to get out there and start doing things with life, get things to show for myself.'

Matthew was described by his school in Wave Two as having behavioural difficulties that were identified late in his schooling. This would accord with his description of himself as not being 'bothered' when he first left school and might explain why he reports himself as

having been 'barred' from a local college. He describes his life since leaving school in the following terms:

'...it's getting boring, because all I do is sit with my mates, watch telly, have a laugh and it's just getting boring now because it's the same old people. For a little while I started getting lazy about it., because I was just copying what they were doing like. They weren't doing nothing about getting a job so I was copying them and then I just thought 'sod this, this is boring and I want to get a job'. For the last four, five, six months I've just been out and about looking for work everywhere.'

It is, of course, entirely possible that Matthew presents himself as more determined in the interview than he is in reality. Nonetheless, what is clear is that he has as yet failed to make progress, that he has not been able to take advantage of such opportunities as have been available and, above all, that he seems to be entirely reliant on his own initiative and the support which his parents can provide. As he puts it:

'I can only learn from my mistakes...My mother likes to support me like but...I'm at that age where I want to do it myself.'

Andrea also participated in Wave Two, where it was clear that the social and behavioural difficulties identified at school were continuing to cause her problems as she churned between activities. However, she had found a place at a Foyer, and there, was in contact with an enthusiastic key worker who was confident she could move Andrea forward. In the event, the pattern between leaving school and the Wave Two interviews had simply been repeated. She left the Foyer and also left an Entry to Employment (E2E) programme, claiming that she found it too easy (she is academically quite able) and irrelevant to her life style:

'E2E is not suited to someone like me...It wasn't challenging enough and I didn't really get on with the people there. They weren't as quick as me...and they were into drugs and fights.'

Her mother claimed that the problems were by no means all to do with Andrea's acknowledged difficulties with social relationships:

'She did stick it out but she got to a point where she'd had enough and she said "I'm not learning anything, I'm not doing anything". They hadn't come up with any job placements for work experience so she said "I'm not doing it anymore". She was going to do key skills level 4 but there was never a level 4 available...And then she was going to do computers but she knew more about the computers than the person teaching it, so that got boring as well and she gave up with that.'

Since then, Andrea signed on for Jobseekers Allowance and had tried to find work — but had found no more than a few days' casual employment. She has also taken an evening course in Japanese. However, she is left with what appear to be unrealistic ambitions regarding how she will eventually earn a living:

'I would really like to do entertainment. But it's not possible at the moment. No-one can tell me how to start, except to join a drama group and I don't want to do that — it's acting. I want to entertain, like at a holiday camp. I've never done it but it looks like fun.'

It is worth adding that not only has Andrea 'never done' entertainment, but she finds socialising extremely difficult and spends most of her time in the house.

There are other cases where the lack of progression appears to be related to the personal and social difficulties experienced by the young people. For instance, Emma was reported, at the time of the Wave Two interview, as having a tendency to live in a fantasy world. Her 'dream' was of becoming a hairdresser, but her FE college believed that she had reached the limits of her capabilities after the first year of an NVQ level 1 course and she was unsuccessfully seeking work. As a jobseeker, she had been taken up by New Deal and placed on an Entry Level 1 basic skills course. She attended only sporadically but had none of the work experience which should form an integral part of the course. She was now looking for work again but had recently been referred to a service which helps people with learning disabilities find work. She now talks about a range of possibilities — working in a clothes shop, working in a cattery, becoming a doctor, getting into musicals. As for her original 'dream' of hairdressing, she comments:

'I'd still love to do it. I've had dreams all the time. Everybody has a dream, don't they, what they want to do? and this is one of my dreams to do with hairdressing.'

Tellingly — and, indeed, poignantly, when asked in the middle of an interview about training and employment, what has changed since she was last interviewed, she says:

'The change I've made is the way I look. The last two years you see me now I had long hair, really long hair, but now I've had it cut. I've had it coloured. I'm different.'

However, not all lack of progression can be explained in this way. For Rosie, a new recruit to our sample, a combination of personal circumstances and an insufficiently supportive system appear to have destabilised her progression. She has moved from the South to the North East to be with her boyfriend. As a result, she has had to abandon a childcare course she was taking at her local college. She actively explored the possibility of resuming her studies in the North East, visited a local college and applied for a course, but was unable to take a place up for financial reasons. Her understanding is that, as a student, she would have lost her Jobseekers Allowance but could not access an Education Maintenance Allowance to support her studies because she was not living with her parents or in her home area. If this understanding was incorrect, no-one seems to have been able to give her different information. As a result, Rosie signed on for New Deal where she has taken part in a number of short-term and apparently unaccredited training programmes whose purpose and benefit she finds difficult to understand. She has not been able to find work experience in childcare and instead has taken a series of casual jobs.

Devesh, likewise, is somewhat in limbo. At Wave Two, Devesh was struggling with a mainstream college course in Business Administration. His intention was to persevere although neither he nor his tutor were confident that he could complete the course. At the time of the Wave Three interview he had failed to complete the Business Administration course and had reverted to more basic skills courses. However, he was in contact with a Disability Employment Adviser who

was confident that he would find employment. The college felt that Devesh had made good progress during this period, although he felt he did not want to continue with his education, and he began to look for employment with the support of the DEA and a supported employment organisation. At the time of the Wave Three interview, he had had a part-time job but this was only temporary (working for a catalogue sales company in the pre-Christmas period) and he was once again looking for work.

There are certainly elements of success in Devesh's story. Despite the setback of finding the Business Administration course too difficult, he has now had experience of employment, was delighted with his temporary job and is confident that he will find another. However, his supported employment worker is less confident. She felt that he would be able to find employment , but that it would take some time to find a suitable job. He had, in fact, only been working part-time because he was not confident that he could manage full-time employment, although he saw part-time work as a stepping stone to full-time work. Moreover, he had also tackled only those parts of the job that the employer and supported employment worker were confident he could handle. In other words, his progression had been into something much more restricted than open employment and might not be easily replicable. As his supported employment worker comments:

'It is a great shame that the type of job he was doing…that is the only time of year when he could do that. I don't think it's going to be easy finding him another position in an environment that's good for him and the tasks he's able to remember.'

To complicate matters, Devesh is under pressure from his family to find full-time employment in order to contribute to the family income. It may be, therefore, that his current unemployment is simply a hiatus while he and his support worker find a job that suits him. However, it may equally be that such jobs will prove elusive and/or that family pressures will result in his seeking other, less appropriate forms of work.

4.4 Not in education or employment (NEET)

Just over a quarter of the young people surveyed (27 per cent of all Wave Three respondents) were not in education, employment or training at the time they were interviewed.

Of those who reported that they were currently not in education, employment or training, half were looking for work (Table 4.20). Males were more likely than females to be looking for work, as were young people who had not had statements at school, and those who were not disabled. Eight per cent of females were waiting for an education course to start, compared to five per cent of males, and nine per cent of those who were statemented at school, compared to four per cent without a statement. Three per cent of these young people were not in education, employment or training due to ill-health or disability.

Table 4.20: Current activity, per cent

	All (N)	All	Male	Female	Statement	No statement	Disabled	Not disabled	D/k
Looking for work	133	50	58	35	39	62	35	65	59
Looking for an education/training course	22	6	5	8	9	4	8	6	0
Waiting to start an education/training course	16	4	5	4	6	2	7	1	11
Can't work due to ill-health/disability	11	3	3	3	4	2	5	1	0
Waiting for a job to start	5	2	4	0	1	4	0	5	0
Pregnant	3	1	0	3	0	1	0	2	4
Other	10	4	4	3	3	4	7	0	0
None of these	91	29	21	44	37	21	38	20	26
Total (N)	291	100	190	101	221	60	172	107	12

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

4.4.1 Looking for work

The jobsearch methods of those who were looking for, or waiting to start work are shown in Table 4.21. Two-thirds had visited Jobcentre Plus, and 45 per cent had applied for jobs advertised in newspapers. One-third of these young people looked for work through friends or family, and nearly a quarter had used the Connexions service, with a similar proportion having applied directly to employers.

Table 4.21: Jobsearch methods, all young people looking for work or waiting to start work

	N	%
Visited Jobcentre Plus	91	67
Applied for jobs advertised in newspapers	58	45
Through friends or family	44	36
Connexions Service	32	23
Applied directly to employers	28	22
Visited a job club	20	18
Applied for jobs using the internet	24	17
Training and Employment Agency Office	16	13
Other careers service	12	10
Visited a Jobmarket	6	7
learndirect	4	4
Other	9	4
Don't know	4	2
Not Stated	3	3
Total	138	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

The most helpful people in terms of looking for work amongst these young people are shown in Table 4.22. Parents and carers were (again) most commonly cited (by 25 per cent) followed by Jobcentre Plus advisers (17 per cent). A wide range of other people were mentioned, including Connexions and careers service advisers, friends and family, and Disability Employment Advisers at Jobcentre Plus. Eleven per cent of young people who were looking for work, or who had recently looked for work, stated that no-one had helped them.

Sixty per cent of young people said that the person who had helped them most had provided information, while around two-fifths said that the person who had helped them the most had explained the options available. A quarter of young people reported that they had help in making decisions, and 14 per cent had help with planning how they would be supported (Table 4.23).

Young people who were looking for work were asked whether they required any additional help or advice, and their responses are shown in Table 4.24. Most of these young people felt that there were areas in which they would benefit from more advice and help. At least one-fifth each felt they needed more information

Table 4.22: Most helpful person with jobsearch

	N	%
Parents/carers	52	25
Other Jobcentre Plus adviser	24	17
Connexions adviser	15	8
Careers service adviser	8	6
Friends or partner (boyfriend/girlfriend)	11	6
Someone else in the family	6	5
Disability Employment Adviser at Jobcentre Plus	9	4
Social Worker/Services	4	2
learndirect helpline adviser	1	1
Employers/people I worked with	2	1
Other careers adviser, *eg* IAG adviser	1	1
Youth worker	1	1
Learning Disability worker	3	1
Someone at current school	2	1
Doctor	2	1
Other	5	2
No-one	19	11
Don't know	3	1
Not stated	6	4
Total	176	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.23: Reasons why they found person/organisation helpful

	N	%
Provided information	91	60
Explained options available	58	39
Helped young person to make decisions	40	26
Planned how young person would be supported	22	14
Helped with letters/application forms/CVs	4	2
Supported/encouraged young person	2	3
Told young person about job	7	4
Other	13	9
Don't know	3	2
Total (N)	148	

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

about employment/training opportunities, more help in looking for such opportunities, or help in making decisions about taking up employment or training. Seventeen per cent reported that they would like more information about support in employment, and 15 per cent each felt they needed more information about transport, and about courses available.

4.4.2 Not looking for work

The young people who were economically inactive at the time of the Wave Three survey were asked the reasons for their in-activities, and their responses are given in Table 4.25. Poor health was the cited by more than one-quarter of the young people (28 per cent), while one-fifth said they were looking after the home or children. Six per cent were attending a day centre, six per cent had

Table 4.24: Additional advice required

	N	%
More information about employment/training opportunities	38	27
More help to look for employment/training opportunities	40	26
Help to make decisions about taking up employment/training	29	20
More information about support in employment	24	17
More information about transport	23	15
More information about courses available	18	15
More information about support in college	14	11
Financial information	11	8
Other help or advice	5	7
Nothing	24	18
Don't know	9	7
Total (N)	135	

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 4.25: Reason for inactivity

	N	%
Poor health at present	29	28
Looking after the home or children	14	21
Attending a day centre	7	6
Not found a suitable job or course	7	6
Pregnancy	3	4
Family problems	3	2
Not yet decided what job or course to do	1	2
Transport difficulties in travelling to work/college	2	2
Not able to work	2	1
Residential care	2	1
Having a break from study	2	1
Looking after other family members	1	1
None/none of these apply	8	7
Other	12	11
Don't know	8	7
Total	101	100

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

not found a suitable job or course, and small numbers of young people gave other reasons such as being pregnant, family problems, or transport difficulties.

Almost all young people who were NEET at the time of the Wave Three survey (84 per cent) had been engaged in a different activity when they were last surveyed. Most of these young people (46 per cent) had left college or school after taking part in the Wave Two survey, mainly because their course had finished or because compulsory schooling had come to an end. Fourteen per cent of young people had experienced ill-health or worsening health and thus, had stopped their previous activity, whilst eight per cent had a baby since the Wave Two survey and had given up their previous activity.

Almost half of those who were NEET at Wave Three (45 per cent or N=120) had engaged in other activities since Wave Two, *ie* over and above the activity in which they were engaged at Wave Two. The main activities they reported being engaged in between the two survey points included:

- full-time work (40 young people or 39 per cent)
- part-time work (27 young people or 26 per cent)
- studying (21 young people or 14 per cent), or
- periods of unemployment (12 young people or 13 per cent).

These activities indicate that many young people who are presently NEET have had some recent experience of 'positive' economic activity and the outside world. However, these findings also suggest that any efforts or opportunities to engage these young people in such activities over the longer-term have been missed or lost.

4.5 Chapter summary

- Half of all young people taking part in Wave Three were in employment. Boys were more likely to be in work than girls.
- Young people with behavioural, emotional and/or social development difficulties were most likely to be in employment than young people with other SEN types.
- Most young people who are in employment are in jobs without training.
- Just under one-quarter of all young people were in education at the time of the Wave Three survey. Girls were more likely to be in education at this time compared to boys.
- Young people who had statements of SEN whilst at school were most likely to be in education at Wave Three compared to young people without statements.
- Young people with sensory and/or physical disabilities were also most likely to still be in education compared to young people in other SEN groups.
- One in five young people who were in education at Wave Three were studying at university.
- There has been some progression for some young people in education since Wave Two. Just over half of all young people in education at both survey points are now studying at a higher level. The remainder continue to study at the same level as at Wave Two, either at their Wave Two college or school, or at another institution.
- Just over one-quarter of all young people in the latest survey (27 per cent) were NEET, which is an increase on the Wave Two survey (when 19 per cent were NEET).
- Young people with cognition and learning difficulties were most likely to be NEET at Wave Three.
- There is some evidence of churning amongst young people in education, employment and amongst those who are NEET.

5. Support

This chapter considers the way the young people taking part in this research have been supported since they left school, and since the Wave Two survey was carried out. It looks at the sources of formal and professional support, including the frequency of contact, satisfaction and perceived usefulness, and the extent to which young people feel that support is co-ordinated. The chapter then turns to the role of parents, carers and other family, and the role of friends and peers in helping and supporting the young people, drawing on evidence from the case studies. The continuity of services, and any further support required is also considered. Finally, young people's general views on their support arrangements since the Wave Two survey are outlined.

5.1 Formal and professional support

The young people taking part in the Wave Three survey had come into contact with a variety of professional and support services during the 18 months before the interview (Table 5.1). Over half had visited their doctor, and almost a quarter had seen a generic Jobcentre Plus adviser. Only four per cent reported having seen a specialist Disability Adviser at Jobcentre Plus. Just over one-fifth had seen a Connexions/careers service adviser, and just over one-tenth had seen a social worker or had contact with social services. However, almost a quarter (22 per cent) of all young people said that they had not had any contact with any professional support services during the last 18 months. Given that young people taking part in the Wave Three survey had all been classified as having SEN when they were at school, we might have expected contact with the Connexions Service to have been greater. Whilst recall amongst young people may be an issue, it appears that the service has not been particularly well targeted towards those most in need, *ie* many young people in our sample.

In terms of SEN type, young people with sensory and/or physical difficulties were the most likely to have seen a Connexions careers adviser (31 per cent with this SEN type reported this). There were also some notable differences in contact/support histories by type of school attended: 36 per cent of those who attended a special school had contact with a Connexions/careers service adviser, compared to just 17 per cent of those who had attended

Table 5.1: Contact with professional/other support services during the last 18 months

	N	%
Doctor	526	52
Jobcentre Plus adviser (general)	204	23
Connexions adviser/careers service	248	21
Social Worker/Social Services	165	12
Other careers adviser, *eg* Information, Advice and Guidance	71	6
Learning disability worker	75	6
Health worker	48	5
Counsellor	39	4
Disability Employment Adviser at Jobcentre Plus	42	4
Youth worker	39	3
Psychiatric Services worker	30	3
learndirect helpline adviser	22	3
Other	39	3
No-one	210	22
Don't know	11	1
Total (N)	1,019	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

mainstream schools. Thirty-eight per cent of those who had attended a special school had contact with a social worker, compared to only four per cent of those who had attended mainstream schools. Conversely, those who had attended mainstream schools were more likely than those who had attended special schools to have had contact with a Jobcentre Plus adviser (26 per cent compared to 12 per cent). Turning to whether the young people had received statements at school, these results were very similar to those by school type, with young people who had statements following the patterns for those at special schools, and young people without statements showing similar levels of contact to those who had attended mainstream schools.

5.1.1 Frequency of contact

The frequency of contact with these professionals and services varied by type of professional, and in some cases there were variations between the young people themselves. Of those who had contact with a general Jobcentre Plus adviser, half reported that they had seen them one to five times, ten per cent had seen an adviser six to ten times, and one-fifth had seen a Jobcentre Plus adviser more than 20 times during the last 18 months.

Of those who had seen a Connexions/careers adviser during the last 18 months, 70 per cent reported that they had seen them one

to five times over this period, with smaller proportions having had more frequent contact.

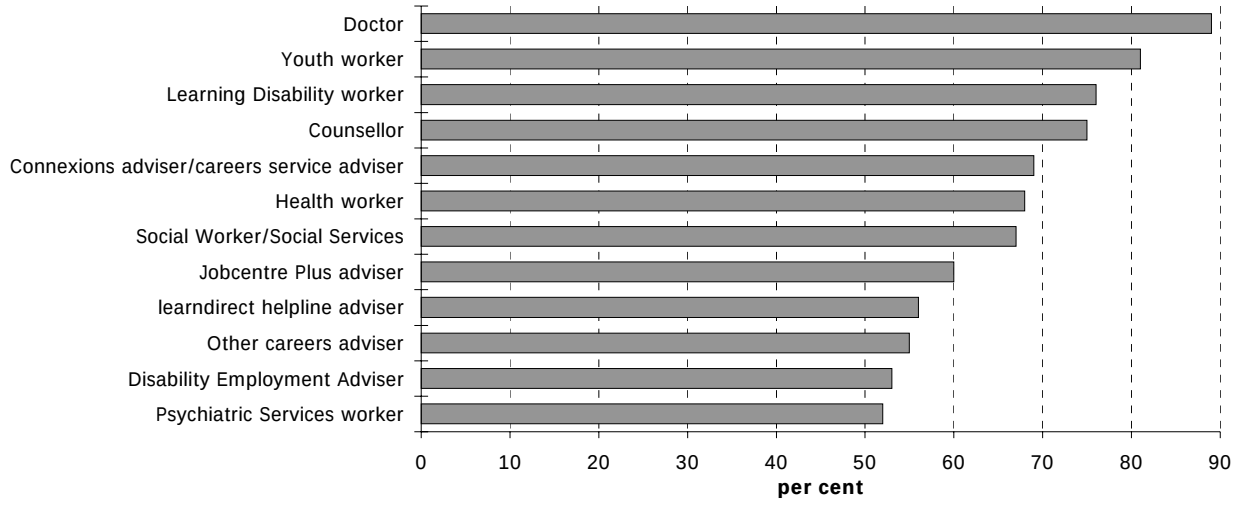
Where it occurred at all, contact with social workers / social services was a little more frequent, with just over half the young people who had seen a social worker reporting a frequency of one to five times, nearly one-fifth (18 per cent) had contact on six to ten occasions, and eight per cent had 11 or more meetings with a social worker or social services.

5.1.2 Satisfaction with formal support services

Satisfaction with the sources of formal support used by these young people is shown in Figure 5.1. More than half of the young people in the case of each type of support were satisfied with the support they had received. They were most likely to be very or fairly satisfied with the support they had received from doctors, youth workers, learning disability workers and Connexions advisers, with lower proportions reporting satisfaction for 'other' careers advisers, psychiatric services workers, and ***learndirect*** workers.

Looking more generally across all sources of formal support (Figure 5.2), most of the young people rated the available support as very good (40 per cent) or fairly good (42 per cent), with only six per cent rating it as fairly or very poor. However, slightly higher levels of dissatisfaction were reported, *ie* they rated the support from all professional and formal sources as fairly or very poor, by those whose main SEN type at school was behavioural, emotional and social development (11 per cent), those who had attended a special school (11 per cent), and those not in education, employment or training (ten per cent). Dissatisfaction was also higher amongst those who were of non-White ethnic origin (11 per cent, compared to six per cent of young people of White ethnic origin).

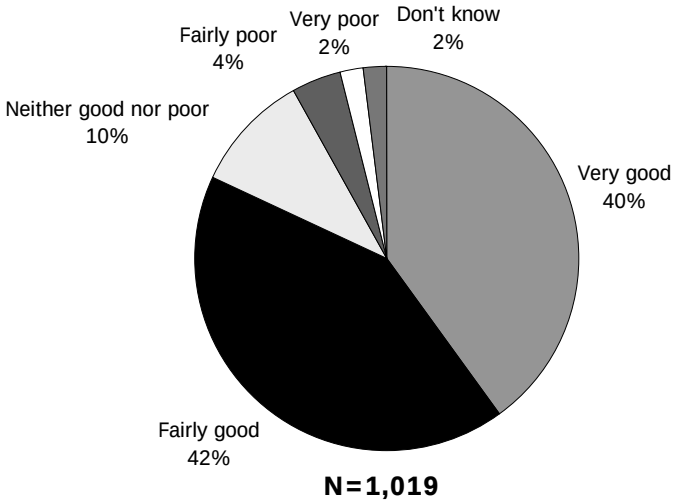
Figure 5.1: Satisfaction with formal support services (in order of services most used)



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2005

Figure 5.2: How young people rated the range of formal sources of support



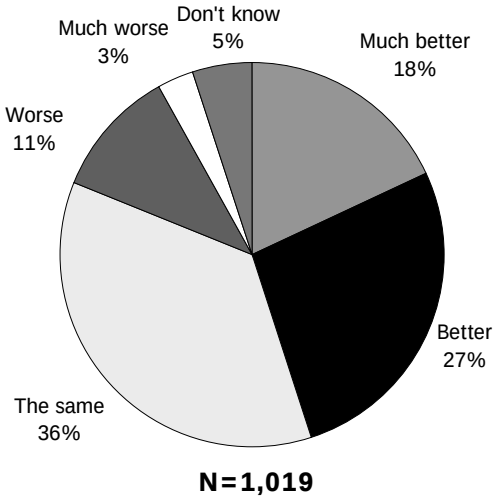
Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2005

5.1.3 Perceived usefulness of formal and professional support

The young people taking part in the survey were asked to rate how useful they had found the support they had received since they left school, compared to the support they had when they were at school. The results for all young people are shown in Figure 5.3. Just over one-third (36 per cent) felt that in terms of usefulness, the support they had received over time had been the same, slightly over a quarter (27 per cent) had found it better, and 18 per cent felt it was much better. However, 11 per cent felt that the support they had received was worse, and three per cent felt it

Figure 5.3: Comparison of formal sources of support since leaving school and Wave Three



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2005

was much worse. There were very few differences by SEN type, type of school attended, or whether the young person had been statemented. Those not in education, employment or training were also more likely to have rated the usefulness of the support as worse or much worse than was the case for those currently in education and those currently in employment/training (17 per cent compared to 13 per cent and 12 per cent respectively). The same was true for those who considered themselves to have a disability, with 18 per cent rating the usefulness of support as worse or much worse, compared with just 11 per cent of those who reported they were not disabled.

Those who reported that the support received since leaving school has been better or much better than was the case at school (45 per cent, or 460 of the young people) were asked how the support had been better. The results are shown in Table 5.2. The most frequently reported improvements were that:

- their needs were understood better, and
- more support had been available.

Table 5.2: Ways in which support received since leaving school has been better

	N	%
My needs are understood better	207	45
More support is available	188	42
It is easy to find where to go for support	57	14
Everyone involved works together better	54	11
Treat me as an adult	16	3
More time for me	9	3
More support	10	2
More independent	8	2
Listen more	7	2
More options/choices	7	2
People/teachers are more helpful	6	1
Easier than/didn't like/left school	6	1
Better/clearer advice	6	1
More mature/older	4	1
More focused	3	1
Confident	3	1
More practical	2	1
Learnt more	3	0
Other	36	7
Don't know	21	4
Total (N)	460	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 5.3: Ways in which support received since leaving school has been worse

	N	%
Not as much support is available	89	60
My needs have not been understood	42	30
I did not know where to go for support	11	9
The people and agencies involved in supporting me do not work together	13	8
I haven't asked for/needed support	5	5
Other	20	14
Total (N)	141	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Just 14 per cent of young people who thought the support they had recently received was better than the support they got at school, said this was because the support was easy to find and only 11 per cent said that everyone involved had worked together.

The young people who felt that the support available since school had been worse or much worse (14 per cent or 141 young people) were also asked why they had given this response, and the results are shown in Table 5.3. The most commonly given reasons for why support had been worse since leaving school were that:

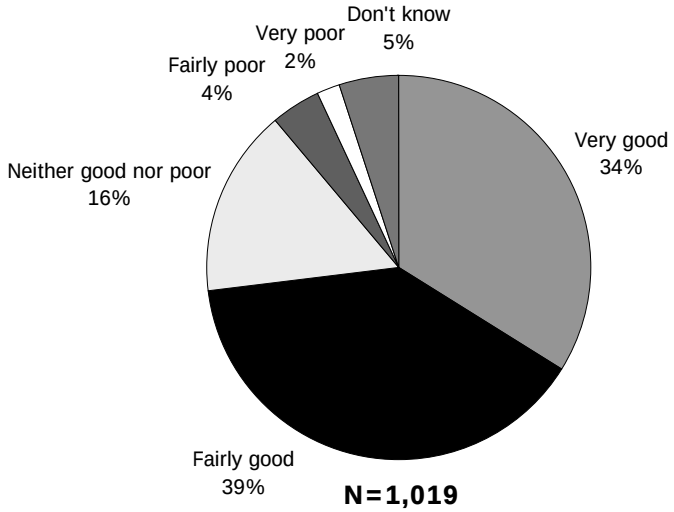
- not as much support had been available (60 per cent), and
- young people felt that their needs were not being understood (30 per cent).

Furthermore, just under one in ten of these young people said that they did not know where to go for support. A similar number also reported that support services did not work together.

5.1.4 Co-operation

All the young people surveyed were asked about how well they felt that everyone involved in helping and supporting them had co-operated, since they had left school. This included all the formal and professional sources of support discussed in the preceding sections, together with others involved in helping and supporting them, such as family and friends. The results are shown in Figure 5.4. Nearly three-quarters (73 per cent) felt that co-operation had been very or fairly good, and only six per cent felt that it had been poor or fairly poor. By main SEN type at school, those with communication and interaction difficulties were the least satisfied with co-operation (11 per cent rated it as fairly or very poor). Those with a disability had found co-operation to be worse than was the case amongst those who did not consider themselves disabled (nine per cent compared to four per cent rated co-operation as fairly or very poor).

Figure 5.4: Co-operation between all sources of help and support since school



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2005

5.1.5 Case studies — formal support systems

The young people in the case study sample draw support from a wide range of professionals working in a range of organisations and agencies — Personal Advisers, Disability Employment Advisers working from Jobcentres, course and personal tutors in FE Colleges, social workers and key workers in other forms of provision. There are certainly many examples of effective support from these sources. For instance, Stuart currently enjoys excellent support from his specialist residential college and from the mainstream college where he attends courses. He describes the quality of support in positive terms:

'Obviously when I first came here it covered things like if I had any problems to do with, obviously, this college, the other college, and if I was okay in my lessons, stuff like that. There was a lot of communication between [tutors in the mainstream and specialist college]…It covered everything. It covered my living, my social, everything.'

He has also had good support from a Disability Employment Adviser who helped him find his current provision, put together funding to support him and also found Stuart a job he could have taken had he wanted.

Likewise, Devesh found his way onto a basic-skills course where he was well supported by his course tutor and a personal tutor. Moreover, the course put him into regular contact with a supported employment organisation. Devesh was delighted with the temporary, part-time job they found him with an employer with whom they have strong links. He is continuing to work with this organisation to search for more work and his key worker is confident that this is possible.

However, Devesh's case also illustrates some of the unevenness in support systems. Devesh had originally taken a Business Administration course at the college. At the time of the Wave Two

interviews, he was adamant that he was not receiving the sort of support he needed and eventually had to transfer to the basic-skills course. Moreover, although the supported employment organisation is taking the lead in finding him work, he is also in contact with a Disability Employment Adviser. As the supported employment worker explains, there are some conflicts with the DEA in terms of what is in Devesh's best interests:

'[A supported employment worker and Devesh] went to see the DEA together and again she brought up referring Devesh for work at Workstep, which is 16 hours plus. He doesn't know if he's ready for that and if he could cope, but his mother actually wants him to go full-time, which is anything from 16 hours plus. So we could end up back in the situation where he's feeling a bit pressured.'

Whatever the rights and wrongs of this issue, it is unlikely to be in Devesh's interests to have two agencies disputing what should be his next step — particularly if that dispute exacerbates pre-existing family tensions.

Although disputes of this kind are not common in the data, the sense of highly variable and incoherent support certainly is. Ben, for instance, seems to have had good support for transition both from his school and from the FE college he attended on leaving school. He also now receives support from a Disability Employment Adviser who has helped him find his current job. However, between times, Ben seems to have fallen through the net. His first job was intended as work experience rather than employment *per se*, and Ben's college were taken by surprise when he stayed on. His contacts with Connexions were minimal and by the time he had an interview with a Personal Adviser at college, he had already made his mind up to leave. Connexions subsequently wrote to him with details of how to get in touch, but after this their involvement ceased. Later, one of his friends tried to approach Connexions but was told he was too old and, as a result of this, Ben himself has seen no point in making a similar approach. When, therefore, he eventually had problems in his first job and found his employer and workmates unsupportive, he did not seek support anywhere.

Eventually, he left the job in acrimonious circumstances. He and his mother claim that when he subsequently tried to claim Jobseekers Allowance, his former employers responded to what was probably a routine inquiry from the Benefits Agency by saying that he was inadequate for work. Whatever the truth of this, Ben had considerable problems claiming his allowance and had to fight the case only with the help of his mother. Moreover, he has decided not to use his former employer as a referee and not to disclose his period of employment to prospective employers. His former college only became aware that the job had broken down when he asked them for a reference and while they express surprise that he did not ask about the prospect of taking further courses, they seem not to have been proactive in making contact with him.

Similar stories recur throughout the case studies and, not surprisingly, young people who decide to make their own way into employment seem to be most vulnerable. Rosie, for instance, moved from a college course in the South to unemployment in the North East in order to be with her boyfriend. On her own initiative, she had joint discussions with college staff and a Connexions worker in the North East but

believed that she would lose her Jobseeker's Allowance if she began to study and that no other form of financial support was available. As a result, she continued to claim Jobseeker's Allowance and was placed on New Deal. She speaks of her New Deal Adviser 'sending' her to various placements which she found irrelevant to her interests — she was taking a course in childcare in the South but has had no childcare-related placement subsequently. She is now working with an employment agency which finds her casual jobs. On the advice of her boyfriend's mother, she approached a local youth project but was told that she was too old for them to work with. There has been no contact with the Connexions Service since the brief initial contact at the local FE college and there is no record of Rosie on the Connexions database — possibly because she has moved region.

What seems to be the case is that, by the age of 20, these young people are potentially supported by a multiplicity of systems, notably those in FE colleges, Jobcentres and the Connexions Service. Individually, each of these systems may be very effective. However, there is some variation in the strength of the support they provide and there are ample opportunities for young people to fall down the cracks between them. Typically, the more dependent young people are likely to fall within the purview of one or other system and will be well-supported, particularly if they have well-informed and assertive parents who can shape services to their children's needs and wishes. However, young people who are more capable of making their own way are particularly at risk of wandering beyond the reach of support. Matthew's mother expresses clearly what seems to be needed in this situation. Matthew is unsuccessfully seeking employment, with strong but not particularly well-informed support from his parents, but with almost no support from any of the formal services. As his mother says:

'He needs something, I don't know. He needs somebody or some people to reassure him not to give up, because there is something out there for him somewhere. He's just got to reassure himself that eventually he will get a job.'

5.2 The role of parents, carers, other family and friends

The Wave Two research highlighted the importance of informal sources of support, principally parents and carers, but also friends, in supporting the young people through their transition from school. In the Wave Three work, the case studies again provided rich evidence of the ways in which family and friends continue to provide significant support. This is presented in the section below.

5.2.1 Case studies — family, friends and self-reliance

For all young people in the sample, parents act as major sources of support. For those with the most severe difficulties, parents play a crucial role in bringing together packages of provision and ensuring, as best they can, that they meet the needs and wishes of the young people. The sorts of constant interventions which they need to make are illustrated by this account from Sophie's mother about her first experiences at the Social services day centre:

'[Sophie] came back very lip trembly and obviously didn't like it and so the next week I think I asked to see somebody and I actually went over…The key worker came into the room, no notebook, no pencil, no nothing and I said, "she needs her socks changing; she gets eczema and she needs help with this and she needs help with that," and she's saying, "yes, I think we can do that," and I said, "at lunchtime I noticed that the hot drinks machine, apart from the fact that she couldn't work it, if she tried to she'd scald herself and she might do because she doesn't appreciate hot and cold,"…"Oh, that's the only drinks they have," she said, and I said, "what would she drink at lunchtime or what would she drink?" And she said, "I'm not sure". Then I said, "what happens about lunch, presumably we have to pay for it?" "I'm not sure," she said, "I'll find out." I'm not criticising. I wouldn't like to do that to [the centre] until we've had a chance to speak to them.'

For other young people, family support may be less all-embracing, but it is clearly there when needed. Toby, for instance, has relied very much on his own initiative and lives away from his parents. However, he too has found the help and support of his family at least as useful as that from formal support organisations:

Interviewer: *'Have you had any advice from anyone like Connexions before you left school and since?'*

Toby: *'I had a Careers adviser in [name] School and I did go to Connexions in [the city] just to enquire how I go about getting a course at [name] College.'*

Interviewer: *'Were they helpful?'*

Toby: *'Yes.'*

Interviewer: '*What about other people, like your sister?'*

Toby: *'Yes she applied for a job and they were looking for a younger person they could train up, that's how I got the job I am doing now. My sister pointed me in the right direction.'*

Interviewer: '*Was there anyone else helped you at this time?'*

Toby: '*My mother and father.'*

In Toby's case, as in that of some others, it seems possible to draw upon family support without being dependent. Paul, for instance, presents as one of the most independent young people in the case study sample, but still professes himself to be happy at home. He is certainly beginning to think about living independently, but, as he acknowledges, there is no greater family tension than might be expected in any household with a 20 year old child:

'I've come to that age now where I've got that maturity to me, but there's still that immaturity that you're living with your mum, your mum's doing everything for you, so I'm talking about it [moving into his own house] with my girlfriend…[My parents]'ll be gutted but I need to do it 'cause I'm the only kid in the house. My brother's moved out so I get all the attention and it does wear you down. When you're 20, you want your own space.'

In only a few cases — Li, Devesh and Andrea — was there evidence of real tension between the young person and their parents. The source of tension was not entirely clear in the first two cases, but *may* have arisen from a cultural expectation that all family members would contribute to the global family income. In Andrea's case, the tensions seem to be the result of her parents' efforts to offer support rather than of any disengagement on their part, as her mother explains:

'...it's almost as if she wants someone to hand it to her on a plate. Andrea, here's this, here's that. It doesn't work like that. At the moment, trying to find her a job, she's sitting there, "I'm not doing this, I'm not working in a factory, I'm not doing this and I'm not doing that." I'm saying, "You've got to do something. You can't stay on Jobseekers Allowance," but she won't make that effort. I look in the paper, look on the Internet, I say, "how about this one," and that's as far as it goes. "I can't 'phone up for you. I can't come to the interview with you because it wouldn't look right dragging mum along to an interview, would it?" It's trying to find her something that she's quite happy to do.'

Of course, the continued importance of family support does not necessarily mean that such support is well-directed. Matthew, for instance, was reliant on the somewhat ineffective support of his mother at the time of the Wave Two interviews and has continued to be. She herself acknowledges the limitations of what she has had to offer:

'I told him whatever he goes for now...whatever he comes up with now, as long as he's happy there, go for it. I wish now I'd have let him go at 16, because he wanted to go in the army and do a catering course and I really wish now I'd let him go. I was the one who said no and he backed down straight away from it...I couldn't do that. I could not be a mum and not see my kids.'

Matthew's situation, of course, illustrates a risk for all the young people in the sample. Insofar as family and friends continue to play a major role in determining the course of the transition process, they are dependent on the knowledge and skills which family and friends can bring to bear. For young people such as Sophie, with high levels of difficulty, family members are able to bring to bear a detailed knowledge of how the young person functions and what, therefore, they need. They play a key role, therefore, in customising provision for the young person. However, the more the young person is able to move into mainstream provision and employment, the less likely it is that family and friends will know what options are best for the young person to take. In Toby's and Paul's cases, the young person is sufficiently self-aware, the networks of contacts sufficiently strong and the parents are sufficiently restrained for their inevitable limitations to be outweighed by their positive support. In other cases, good advice is available from elsewhere. In cases such as Matthew, however, a high reliance on limited parental guidance is highly damaging to the transition process.

5.3 Further support needs

The young people who took part in the survey were asked whether there was any more help that they felt they needed.

Table 5.4: Additional help needed, by SEN type, school attended, statement, and disability status (per cent)

	Yes	No	(N)
Main SEN difficulty at school			
Communication and interaction	35	65	193
Cognition and learning	33	67	514
Sensory and/or physical	41	59	68
Behaviour, emotional and social development	33	67	134
Type of school			
Special school	47	53	323
Mainstream school	28	72	651
Statemented			
Statemented	40	60	645
Not statemented	27	73	292
Disabled			
Disabled	45	55	464
Not disabled	23	77	478
Total (N)			974

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Almost two-thirds (64 per cent) felt that they did not need any more help, but just over one-third felt that they required more help and support. The responses are shown more fully in Table 5.4. The perception that additional help and support was required was highest amongst the following groups:

- those who had attended a special school
- those who were disabled
- those whose main SEN type at school had been sensory and/or physical difficulties
- those who had received a statement.

5.3.1 Case studies — future support needs

The issue of medium- to long-term support needs is not one which concerns most young people or their families. For young people like Paul, the issue is keeping their jobs and moving upwards in their chosen field. For those like Matthew and Rosie, the issue is finding work. For those with more significant difficulties making what we have called deferred transitions, there seem to be two sets of issues. One is a medium-term issue to do with finding appropriate provision which will see them through the next three or four years. In some cases,

there is a reasonable expectation that this might eventually lead to some form of employment and a meaningful degree of independent living. However, for the more dependent young people, there is a second set of issues to do with long-term support needs. Already, some parents are beginning to think about what will happen after they become incapable of supporting their child — or indeed, how they will be able to reduce the burden of dependence on themselves and on other family members as their child becomes an adult.

The ideal solution seems to have been found by Marcus' family. As we have seen, Marcus has found a place at an independent centre where it seems likely he can stay indefinitely. From his parents' point of view, the centre offers 'so many positive things', not least that it helps to co-ordinate the wide range of services which Marcus needs:

'It doesn't take the responsibility away from you, it's simply there as a support.'

As a result, Marcus' parents can now think about increasing both his and their independence:

'I think it's a natural progression… He's a teenager now and coming into his early twenties he would probably be at home. But come mid-twenties I would like him to have a bit more independence so that we could have a little bit of a life to ourselves.'

The transition process to date has, Marcus' parents report, imposed considerable strain on themselves and they regard the transition process as only 'two-thirds there'. Nonetheless, the situation they have arrived at promises well for the future because of the level, coherence and stability of the support they receive.

In the case of the more highly dependent young people, however, the future is much less certain. Sophie's parents, for instance, have had considerable difficulties sorting out her medium-term provision and still have no satisfactory respite care. Nonetheless, they are already thinking about the long-term and Sophie's mother explains the strain this imposes:

'Well, this again, is an absolute nightmare really…Constantly this is on my mind and if I could get something in the pipeline I would really feel 20 years younger because it's constantly there. You don't know what can happen and you think, I don't know whether I'm going to be ill and all the rest of it.'

She goes on to give an account of talking to various supporters (such as social workers), hearing about new possibilities, visiting different provisions across the country but being as yet unable to sort out long-term provision. In contrast to Marcus' parents, Sophie's parents have not been able to find any individual or organisation that can share this burden effectively. Ironically, they had just such a person in Sophie's school headteacher:

Interviewer: '*It seems to me that you're the person, obviously you know Sophie better than anybody else but you have to make sure that everyone else understands Sophie's needs and there's still no one person who's helping you with that all the way through. Is that right?'*

Mother: '*I suppose there isn't really. With school we were spoilt really because [the head] was exceptionally good and I know now I could ring [the head] and she'd say, "Hi [mother's name], come and see me." She's really good. I know I could but I wouldn't because she's got enough problems with the school but you could always turn to [the head] for anything on the school side, you could turn to her for anything.'*

We also get a hint here of why Sophie's mother might be finding it difficult to access appropriate support. Throughout her interview, she emphasises the problems faced by the professionals working with her daughter and her own reluctance to trouble them further. However, in the absence of any powerful and coherent support system which shares the task of managing transitions, the consequence seems to be that Sophie's mother is simply left to shoulder more of the burden herself.

5.4 General views on support arrangements

To provide an overview of how young people viewed the support they had received over the last 18 months (since the Wave Two survey), young people were given a series of five statements, and asked if they agreed or disagreed with them. The overall results are presented in Table 5.5.

The responses given indicate that in the main, these young people have felt well supported over the last 18 months, with more than four-fifths indicating that they know where to go for help, advice and support, and agreeing that they have enough opportunities to discuss problems when they arise. Just under three-quarters felt that they had been well supported in their education, training and career decisions. Just over two-thirds said they had a key person aside from their parents/carers who they could rely on for help, advice and support, although more than a quarter said they did not. Just over half felt that they needed a key person to go to for help, advice and support, although more than one-third felt that they did not need this type of support.

Table 5.5: Views on support over the last 18 months, since the Wave Two survey (per cent)

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	(N)
I have been well supported in my education, training and career decisions	74	12	14	982
I know where to go for help, advice and support	82	6	12	981
I have enough opportunities to discuss problems when they arise	82	8	10	967
I have a key person (other than my parents/carers) who I can rely on for help, advice and support	67	7	27	977
I feel I need a key person (other than my parents/carers) who I could go to for help, advice and support	51	11	37	976

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Although most of these young people seem to be satisfied with their support arrangements over the past 18 months, there are a significant minority who are not. In order to explore which young people are not getting the support they feel they need, Tables 5.6 to 5.10 show the young people's general views on the support they have received over the last 18 months, *ie* since the Wave Two survey, by the following:

- SEN type at school
- type of school attended
- whether statemented or not
- whether the young person is disabled or not.

There were a few differences for each view. Each is taken separately below.

1. ***I have been well supported in my education, training and career decisions***.

Young people who had behavioural, emotional and social development difficulties at school were the most likely to disagree with this statement.

2. ***I know where to go for help, advice and support***.

The young people who were the least likely to agree with this statement were those who had attended special schools, and those who had been statemented when at school, and those who considered themselves to have a disability.

3. ***I have enough opportunities to discuss problems when they arise***.

As with the previous view, those who had attended special schools, those who had been statemented when at school, and those with a disability were most likely to disagree with this view.

4. ***I have a key person (other than my parents/carers) who I can rely on for help, advice and support***.

Young people with communication and interaction SEN types at school, those who had attended special schools, and those who were disabled were the most likely to disagree with this view.

5. ***I feel I need a key person (other than my parents/carers) who I could go to for help, advice and support***.

Young people who had sensory and/or physical difficulties at school, those who had attended a special school, and those who were disabled were most likely to agree that they needed a key person, other than their parents or carers who they could go to for support.

Table 5.6: View (1) on support over the last 18 months, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I have been well supported in my education, training and career decisions	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	75	80	80	58	76	73	74	74	74	73
Neither agree nor disagree	10	11	2	19	8	14	11	14	10	14
Disagree	16	9	18	23	16	13	15	12	16	13
Total (N)	191	518	68	139	316	666	648	296	458	486

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 5.7: View (2) on support over the last 18 months, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I know where to go for help, advice and support	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and / or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	80	84	82	80	72	85	78	86	79	84
Neither agree nor disagree	5	5	6	11	7	6	6	7	6	7
Disagree	14	10	13	9	21	9	16	7	15	9
Total (N)	189	518	66	142	312	669	646	296	458	487

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 5.8: View (3) on support over the last 18 months, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I have enough opportunities to discuss problems when they arise	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	78	84	82	80	73	84	76	86	75	87
Neither agree nor disagree	10	8	6	8	9	8	9	8	10	7
Disagree	12	7	12	12	18	8	15	6	15	7
Total (N)	185	512	67	137	300	667	634	294	448	483

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 5.9: View (4) on support over the last 18 months, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I have a key person (other than my parents/carers) who I can reply on for help, advice and support	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	55	71	71	75	61	69	66	68	62	70
Neither agree nor disagree	8	6	1	5	5	7	5	8	7	6
Disagree	37	23	28	21	34	24	28	24	30	23
Total (N)	191	509	69	142	318	659	647	291	460	481

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 5.10: View (5) on support over the last 18 months, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I feel I need a key person (other than my parents/ carers) who I could go to for help, advice, support	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/ or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	56	50	65	46	62	48	57	47	60	44
Neither agree nor disagree	12	11	5	14	10	12	11	12	10	12
Disagree	32	39	29	39	28	40	32	41	29	43
Total (N)	193	512	67	139	316	660	646	291	460	480

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

5.5 Chapter summary

- Young people most frequently reported having had contact with doctors, Jobcentre Plus advisers (general) and Connexions or careers service advisers for support during the last 18 months. Almost a quarter of young people had not had any contact with professional support services during this time.
- For each source of formal support, more than half of the young people reported that they were satisfied with the support they had received, with satisfaction being highest for support from doctors, youth workers and disability workers.
- Those whose main SEN type at school was behavioural, emotional and social development and those who had attended special schools were least likely to be satisfied with the formal support available to them.
- Nearly half of the young people felt that the support they had received had improved since they left school, just over one-third felt that it had stayed about the same, and 14 per cent felt that it had got worse.
- Those who had attended a special school, those who were disabled, those who had received a statement at school, and young people whose SEN type at school had been sensory and/or physical difficulties were the groups most likely to feel they had support needs which were not currently being met.

6. Leisure Activities and Social Life

The data from the Wave Three survey and the case studies are used in this chapter to examine the leisure activities and social lives of the young people. First, the chapter looks at the types of leisure activities that these young people are involved in. It then turns to friends and other relationships, considering how much time these young people spend with friends, and what they do together. It also looks at whether they find it easy to make friends, the ages of their friends, and the extent to which their friends are disabled or have difficulties.

6.1 Leisure activities

The majority of the young people surveyed regularly watch television, listen to music and spend time with friends and family (Table 6.1). However, large proportions of these young people are engaging in leisure and social activities outside the home, for example, going shopping, going clubbing or dancing, going to the cinema and theatre, or having meals out. Participation in sports and creative pursuits is a little lower, with just under one-third taking part in sports, and 13 per cent doing painting, drawing or other crafts.

Some of the young people said that there were some leisure activities that they would like to do, but would find difficult. These are shown in Table 6.2. The most common response was concerned with learning to drive, with almost one-third of the young people surveyed citing this as something they would like to do but would find difficult. Young people with a disability, and females, gave this response more frequently (38 per cent and 37 per cent respectively). Nearly a quarter said they would like to go on holiday, and 12 per cent said they would like to go out alone or have more freedom but found it problematic to do so. Almost one-third of the young people said that there weren't any activities that they wanted to do but that they would find difficult.

Table 6.1: Leisure activities

	N	%
Watch TV	831	82
Listen to music	782	76
Spend time with friends	724	73
Spend time with family	671	65
Go shopping	564	54
Play video games or computer games	490	47
Go clubbing/dancing	425	46
Go to cinema/theatre	413	40
Have meals out	409	39
Read magazines or books	403	39
Use computer	370	35
Do outdoor/indoor sports	309	31
Watch sports	283	28
Spend time with pets	228	21
Do school or college work	184	17
Paint, draw, or do other arts/crafts	151	13
Go to places of worship	74	6
Voluntary activities	71	6
Youth groups, including scouts	68	6
Other	91	8
Total (N)	1,019	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 6.2: Activities which young people would like to do, but that they felt would be difficult for them

	N	%
Driving, learning to drive, or passing theory test	323	30
Travelling or going on holiday	244	24
Exercise or going to the gym	165	16
Reading, writing or spelling	163	14
Going out alone or having more freedom	137	12
Sporting activities	124	12
Going out more, socialising and visiting friends and family	133	11
Using computers or playing computers and video games	48	4
Other	39	4
Don't know	22	2
None	291	30
Total (N)	1,019	

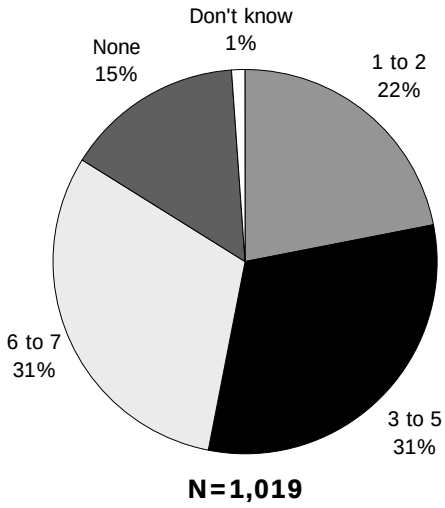
Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

6.2 Social life and relationships

The vast majority of the young people surveyed said that they spent time with friends, including a partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, husband or wife. The amount of time spent with friends during an average week is shown in Figure 6.1. Nearly a quarter (22 per cent) said that they spent one or two evenings a week with friends, and nearly two-thirds (62 per cent) said that they spent between three and seven evenings a week with friends. However, 15 per cent said that they did not spend any evenings with friends. Amongst those whose SEN type at school was communication and interaction difficulties, this proportion was higher, at 27 per cent. It was also high amongst those who had attended special school (36 per cent) and lower amongst those who had attended mainstream school (eight per cent). One-quarter of those who had received statements at school did not spend any evenings with friends, compared to just seven per cent of those who had not. Nearly a quarter (23 per cent) of those who had a disability said they did not spend any time with friends during the evenings; this was the case for just nine per cent of those who were not disabled. A higher proportion of females than males did not see their friends during the evenings (12 per cent compared with 20 per cent), and the same was true for young people of non-White ethnic origin when compared to those of White ethnic origin (22 per cent of young people who reported they were non-White said they did not spend any evenings with friends, compared to 15 per cent of young people reporting they were White). By current activity, social activity was lowest amongst those not in education, employment or training (25 per cent did not spend any evenings with friends) and highest amongst those in employment or training (the equivalent figure was eight per cent) with those in education showing an

Figure 6.1: Number of evenings spent with friends during an average week



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI 2005

intermediate level of social activity outside their family (19 per cent did not spend any evenings with friends during an average week).

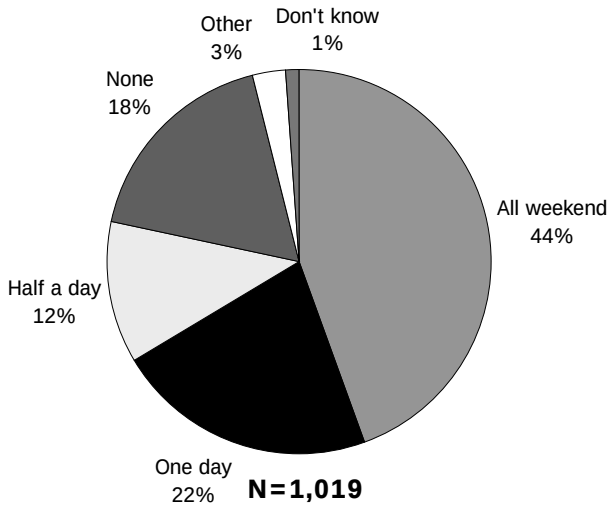
Most young people spent considerable time at weekends, with friends including a partner, boyfriend, girlfriend, husband or wife (Figure 6.2). In fact, almost half of all the young people taking part in the Wave Three survey said that they spent all weekend with friends, and a further third reported that they spent a day or half a day at the weekend with friends.

The groups of young people who were less likely to spend time with friends at the weekends were similar to those who didn't spend time with friends during the evenings. However, the proportions not spending any of the weekend with friends was particularly high amongst those who had attended a special school (41 per cent), and those who had sensory and/or physical disabilities at school.

The social activities reported by these young people when spending time with friends and partners are shown in Table 6.3. Almost two-thirds of those reporting that they spent time with friends during evenings and/or at weekends said that they went to pubs and clubs, half visited friends in their homes, and shopping, going to the cinema and playing sports were each reported by around one-third of the young people who spent time with friends.

In terms of who these young people are spending time with, nearly half (46 per cent) said that they spent time with friends of a range of ages (Figure 6.3). Just over one-third reported that their friends were mainly their own age, around one-tenth had friends who were mainly older, with a smaller proportion (three per cent) reporting that they had friends who were mainly younger. Three per

Figure 6.2: Time spent with friends at the weekend



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 6.3: Activities with friends

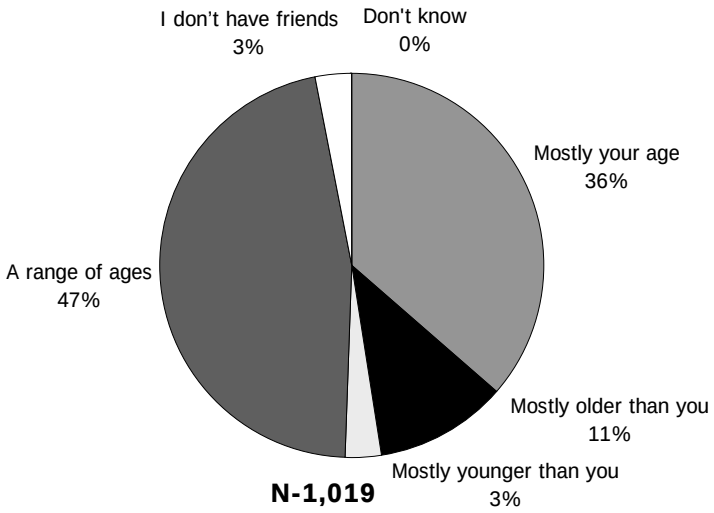
	N	%
Go to pubs/clubs	537	64
Stay in your home	429	51
Visit friend's homes	431	50
Go shopping	316	35
Go to the cinema	299	33
Play sports	232	27
Watch sports	125	12
Do organised activities	99	10
Hang around	92	10
Go for a meal out/to a restaurant	22	3
Driving round	11	1
Listen to music	7	1
Fix up cars	4	1
Go to gym	7	1
Biking/cycling	5	1
Chat/talk to friends	7	1
Go for walks	6	1
Other	47	4
Total (N)	886	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

cent reported they did not have friends; this response was highest amongst those who had attended a special school (eight per cent).

Figure 6.3: Friends' ages



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

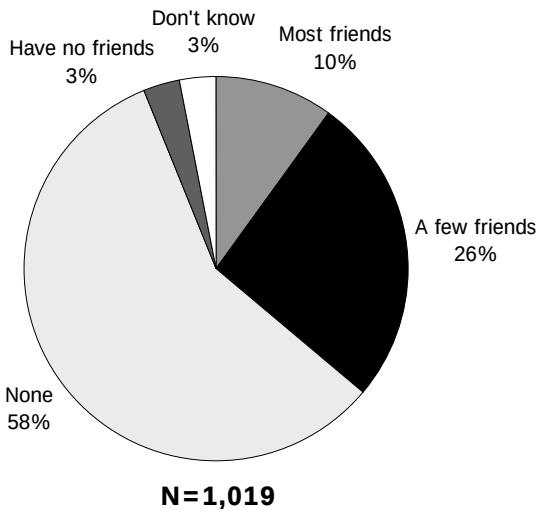
Source: IES/MORI, 2004

The majority (58 per cent) of these young people reported that none of their friends had disabilities or difficulties, whilst just over a quarter (26 per cent) said that a few of their friends had disabilities or difficulties. Ten per cent of young people reported that most of their friends had disabilities or difficulties (Figure 6.4). By SEN type at school, those with communication and interaction difficulties and physical or sensory difficulties were most likely to report that the majority of their friends had disabilities or difficulties (18 per cent and 23 per cent respectively). The same was true of over one-third (36 per cent) of those who had attended special schools, one-fifth (21 per cent) of young people who had received a statement at school, and one-fifth (20 per cent) of those who considered themselves to be disabled.

More than two-thirds (68 per cent) of the young people surveyed reported that, in general, they found it easy to make friends, and a further 15 per cent said that they sometimes found it easy (Figure 6.5). Fifteen per cent said that they did not find it easy to make friends. Higher proportions of young people reported that they did not find it easy to make friends amongst the following groups: those whose main SEN type at school was communication and interaction difficulties (23 per cent), those who had attended special schools (27 per cent), those who had been statemented (20 per cent), and those who had a disability (23 per cent).

Almost three-quarters (72 per cent) of the young people reported that they had had a boyfriend or girlfriend since the end of Year 11.

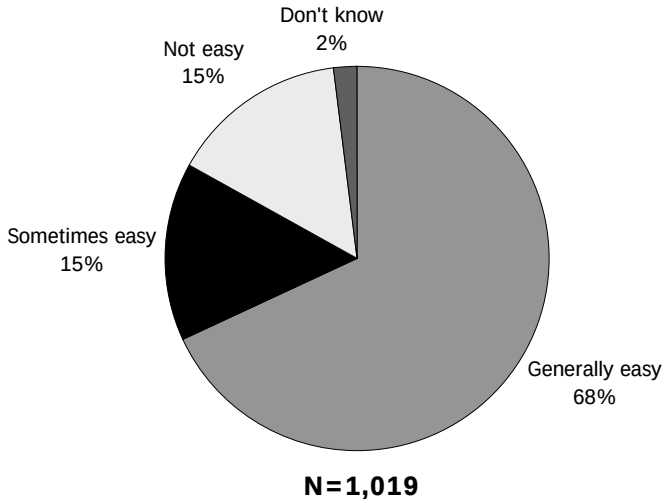
Figure 6.4: Proportion of friends with disabilities or difficulties



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Figure 6.5: Ease of making friends



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

6.2.1 Case studies — leisure activities and social life

As with the survey data, some of the young people in the case study sample stand out as having created for themselves a supportive circle of friends and an active social life. Paul is probably the most obvious example. He has had the same girlfriend since he was 15 and she seems to have been a constant source of support and stability:

'She's helped me get my jobs…Yes, she's kept me in line. She doesn't let me go elsewhere. She's kept me on the straight and narrow, which is good. It always helps.'

He has made new friends at work and can even call on them for help with his literacy difficulties when necessary:

'I've got some good people there…It's helpful that I can sit there and not worry about spelling and stuff 'cause I know I've got people that will sit there and help me, which is good. It's helpful.'

Added to this are what appear to be positive family relationships and even positive relationships with people in his neighbourhood. Moreover, he has a keen interest in sports and an active social life, even if it is largely home based:

'I'd rather just sit in with my girlfriend and just chill out, personally. I'm not a drinker anyway. It's best just to come home and then chill out, have your friends round, whatever.'

In other cases, the young people's difficulties means that their social life has to be facilitated by adults, though this certainly does not mean that their social life is anything other than rich. For instance, Gareth's social life centres on his college course — where he often engages voluntarily in extra activities — and on a network of social activities organised by a group of parents of young people with difficulties and disabilities. There is no doubt that this imposes a burden on the

parents, but Gareth himself has a range of friends and a steady girlfriend at college. Indeed, he dropped out of attending a Social Services day centre because he was too busy with his other activities. In Sophie's case, however, the adult facilitation has begun to come under strain. This is partly because she has moved to adult provision and has lost access to respite care where she met other young people. It is partly that the social group organised by a network of parents has moved to a midweek night when Sophie is already tired from her college activities.

Clearly, where social life is facilitated by adults, much depends on the quality and appropriateness of such facilitation. Typically, such facilitation comes from statutory services and voluntary agencies on the one hand and networks of parents on the other. For instance, Tania has an active social life which centres around her college life and the friends she has made at college. However, she also attends riding lessons organised by a charity, swimming lessons organised by a local Sports Partnership and a day centre organised by a charity. Moreover, her parents are part of a strong informal network of parents of young people with disabilities and difficulties. They look to that network not only for support but also to extend the range of options they can offer Tania. For instance, they map out her medium-term future in the following terms:

'I think it would be good for her…to start thinking about employment and then ultimately, in her mid 20s, perhaps supported living but again what we feel would be appropriate would be with some friends because why should she go and move in with people she doesn't know? I mean, I think there probably are enough friends whose parents feel the same as us and would sort of help to get their flat or whatever and there would be three or four living together.'

The strength of such networking and adult facilitation is that young people like Tania have a relatively rich social life. Arguably the price they pay, however, is that their social life tends to be restricted to other people with difficulties and disabilities and to be, to some extent, dominated by adults.

However, other young people are very much on their own, but have social difficulties which make the development of a rich social life unlikely. In some cases, the breaking of links with school and subsequent churning have exacerbated the situation. Devesh, for instance, has left college and is no longer employed, so it seems he is losing contact with his circle of friends. Peter likewise has left college and lost contact with his only friend there. He seems to have made no new friends on his Entry to Employment scheme and has no social life outside the home. However, he has found a new interest in football and a Connexions worker has advised his parents to set up a team for young people with similar difficulties. It remains to be seen whether this will materialise. Similarly, Emma has made no progress from her isolated position at Wave Two. She claims to have friends and a boyfriend, but the reality seems to be that her social life centres around the home. Moreover, since she is unemployed, it is difficult to see how her social position is likely to improve.

6.3 Chapter summary

- Many of these young people appear to have varied leisure activities. Most of the young people surveyed reported that they watched television, listened to music and spent time with friends. Just under half said they played video or computer games and a similar proportion said they went clubbing or dancing. Nearly one-third took part in sports.
- Nearly one-third of the young people reported that they would like to drive or learn to drive, but were unable to do so.
- The vast majority of the young people spent time with friends at weekends and in the evenings. Young people who had attended a special school, and those whose SEN type at school had been communication and interactions were the groups least likely to do this.
- Nearly half of the young people mixed with friends of a range of ages, and more than half said that their friends did not have disabilities, with just over a quarter reporting that some of their friends had disabilities. Those whose SEN type had been communication and interaction difficulties were the most likely to report that all of their friends had disabilities or difficulties.
- More than two-thirds felt it was generally easy to make friends and almost three-quarters of the young people had a boyfriend or girlfriend since the end of year

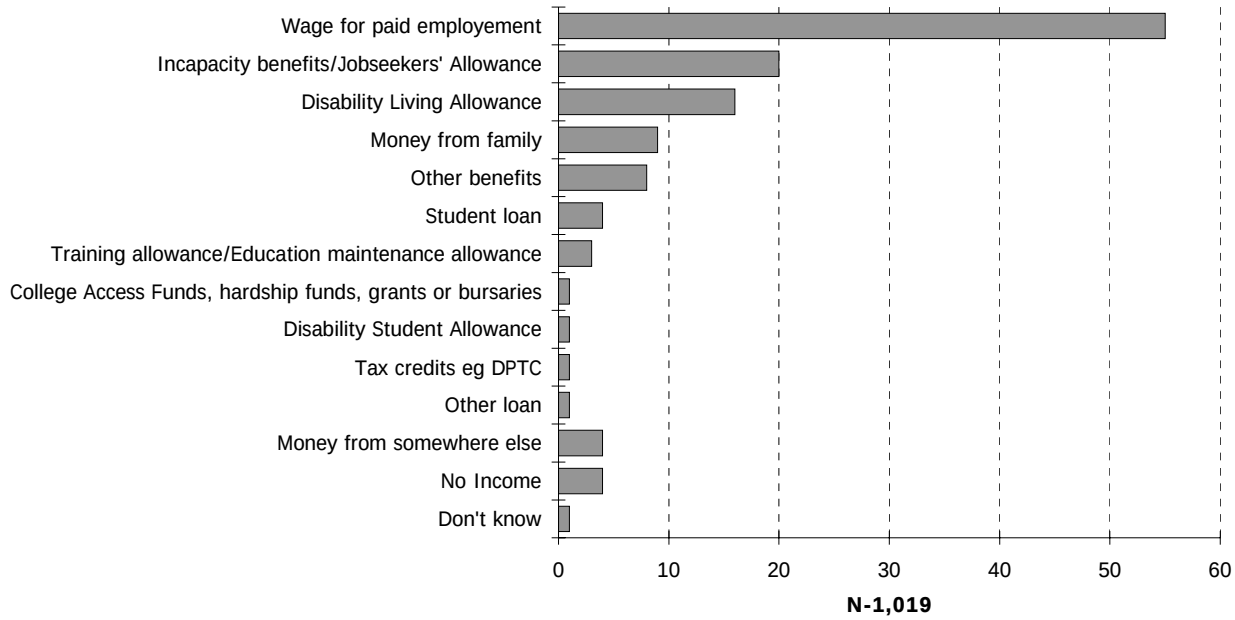
7. Autonomy, Independence and Aspirations

This chapter deals with issues around independence and the autonomy of young people participating in the research. It looks at the finances of the young people — their sources of income and whether they or their parents/carers look after their money. It then examines the extent to which the young people are living independently, and explores their satisfaction with their current living arrangements, and their expectations about where and how they will live in the future. Finally, the chapter turns to outline the young people's hopes and aspirations, including their general perceptions of their time since Year 11, and how they feel about the future.

7.1 Finances

Young people's main sources of income are shown in Figure 7.1. Not surprisingly, more than half of all young people (55 per cent) said that they were receiving a wage for paid employment. The second most frequently reported source of income was Incapacity

Figure 7.1: Sources of income



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Benefit or Jobseekers Allowance, which was reported by one-fifth of all young people. Sixteen per cent received Disability Living Allowance, and eight per cent said that they received other benefits. Almost one-tenth (nine per cent) reported that they received some money from their family, but four per cent said that they had no income at all.

As might be expected, the proportion of young people receiving wages was lower amongst certain groups of young people, for example, those who had attended special schools (20 per cent), those who had received statements (40 per cent), and those who were disabled (39 per cent). More than two-thirds of those who were not statemented, and two-thirds of those who had attended mainstream school were being paid a wage from employment. One-third of those who considered themselves to have a disability received Disability Living Allowance.

Table 7.1 shows the young people's sources of income by their current main activity. Unsurprisingly, virtually all of those in employment and training received a wage for this, however, a quarter of young people who were in education at Wave Three were also earning money from employment. Some young people

Table 7.1: Sources of income, by current main activity

	Education		Employment and Training		Not in education, employment or training (NEET)		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Wage for paid employment	61	25	433	97	10	3	504	55
Incapacity benefits/Jobseekers' Allowance	76	23	6	1	152	51	234	20
Disability Living Allowance	112	32	13	2	98	27	223	16
Money from family	60	24	7	2	25	9	92	9
Other benefits	22	7	7	2	56	20	85	8
Student loan	36	15	0	0	0	0	36	4
Training allowance/Education maintenance allowance	21	8	7	1	6	2	34	3
College Access Funds, hardship funds, grants or bursaries	12	5	1	0	0	0	13	1
Disability Student Allowance	13	4	0	0	1	0	14	1
Tax credits *eg* DPTC	2	0	5	1	4	2	11	1
Other loan	5	1	0	0	5	1	10	1
Career Development loan	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Money from somewhere else	14	6	6	2	22	8	42	4
No Income	14	6	0	0	24	9	38	4
Don't know	7	2	0	0	3	1	10	1
Total (N)	281		447		291		1,019	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

in education also reported receiving Jobseekers Allowance and/or Incapacity Benefits (23 per cent) and Disability Living Allowance (32 per cent). Fifteen per cent had taken out student loans. Almost a quarter of these young people were being given money by their families.

Just over half of young people who were not in employment, education or training were receiving Incapacity Benefits and/or Jobseekers Allowance, and around a quarter received Disability Living Allowance. One-fifth received other benefits, and almost one-tenth received money from their families. A similar proportion said they did not have any income at all.

The amount of income received varied a great deal, but around one-third (34 per cent) of young people were receiving between £51 and £150 per week, with the same proportion receiving between £151 and £250 per week (Table 7.2). Fourteen per cent reported receiving over £250 per week.

More than four-fifths (86 per cent) of the young people said that the money they received was paid directly to them (Figure 7.2). Seventy-eight per cent of those with a disability said that all of their income was paid directly to them, compared to 93 per cent who were not disabled. By current activity, virtually all (99 per cent) of the young people in employment received all their income, compared to 76 per cent of those in education, and 86 per

Table 7.2: Average income per week (after tax and national insurance)

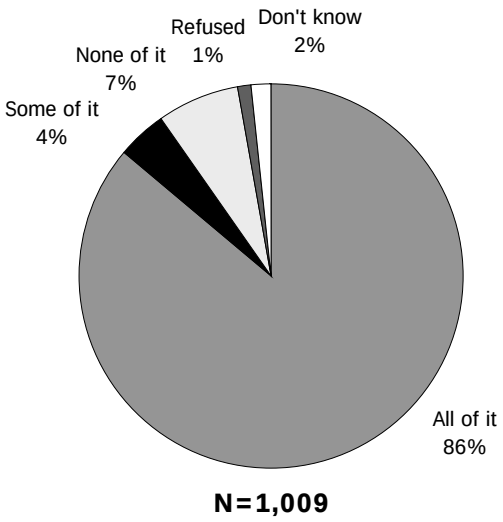
	N	%
Nothing	33	3
£1-£50	158	16
£51-£100	193	18
£101-£150	155	15
£151-£200	168	19
£201-£250	74	8
£251-£300	31	4
£301-£350	8	1
£351-£400	3	0
£401-£450	1	0
£451-£500	2	0
Over £500	7	1
It varies	58	6
Don't know	90	7
Refused	28	3
Total	1,009	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

cent of those not in education, employment or training.

Figure 7.2: Proportion of income paid directly to the young person



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Of those young people who said that some or all of their income was paid to someone else, parents and carers were the most commonly reported recipients (72 per cent). Six per cent of young people said that some or all of their income was paid to their partner, with smaller proportions reporting income being paid to other family members, or to residential homes and care homes, or colleges.

More than three-quarters of young people in the Wave Three survey reported that, on a day-to-day basis, they looked after their money themselves (Table 7.3). One-tenth (11 per cent) reported that their parents/carers took day-to-day responsibility for their money, and eight per cent said that they took joint responsibility, together with either their parents/carers or other family members, or their partner.

Table 7.3: Day-to-day responsibility for money

	N	%
Young person	730	78
Parents/carers	161	11
Jointly with parents/carers or another family member	84	6
Jointly with my partner	15	2
Refused	3	1
Total	1,019	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

7.1.1 Case studies — finances

At Wave Two, money was scarcely an issue for young people, while their parents had, where necessary, been supported by their schools in putting together a funding package to support their post-school provision. Now, however, money figures more prominently for both groups. We have already seen how the parents of more highly dependent young people bear the responsibility for negotiating packages of provision and funding as their children move from childhood to adult services. As we have also seen, this means that there is always anxiety as to whether these packages will fall into place in a timely fashion.

For most young people, however, income paid directly to themselves has begun to be an issue. Those who are in employment receive relatively low levels of pay, but at this stage this seems not to be a problem. Some, such as Paul, Rosie and Toby have achieved some degree of financial independence, are living or actively planning to live away from the family home and are beginning to budget in a recognisably adult manner. Other young people, however, though increasingly aware of finance, continue to remain financially dependent on their parents. Ben is, perhaps, typical. He is employed and the level of bonuses he could earn over Christmas was a motivating factor in taking his current job. However, it seems to be other attractions which keep him in the job now that he is working at a much lower standard rate of pay. Moreover, although he is thinking in general terms about setting up home with his girlfriend, there is no evidence that he has begun to plan or budget for this. As his mother explains, he has 'the life of Riley' at home and does not really need to budget in an adult way at this stage.

There is relatively little sense of money shaping the lives of young people whose finances are entangled with those of their parents and who do not need extensive packages of support. However, there are exceptions to this. In the cases of both Li and Devesh, as we have seen, there are indications that there may be tensions between them and their parents and that these may centre around an expectation on the part of the parents that the young people should be contributing to the overall family income. As we have seen before, there may be cultural issues here to do with how far and in what ways young people are seen as dependants upon, independent of, or contributors to their families. There is too little evidence in the case studies to explore this issue further, except to say that the dominant cultural model seems to be that children are highly dependent on the family until they are capable of supporting themselves, at which point they become highly independent. This is different, say, from a model which sees all family members as contributors to mutual well-being from the earliest possible point. (There is, incidentally, no reason to believe that this model is peculiar to particular minority ethnic groups.)

It is also clear that financial considerations can shape the lives of young people on benefits. In particular, young people on Jobseekers Allowance are sensitive to its possible loss if they breach the rules by undertaking extended study. It is this which deters Rosie from returning to college and (so she claims) deters Andrea from pursuing further study. Charlotte, on the other hand, falls below the hours limit and claims Jobseekers Allowance. However, this means that she falls within the purview of New Deal which, her college tutors feel, may be

inappropriate to her needs. Stuart, likewise, seems to have fallen foul of the rules governing Jobseekers Allowance. The situation is confused, but seems to be that Stuart took a temporary job at a point when he could have been applying for Jobseekers Allowance. Now that he has a residential college place with associated funding, he is no longer eligible to claim. His mother explains:

'...he could have got Jobseekers Allowance but that became extremely difficult because he was working during the summer when he needed to apply for it, and because he was working and getting paid at that time it meant he couldn't really apply for Jobseekers Allowance...It became so fraught at the time because he felt he had taken that job at the play centre, he was employed but couldn't legitimately apply for jobs and that job ended virtually at the same time within days of him going to [the residential college], so date-wise it became extremely difficult because he legitimately applied to Jobseekers saying that he didn't have a job, and applied for it and then said, "well, I've got this funding"...He would have had some money and in a way if he had had a little nest egg, I don't know if he would have said, "well, perhaps don't do the play scheme," but we didn't know that he was going to go to [college] until the middle of August and we didn't realise all the intricacies because the [DEA] said you can apply for jobs but she didn't say but you mustn't be earning from the play scheme, so it all became so muddly.'

It is, of course, impossible on the basis of our data to adjudicate on the rights and wrongs of cases such as these. However, if we recall the case of Devesh, for whom supported employment workers and the DEA were planning somewhat different trajectories, it is not unreasonable to suggest that some young people are being caught between two (albeit rather loosely-coupled) systems. One system is focused on the needs of young people with difficulties and disabilities who are making extended transitions from school. It is concerned with supporting them through the transition process, giving them time to develop and finding ways of supporting them into appropriate activities which may, perhaps later rather than sooner, lead them into some form of employment. The other system seems to be focused more on unemployed — and particularly long-term unemployed — adults. It assumes that they are indeed 'job-seekers' and that financial and other support must be contingent on their actively seeking work and/or participating in activities which will enhance their job-seeking skills in the short-term. That these systems reflect the different situations in which different groups of people find themselves seems undeniable. However, it is also undeniable that some of the young people in the sample are on the borderline between these situations and that the two systems seem to have no reliable and sensitive mechanism for determining which pathway would be the better in these cases.

7.2 Living arrangements

An important aspect of young people's lives and a measure of their autonomy and independence is where they currently live, and how satisfied they are with their living situation. Table 7.4 shows that more than four-fifths (82 per cent) of these young people continue to live with their parents or carers. However, some of these young people are living more independently, for

Table 7.4: Current living arrangements

	N	%
At parents/carers home	850	82
With boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife	46	6
Live alone	19	2
Halls of residence	20	2
With friends	18	2
Somewhere else	21	2
At a residential school/centre/unit	24	2
At the home of other relatives	13	1
Supported housing	4	1
Brother/sister	4	0
Total	1,019	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

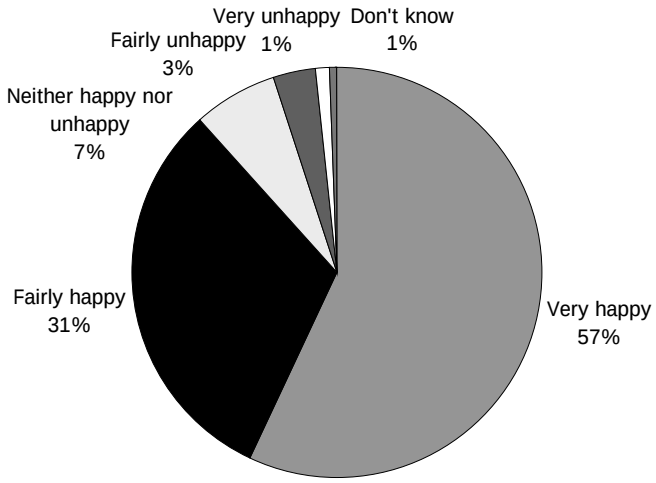
example, six per cent are living with their partner, and smaller proportions of these young people are living with friends, in halls of residence, or living alone. Still others are living in supported housing or in residential schools or centres. There were some interesting differences by SEN type at school: of those with emotional, behavioural and social development difficulties, a lower than average proportion (76 per cent) were living with parents / carers, with higher proportions living with partners (ten per cent). Those with physical or sensory difficulties were also less likely than average to be living with parents / carers (76 per cent were doing so), and more likely than average to be living at a variety of other places, for example, five per cent were living at a residential school or centre, four per cent lived with friends, and five per cent lived in halls of residence.

7.2.1 Satisfaction with living arrangements

Young people were asked how happy they were with their current living arrangements, and the results are shown in Figure 7.3. More than half (57 per cent) said they were very happy with where they lived at present, and almost one-third said they were fairly happy. Less than five per cent were fairly or very unhappy with where they were currently living. There were few differences in satisfaction ratings by any of the usual groupings used throughout this report (SEN type, type of school attended *etc.*).

Those who were fairly or very unhappy with their current living arrangements were asked where they would rather live. The numbers answering this question were very small (just 36 in total) and so care should be taken not to generalise too widely from these results. One-third said they did not know where they would

Figure 7.3: Satisfaction with current living arrangements



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

rather live, but smaller proportions felt that they would rather live alone or with friends.

7.2.2 Living arrangements in the future

Young people were asked where, if they had the choice, they would like to be living in two years time. The results are shown in Table 7.5. Almost one-third reported that they would most like to be living with a partner, and 14 per cent each reported that they would like to be living with friends or living alone. A quarter said that they would most like to be living with their parents or carers. Higher than average proportions (43 per cent) of those who had

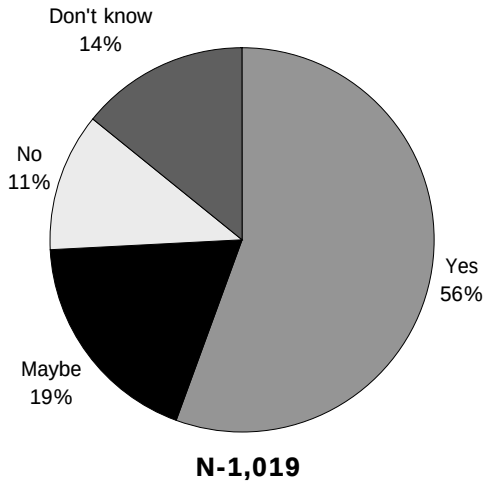
Table 7.5: Where young people would like to be living in two years time

	N	%
With boyfriend/girlfriend/husband/wife	279	31
At parents/carers home	298	26
With friends	139	14
Alone	125	14
In supported housing	17	1
With brother/sister	12	1
At a residential school/centre/unit	17	1
At the home of other relatives	12	1
Somewhere else	26	3
Don't know	94	9
Total	1,019	

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Figure 7.4: Whether young people felt that they would be living where they wanted in two years time



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

attended a special school wanted to be living with their parents / carers in two years time.

More than half (55 per cent) of young people felt that they would in fact be living where they wanted in two years time, one-fifth thought that maybe they would, while one-tenth felt that they would not be living where they wanted (Figure 7.4). Those whose SEN type at school was behavioural, emotional and social development difficulties were particularly likely to feel that they would be living where they wanted in two years time (67 per cent).

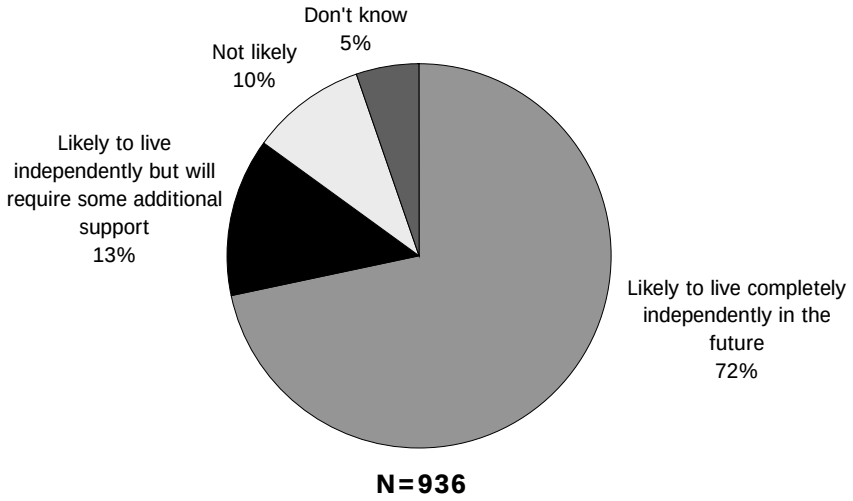
Those who felt that they would not be living where they wanted in two years time were asked why this was likely to be the case. The responses are based on relatively small numbers (113 young people) and so care should be taken. However, the most commonly given reasons were financial reasons / lack of money (43 per cent) and property prices / can't afford to buy (13 per cent).

7.2.3 Future independence

Nearly three-quarters of all young people who were currently living with parents or carers felt that they would live independently in the future. Just over one-tenth felt that they would be able to live independently with some additional support, and one-tenth felt that they would not be able to live independently. These responses are summarised in Figure 7.5.

There were considerable differences in responses by the various groupings used throughout this report. Perceived future independence was highest amongst those who had attended a

Figure 7.5: Do you think you will live independently in the future?



Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

mainstream school, those without a statement, those who were not disabled, and those who were currently in employment. It was lower amongst those with a physical or sensory difficulty SEN type, those who had attended a special school, those with statements at school, and those who had a disability.

7.2.4 Case studies — independent living

From much of what we have seen already, it is clear that the young people in the sample fall into three groups in respect of independent living:

There are those, like Paul, Toby and Rosie who have already achieved or are on the brink of achieving a high level of independent living. These young people have quasi-adult relationships, manage their own finances to some extent and are either living away from the family home or are planning actively to do so.

There are those like Marcus and Sophie, for whom independent living of this kind is out of the question because of the high level of support they will continue to need throughout their lives. For these young people, the issue is when and how far this support can be provided independently of their families.

There is a third group which is more diverse, but includes young people such as Matthew, Stuart, Andrea, Li and Emma. There is a reasonable prospect that these young people might achieve a significant degree of independence. However, as yet they have not done so and they seem unlikely so to do without further support and intervention.

In the case of the first group, the achievement of independent living seems to be primarily a function of the young people's own characteristics and capacities (though family support helps), largely

because they place themselves beyond the reach of the major supportive agencies. For the second group, it is the actions of these agencies, cajoled and sometimes co-ordinated by their parents, which determines whether and how far independence will be achieved. The third group, by contrast, have characteristics which neither equip them to function independently like the first group, nor trigger the intensive and extensive support which ideally is enjoyed by the second group.

Moreover, those characteristics are diverse. Li, for instance, has learning difficulties which affect his literacy and numeracy skills. However, he is also socially withdrawn and appears to have difficulty finding his way about outside familiar neighbourhoods. Emma seems prone to fantasising. Stuart is socially adept, but has spent his educational career in specialist environments, is visually impaired and has a range of other difficulties. Andrea, on the other hand, appears to be intellectually able but has significant social and personal problems which have so far made it difficult for her to persevere with any transition pathway. In other words, the problem for this group is not only that they tend not to trigger high levels of support, but that any move towards independent living would require support services to be customised to their particular characteristics. To compound the problem, the barriers to independence experienced by these young people are often 'invisible' in that they are unrelated to any obvious physical, sensory or even intellectual impairment. This may well make it even less likely that they will receive the sort of support and intervention which might make a real difference.

Matthew perhaps best sums up their situation. After four years without any evident signs of progression, with the time since the Wave Two interview spent in unemployment, with no very clear plan for finding work or gaining qualifications and with no sign of support from any agency, he comments:

'I don't feel 20 if that's what you're asking. I don't feel 20 at all 'cause like most 20-year-olds they're all out doing what they wanted to in life and I'm just sitting here doing nothing. So I don't feel 20 at all.'

When asked, therefore, how he sees himself in ten years time, he responds wryly:

'Working, my own place, [married], kids, hopefully. I doubt it though. It never works out like that.'

7.3 Future aspirations

The young people were asked what they wanted to do next, and their responses are given, by current main activity, in Table 7.6. The response most frequently given by young people was that they wanted to move into work (36 per cent in total), and this was particularly the case amongst those not in education, employment or training (50 per cent). Those in employment appeared to be fairly satisfied that they were working, although 14 per cent wanted to change jobs, and smaller proportions hoped to take a year out, go travelling, or go to university/HE college. A fair proportion of those in education also appeared to be happy in that situation, with more than 40 per cent saying that they either

Table 7.6: What the young people want to do next

	Education		Employment and Training		Not in education, employment or training		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Be working	72	26	147	34	137	50	356	36
Continue doing what I am doing now	34	13	125	27	45	13	204	20
Go to/stay at college	91	29	35	8	34	12	160	14
Change jobs	0	0	63	14	0	0	63	7
Go to university/HE college	30	13	13	3	7	3	50	5
Take a year out/go travelling	7	3	15	4	3	1	25	3
Do work experience	11	4	5	2	9	2	25	2
Stay at home with my family/friends	10	3	3	1	13	4	26	2
Have children	2	1	5	1	8	3	15	1
Look after my family	0	0	4	1	5	2	9	1
Other	9	3	26	5	14	4	49	4
Don't know	15	5	6	1	16	5	37	3
Total	281	100	447	100	291	100	1,019	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

wanted to go to, or stay at, college next, or continue what they were currently doing. More than one-tenth of this group hoped to go to university or HE college. A quarter hoped to move into work next.

The young people were then asked what they hoped to be doing in two years time. Again, the results from this question are presented broken down by current main activity (Table 7.7).

The patterns are very similar to those in Table 7.6, which showed what the young people wanted to do next. The main aspiration for almost half is to be working (43 per cent), and this is even higher amongst those who are currently not in education, employment or training. Just over ten per cent of this group hoped to be in education (college or university / HE college) in two years time. More than one-third of those in education hope to be working in two years time, but almost one-fifth of this group hope to be at college and a further 15 per cent hope to be at university or HE college. Two-fifths of the young people in employment or training reported that they wanted to be working in two years time. In addition to this, one-fifth want to be doing the same as at present and a further fifth of the young people hope to be working in a different job to the one they currently have. Small proportions of these young people hoped to be staying at home with their family, or looking after their own family; although the figures were slightly higher amongst young people who were currently not in education, employment or training.

Table 7.7: What the young people hope to be doing in two years time

	Education		Employment and Training		Not in education, employment or training		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Be working	105	37	180	39	150	54	435	43
Continue doing what I am doing now	23	8	84	20	40	11	147	15
Be working in a different job to the one I have now	3	1	79	17	0	0	82	9
Studying at college	62	20	12	3	22	8	96	8
Be at university/HE college	34	15	16	4	6	3	56	6
Taking a year out/go travelling	5	2	27	6	9	4	41	4
Have children	1	0	14	4	5	2	20	2
Be doing work experience	12	4	1	0	6	3	19	2
Stay at home with my family/ friends	3	1	1	0	17	5	21	2
Look after my family	1	0	3	1	6	3	10	1
Other	11	4	22	5	10	3	43	4
Don't know	21	7	8	2	20	6	49	4
Total	281	100	447	100	291	100	1,019	100

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Finally, in order to gauge how well these young people felt that things had gone for them in general, since they left Year 11, and how they felt about the future, they were given a series of statements or views and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each one (Table 7.8). The vast majority (89 per cent) of young people feel positive about the future, and more than four-fifths feel they know how to find out about future work, education and training opportunities. Around three-quarters felt that things have generally worked out for them since year 11, and that they get enough support in planning their future. Three-quarters want to

Table 7.8: Views on the future, all respondents (per cent)

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
Since year 11, the course, jobs, training or what I have done has generally worked out for me	74	10	16
I know how to find out about future work, education or training opportunities	82	6	12
I think that making plans for the future is a waste of time	10	9	81
I am hopeful about the future	89	7	5
I get enough support in planning my future	75	14	11
I want to do more education and training in the future	74	11	15
I have got all the qualifications I need for the job or course I want to do	31	14	55

Note: All percentages are weighted percentages, unless otherwise stated

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

undertake more education and training in the future, and nearly one- third feel that they need to gain more qualifications for jobs or courses they want to do. Only ten per cent feel that making plans for the future is a waste of time. In general then, these young people are positive about their experiences over the last few years, and are optimistic about their future. However, for a minority of between ten and 25 per cent, this does not seem to be the case. In order to explore which young people have found things more difficult, and feel less positive about their future prospects, Tables 7.9 to 7.15 present these young people's views by the following:

- SEN type at school
- type of school attended
- whether statemented or not
- whether the young person is disabled or not.

Each statement is presented separately below.

1. ***Since Year 11, the course, jobs, training or what I have done has generally worked out for me***.

Those whose SEN type at school was behaviour, emotional and social development difficulties were particularly likely to disagree with this statement, while those with SEN types of communication and interaction, and cognition and learning were particularly likely to agree. There were very few other differences between the groups of young people.

2. ***I know how to find out about future work, education or training opportunities***.

Those who were least likely to feel they knew where to look for opportunities were those whose SEN type at school was communication and interaction difficulties, those who attended a special school, those who were statemented at school, and those who are disabled.

3. ***I think that making plans for the future is a waste of time***.

Young people whose SEN type at school was behaviour, emotional and social development difficulties were most likely to agree with this statement. Young people who had attended special schools and those who were disabled, were also a little more likely than average to agree that making plans for the future is a waste of time.

4. ***I am hopeful about the future***.

The young people who were the least hopeful about the future were those who had attended special schools, those who were disabled, and those whose SEN type at school was sensory and / or

physical difficulties. Those who did not consider themselves to be disabled were most likely to feel hopeful about the future.

5. ***I get enough support in planning my future***.

Young people whose SEN type at school was behaviour, emotional and social development difficulties, or communication and interaction difficulties, together with those who had attended special schools were least likely to feel that they get enough support in planning their future.

6. ***I want to do more education and training in the future***.

Young people whose SEN type at school was sensory and/or physical difficulties were most likely to want to undertake more education and training in the future. Young people who had behaviour, emotional and social development difficulties, those who had attended special schools, those who had been statemented, and young people with disabilities were least likely to want to undertake further education or training.

7. ***I have got all the qualifications I need for the job or course I want to do***.

Those whose SEN type at school was cognition and learning difficulties were most likely to agree that they had got all the qualifications they needed. Young people with communication and interaction difficulties, and behaviour, emotional and social development difficulties, together with those who attended special schools were least likely to agree with this statement.

Table 7.9: View (1) on the future, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

Since year 11, the course, jobs, training or what I have done has generally worked out for me	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	81	75	81	67	72	74	73	74	72	76
Neither agree nor disagree	5	11	5	11	8	10	11	10	10	9
Disagree	14	14	14	22	20	15	16	17	18	15
Total (N)	183	509	66	138	298	661	629	293	440	484

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 7.10: View (2) on the future, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I know how to find out about future work, education or training opportunities	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	75	82	86	83	62	87	73	90	73	88
Neither agree nor disagree	8	7	5	7	11	5	9	4	9	4
Disagree	17	11	9	11	26	8	18	6	19	7
Total (N)	175	511	65	138	284	670	621	295	434	487

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 7.11: View (3) on the future, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I think that making plans for the future is a waste of time	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	9	7	10	17	13	9	12	8	13	8
Neither agree nor disagree	12	7	8	14	13	8	11	9	11	8
Disagree	80	85	82	69	74	82	77	83	76	84
Total (N)	180	506	65	139	291	665	626	292	440	478

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 7.12: View (4) on the future, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I am hopeful about the future	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	86	91	85	88	79	91	84	92	82	94
Neither agree nor disagree	8	6	9	5	9	6	8	6	9	5
Disagree	6	3	6	7	12	3	7	2	9	2
Total (N)	187	510	66	136	298	666	632	294	444	482

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 7.13: View (5) on the future, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I get enough support in planning my future	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	70	81	80	65	69	77	73	78	71	78
Neither agree nor disagree	18	13	5	15	16	14	14	13	14	15
Disagree	12	6	14	20	15	9	12	9	15	7
Total (N)	187	517	67	137	306	666	642	293	452	481

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 7.14: View (6) on the future, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I want to do more education and training in the future	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	76	75	82	71	72	75	72	74	72	75
Neither agree nor disagree	10	11	5	14	11	11	12	11	10	11
Disagree	14	15	13	15	17	14	16	15	18	14
Total (N)	179	507	62	138	297	654	625	287	437	478

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

Table 7.15: View (7) on the future, by SEN type, school, whether statemented, and whether disabled (per cent)

I have got all the qualifications I need for the job or course I want to do	Communication and interaction	Cognition and learning	Sensory and/or physical	Behaviour, emotional and social development	Special	Mainstream	Statemented	Not statemented	Disabled	Not disabled
Agree	22	37	33	20	25	32	29	32	28	32
Neither agree nor disagree	15	14	7	19	15	14	15	14	15	13
Disagree	62	49	60	61	60	54	56	54	57	55
Total (N)	167	488	61	131	259	649	584	287	407	470

Source: IES/MORI, 2004

7.4 Chapter summary

- Over half of all young people in Wave Three receive income from earnings.
- One in five young people receive Incapacity Benefits or Jobseekers' Allowance.
- Most young people are in control of their own money.
- However, just over one in ten young people receive only part of their income, or none at all. In this case, parents and carers are most likely to have control of the young person's income.
- The majority of young people continue to live at home with their parents or carers and most of these young people were happy with this arrangement.
- Most young people want to be living with a partner or friends, or independently from their parents in two years' time.
- About three-quarters of all young people who continued to live at home at the time of the Wave Three survey believed they would be able to live independently in the future.
- Most young people want to be in work in two years' time.
- About three-quarters of all young people participating in the survey think that what they have done since Year 11, in terms of education, work or training, has generally worked out for them.
- Most young people want to do more education and training in the future, and few believe they have enough qualifications for the job or course they want to do at the present time.
- Nine out of ten young people are hopeful about the future.

8. Conclusion

This report set out to provide an overview of the experiences, activities and attitudes of young people with SEN during their post-16 transitions and beyond. It has also sought to identify any apparent strengths and weaknesses in the systems that pertain to aid transition to further and higher education, training, employment and independent living.

As was the case in Wave Two, the survey data present a largely positive picture. Most young people are engaged in 'productive' and satisfying activities and most are happy with the choices they have made thus far, and indeed, have felt supported in making these choices. However, the survey data also hint at a not insignificant proportion of young people for whom their post-16 transitions have been less than satisfactory, and certainly not stable nor necessarily indicative of any form of progression.

The preceding chapters have presented the evidence from the Wave Three survey and the case studies to illustrate in-depth some of the differing patterns of transitions experienced by these young people. This final section draws on the previous sections to provide a commentary on their transitions thus far, and on their likely future progress.

Two features of what has happened to these young people by the time of the Wave Three interviews are striking. The first is the diversity of experience, trajectory and outcome. Some are in employment and living independently. Some are unlikely ever to be employed or independent but are nonetheless making evident progress. Some seem to have become becalmed. Some have churned between activity and activity. Some have followed a relatively straight pathway, but it is, as yet, unclear where this is leading. This is, perhaps, not surprising given that the only thing this group of young people has in common is that they were identified in school as having special educational needs. Since 'special educational needs' is itself a large and extremely diverse category covering a range of disabilities, and an even wider range of school-related difficulties, it is hardly surprising that, four years on, the population continues to look diverse.

What is particularly noticeable is what we might call a 'sedimentation' of the population. Some young people appear to be making the kind of progress which suggests that they can look forward to a fulfilled and (in most cases) productive adult life. They are, perhaps, in education and studying at a higher level than previously; they may be in employment and perhaps have access to training; they have active social lives; they control their own money, live independently or are thinking of doing so and perhaps are developing stable partnerships with another young person. Others, however, have dropped out of the fast stream to adulthood: they are NEET or are in employment without training or are churning between activities; if they are in education, they are becalmed at the same level as at Wave Two; they have limited social lives and in some cases are rather isolated; they remain dependent on their parents, perhaps have little money to manage and have no realistic plans for independent living. The mix of positive and negative factors is, of course, different for different individuals, but it is noticeable that there are different risks and possibilities for different groups — young men tend to fare differently than young women, special school leavers than mainstream school leavers, young people with one kind of special educational need from those with other kinds of need, and so on. In other words, the sedimentation, though partly dependent on individual and local factors seems also to be dependent on some structural factors.

The second feature is the complex — sometimes apparently serendipitous — nature of the support which these young people and their families receive. They may be in contact with a wide range of agencies and voluntary organisations, or with none. Where they are in contact, different individuals may take the lead — DEAs, Connexions Personal Advisers, college tutors, supported employment workers, social workers and so on. The most generous interpretation of this is that support is customised to the needs of the individual. However, there are too many cases of inadequate support, conflicting support or families having to bear the brunt of co-ordinating support for this interpretation to be entirely credible. From the case study evidence, it seems more realistic to say that there is a complex patchwork of support which is triggered differentially in each case — effectively in some, but less so in others.

One way of making sense of this complex situation is to see it in the light of the emerging situation for all young people — and particularly those with difficulties and disabilities — which we outlined in Chapter 3. We suggested there that changing patterns of youth transitions and changing views of disability had created a more open terrain for these young people — one which was characterised by greater opportunities than in the past, but also by greater risks. In this situation, it is not surprising that we see some young people doing well, while others seem to be succumbing to one or other of the considerable risks to which they are subject.

Moreover, in this more open terrain, it seems that individual trajectories are not determined by single factors such as type of difficulty and disability or school background. Such factors are important, but they interact with a complex network of other factors so that individuals can take somewhat different routes from similar starting points. In particular, four sets of factors seem to be important:

- The capacities and characteristics of the young person themselves.
- The purposefulness of the support provided by their family.
- The nature of local support systems and the effectiveness of the support they actually provide.
- The local pattern of opportunities in terms, for instance, of college courses, residential provision, work experience placements and employment opportunities.

Not surprisingly, outcomes are both diverse and unpredictable given the multiple interactions between these factors that may occur. For someone with very severe difficulties, for instance, there is little an individual can do to manage their own transition. However, with well-informed and assertive parents and proximity to excellent provision which is able to offer some co-ordination of services, the outcomes of such a transition seem likely to be positive. For another individual, however, an altogether different outcome may ensue. One example would be someone with no obvious intellectual difficulties but with some personal characteristics that seems to make them 'hard to help'. Couple this with a family which is unable to offer the young person useful guidance and is out of contact with agencies which might potentially offer support and the outcomes of the transition are currently looking rather negative.

We also have some indications that the various agencies involved with young people — and, indeed, different parts of the same agency — operate on the basis of very different models of the transition process. In broad terms, one is a developmental model, while the other is a booster model. The former assumes that young people with difficulties and disabilities need time to develop and offers extensive support during their development. It accepts that they have limitations in terms of the open labour market and is concerned not to expose them to the buffeting of that market any more or any sooner than is necessary. It is certainly concerned to respect the wishes of the young person in terms of their trajectory, but does not rely too heavily on the young person's capacity to navigate their way towards employment and, therefore, is proactive in offering support and guidance. In the case study sample, this seems to be the model on which some FE college learning difficulties and disabilities provisions operate, as do supported employment organisations and provisions for young people with severe disabilities. The

latter model assumes that young people can indeed move towards the labour market and can function there effectively, but that they might need boosters along the way in terms of guidance and training. It relies much more than the former model on the young person's agency in finding their way through the complexities of the training and labour markets. It, therefore, tends to be somewhat reactive, waiting for the young person to seek help, or for obvious difficulties to arise before intervening. In the case study sample, we see mainstream FE college departments operating in this way and, to some extent, DEAs and Connexions workers.

If this distinction is a little crude, this may be in part because individual organisations and agencies do not always seem to have worked out a clear model of transition on which to operate. Moreover, we would argue that it points to the dilemmas which are inherent in any transition and particularly in transitions for young people with difficulties and disabilities. By definition, transition is about moving from childhood to adulthood, from dependence to independence and, in economic terms, from consumption to productivity. There are always fine judgement calls, therefore, about how far along these dimensions an individual has moved and what is the best way to help them move further. These judgements are even more problematic when the individual in question has disabilities and difficulties which may make it impossible for them to achieve all the markers of adulthood, or to become fully independent, or to be economically productive. There is always the danger of expecting too little or too much.

However, the evidence of the case studies suggests that the systems currently in place get these difficult judgements wrong at least as often as they get them right. Too many of the young people seem to be making too little progress, repeating an endless cycle of basic skills and personal development courses. Others lack adequate support, or have to battle (probably through their families) to get the support they need. In general terms, it may be the case that the systems in place are overly biased towards what we have called the 'booster' model, with young people who need greater and more effective support than they are offered. More importantly, however, the fine judgements that have to be made go wrong because, so far as we can tell, there is no individual, organisation or agency with the overall responsibility for making those judgements. Instead of a coherent system of the sort which (in principle at least) identifies, assesses and provides for children's needs at school level, there is a series of complex and uncertain negotiations between a range of agencies, the young person and the young person's family. As a result, too much seems to depend on who does or does not get involved in a particular case, how clear and purposeful the young person and family are and what opportunities are or are not available locally.

In this situation, it is tempting to echo the call by Matthew's mother for a single point of contact:

'He needs something, I don't know. He needs somebody or some people to reassure him not to give up, because there is something out there for him somewhere.'

Arguably, this is precisely the role which Connexions should have been playing. There is some evidence from the survey that Connexions has indeed been playing this role for some young people. However, it is clear that, for young people in the case studies, Connexions is a fitful presence, sometimes heavily involved, sometimes present in the background but sometimes entirely absent. Perhaps this is because these young people began the transition process when Connexions was not yet fully operational. Perhaps it is because now they have reached the end of the age range with which Connexions is principally concerned. Whatever the explanation, neither Connexions nor any other agency consistently plays the co-ordinating role.

This situation creates a very significant policy challenge. The new, more open terrain in which young people find themselves is the product of fundamental social and economic changes. It is unlikely to be changed significantly, therefore, by policies targeted at young people with difficulties and disabilities. However, such policies may have a key role to play in ensuring that young people have access to appropriate opportunities and have sufficiently powerful systems of guidance and support to direct them towards those opportunities. The design of such opportunities and systems is bound to be a complex and uncertain business, though a promising start has been made. It is clear, however, that much still remains to be done.

Appendix 1 – Technical Report

Introduction

This report has been compiled by MORI Social Research Institute and contains the technical details of a survey of young people. The survey is part of a longitudinal study of young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN) conducted by a research consortium comprising MORI Social Research Institute, the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) and Alan Dyson of the University of Manchester. This particular study is the third wave of the longitudinal study, and the second conducted by this consortium. Wave One of the research was conducted in 2000/2001 by a different research consortium — a summary of the methodological approach taken for both Wave One and Wave Two surveys is outlined below.

Aims of the study

The aims and objectives for Wave Three of the study are to:

- provide a comprehensive overview of the experiences, achievements and attitudes of young people with SEN during post-16 transitions and beyond
- identify strengths, weaknesses and barriers to further and higher education, training, employment and independent living, and
- examine the transitions made by young people between Waves Two and Three, to evaluate the impact of policy interventions and support mechanisms.

Target audience

The target audience for this research are young people who were:

- in curriculum Year 11 in academic year 2000/2001, **and**
- on SEN Stage 2 for two years or more **OR** on higher SEN stages (regardless of time) in that year group.

Summary of Waves One & Two

Wave One

In Wave One of the research, interviews were conducted with the following groups:

- 617 SEN Co-ordinators (SENCOs) / teachers
- 2,313 young people
- 2,365 parents / carers.

Sampling took place at three levels:

- The project team initially approached a sample of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) in order to ask permission to approach the schools within these LEAs.
- The second stage was to approach schools within the LEAs that granted permission. The SENCO / teacher at each school was asked to provide background information on a maximum number of ten eligible pupils: demographic characteristics, SEN profile, special needs support offered, educational attainment, absences and exclusion, transition planning and careers education and advice. Interviews were also conducted with the SENCO / teacher at these schools.
- Finally, those schools that agreed to take part in the study were asked to provide contact details of eligible young people and their parents / carers who have agreed to take part in the research (*ie* after the schools have conducted opt-out procedures). These young people and their parent / carer were contacted for interview during 2000 / 2001.

Wave Two

In Wave Two of the research, interviews were conducted with the following groups:

- 1,876 young people, and
- 1,638 parents / carers.

Sampling took place at two levels:

- **Wave One follow-up**: Interviews were conducted with young people and their parent / carer who took part in the Wave One survey. Prior to the Wave Two survey, MORI wrote to all of these young people and their parents, notifying them of the impending Wave Two survey and asking them to contact MORI (within two weeks) if they had any queries about the survey and / or if they did not want to take part. The sample was also 'cleaned' by MORI prior to this mail-out against the Post Office Address File.

- **Top-up sample**: The number of achieved interviews among young people in Wave One was considered too low for subsequent waves of survey to be viable. Therefore, the decision was taken to boost the number of young people and parent/carer interviews at Wave Two, in addition to re-interviewing Wave One respondents. Since no sampling frame exists for young people with SEN we used schools as the primary sampling unit[1] and, through their support, drew a sample of eligible young people.

Sample Design for Wave Three

In the interim period between Waves Two and Three, MORI maintained regular contact with the young people who had participated in Wave Two of the research. Letters were sent in January, July and October to thank respondents for their help and to remind them that research was ongoing. Each letter also gave details of how to opt-out of the research if young people did not wish to participate in future waves of the survey. By October 2004, 324 young people (17 per cent) of the 1,876 who completed the Wave Two questionnaire had declined to take part in further research. Table A1.1 illustrates the stage at which young people declined to take part in the survey:

Many of those we spoke to did not give a reason for refusing to continue with the research other than they did not want to take part. Some young people refused via fax-back forms and did not offer reasons for opting out of the research. Where they were given, reasons for refusal are shown in Table A1.2.

Table A1.1: Sample Attrition

Date/Event	Number of leads
Number of Young People Interviewed in Wave Two	1,876
Number of Young People agreeing to be re-contacted for future waves	1,784
Remaining leads after January mailout to YP	1,739
Remaining leads after July mailout to YP	1,698
Remaining leads after October mailout to YP	1,552
Total number refusals	*324*

Source: MORI

[1] We did not approach LEAs as in Wave One, as in our experience this was not necessary.

Table A1.2: Stated Reasons for Refusal[1]

	Number of Young People
Too busy	23
Not interested	10
Does not like being interviewed	6
Ill-health	5
Parents do not want us to interview child	3
Finds survey boring	1
Nothing has changed since Wave Two	1
Parents have lost contact	1
Thinks the research should be qualitative	1
Upset about life after school – does not want to talk about it	1
Working abroad	1

[1] The table shows the reasons for refusal given by those who contacted MORI to decline participation in advance of the survey in response to mailings about the project. It does not include the reasons for refusal given to interviewers during the fieldwork period.

Source: MORI

Questionnaire development

The questionnaire was designed by the IES with input from MORI and Alan Dyson of the University of Manchester, and programmed into CAPI format. Wherever possible, logic and date checks were included to minimise keying errors and implausible answers.

Piloting

The aim of the pilot was to test the questionnaire with young people to ensure its accessibility and relevance. Young people with a range of special educational needs were selected to take part.

In total, 20 pilot interviews were conducted with young people. Interviewers working on the pilot were personally briefed by MORI researchers. A pilot debrief was held at MORI.

Overall, the questionnaire worked well in the pilot but was longer than anticipated in length, and in parts respondents felt it was repetitious. Thus, some pruning and rewording was required for the main-stage. Other issues arising from the pilot that were taken on board in the main-stage included:

- The need to emphasise that interviewers must be responsive to the needs of the young person they were interviewing, including taking breaks, reading out showcards for those with poor eyesight, *etc.*

- The need for sensitivity when asking about friends and partners as some young people find these topics upsetting.
- Not raising the issue of special educational needs in the initial mail-outs and at the start of interviews.
- The need to provide additional space on contact sheets to record change of addresses, and temporary addresses such as halls of residence.

Main-stage fieldwork

All interviews were conducted by MORI Field & Tab.

The aim was to interview all young people directly. However, we realised that this would not be possible in a small number of instances where the young person was not able to consent fully and/or required the assistance of a parent or career to complete the interview. Interviewers were instructed *not* to conduct a proxy interview unless the young person was present as well.

Interviewers were required to make a minimum of six calls per address, at different times/day including at least one call at the weekend.

If the young person had moved away and the parent/carer was willing to provide contact details, interviewers were instructed to make every attempt to contact the young person at their new address. If the young person had moved out of the area, they were asked to notify the Area Manager, so that the new address could be issued to an interviewer working in the appropriate area.

Interviewer briefing

A series of regional briefings for interviewers were conducted by members of the MORI research team. Sessions were held in London, Birmingham, Leeds and Bridgwater (Somerset).

A briefing pack was provided to every interviewer involved in the project, which included background information on SEN pupils and transitional planning, guidelines on contact procedures, and advice on interviewing young people with disabilities (including advice on conducting the interview in specific situations, such as a proxy interview). Interviewer instructions were also provided to interviewers.

Key points that were stressed in the briefing sessions included:

- **Flexibility**: Interviewers were asked to be as flexible and accommodating as possible in how they conducted the interview.

- **Inclusiveness**: MORI made every effort to provide whatever help was necessary to enable the young people to take part in the study. All requests for an interpreter/facilitator were asked to be forward to the MORI Project Manager who contacted the respondent directly.
- **Proxy as a last resort**: Interviewers were instructed to accept proxy interviews only as a very last resort. They were asked to make every effort to keep the named respondent and their proxy together throughout the interview as, in most cases, the respondent should be able to answer at least some of the questions.

All interviewers working on the survey were asked to complete at least one dummy interview (for each version of the questionnaire) and to send these back to the MORI CAPI Team before starting the fieldwork.

Response rate

In total, 1,020 interviews were achieved with young people, from an issued sample of 1,552 giving an overall adjusted response rate of 64 per cent. Table A1.3 illustrates the sample outcome in more detail.

Data processing

A full set of computer tabulations (provided in a separate volume to this report), were produced according to the specification agreed between MORI and IES. Along with these tables a fully labelled SPSS data file was provided.

The data collected has been subject to both CAPI checks and

Table A1.3: Response rate analysis (Wave Two and Wave Three)

	Overall Wave Three	Overall Wave Two
Issued sample	1,552	3,732
Achieved interviews	1,020	1,876
Unadjusted response rate	*64%*	*50%*
Invalid sample	6	100
Not available during fieldwork	38	100
Moved	98	582
Other	151	177
Adjusted response rate	*76%*	*68%*
Refused	125	519
No contact	114	378

Source: MORI

verification by the project and fieldwork teams. All data processing has been validated against the raw data to ensure that routing, base figures and final data are accurate.

Coding staff checked verbatim answers entered by interviewers at open and 'other – specify' questions. Code frames were prepared where the 'other- specify' responses rose above ten per cent with a relatively substantial base size.

Weighting

Weighting at Wave Two

Weighting was applied in Wave Two in order to control for selection bias at Wave One, *ie* Wave One disproportionately sampled young people from special schools and those who were statemented.

Table A1.4 reports the achieved sample at Wave Two against estimates of the number of Year 11 students in 2000 by school type and whether they has a statement of special educational need.

As can be seen below, young people in the Wave Two sample without statements and from mainstream schools are under-represented while students with statements are over-represented. This was corrected at Wave Two through the use of cell-based weighting.

Weighting at Wave Three

In addition to the weighting issues identified at Wave Two, in the analysis of the third wave we also had the potential consequences of attrition bias between the survey periods. That is to say, some groups of young people who had participated in Wave Two may have been less likely to have participated in Wave Three than others.

Table A1.4: Estimates of the number of secondary level students with SEN (SEN population) and Wave Two distributions

	Wave Two		SEN Population
	N	%	%
Mainstream school, non-statemented	593	34	54
Mainstream school statemented	638	36	24
Special school statemented	505	29	22
Special school other	18	1	1
Total	1,756	100	100

Source: IES

We identified the propensity of young people to take part at Wave Three using logistic regression modelling, and the weight which was created and applied to the Wave Three data achieved a fair representation of the Wave Two weighted sample, *ie* was representative of the (2000) SEN population cohort.

The weighting for Wave Three also controlled for a number of individual, educational and economic factors, including: gender, ethnicity, region, social class, main activity, SEN, type of school, highest qualification, Connexions area and ability to carry out paid work. Table A1.5 shows the profile of Wave Three respondents before weighting was applied.

Table A1.5: Profile of young people who took part in the Wave Three Study

	N	%
Gender		
Male	676	66
Female	344	34
Nature of main SEN[1]		
Communication and interaction	203	20
Cognition and learning	533	52
Sensory and/or physical	73	7
Behaviour, emotional and social development	145	14
Ethnicity		
White	939	92
Ethnic minority	81	8
Main activity of young person		
Studying	281	28
Paid work/ training	448	44
Other	291	29

[1] This data was collected in Wave Two. It was not asked in Wave Three but has been included for profiling purposes. Please note that this information is not available for a small proportion (seven per cent) of the Wave Three sample: the data was captured in the Wave Two Parents' questionnaire and a small number of young people did not have a corresponding parent interview in Wave Two.

Source: MORI

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Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

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Oneline: www.dfespublications.gov.uk

Produced by the Department for Education and Skills

ISBN 1 84478 519 X
Ref No: RR655
www.dfes.go.uk/research