

Activity Agreement Pilots – Follow-Up Survey of 2007- 2008 Participants

Emily Tanner, John D'Souza, Eleanor Taylor, Steven Finch (NatCen)

Susan Purdon (Bryson Purdon Social Research)

Malcolm Maguire (Maguire Policy Research)

This research report was written before the new UK Government took office on 11 May 2010. As a result the content may not reflect current Government policy and may make reference to the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) which has now been replaced by the Department for Education (DFE).

The views expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Department for Education.

Contents

Executive Summary	i
The Activity Agreement Pilots	i
The evaluation.....	ii
The sample	ii
Measuring impact	iii
Key findings.....	iii
Impact on employment, education and training activities	iii
The quality of employment, training and education experiences since the first interview	iv
Impact on attitudes to learning and work.....	iv
Perceived impact of AA	v
Conclusions.....	v
1 Introduction	1
1.1 The Activity Agreement Pilots.....	1
1.2 The evaluation	2
1.3 Sample design for the first survey and follow-up survey	2
1.4 Questionnaire design	5
1.5 Weighting and analysis	5
1.6 The report	7
2 Impact on activities.....	8
2.1 Key findings	8
2.2 Introduction	8
2.3 Longer-term impact at the follow-up interview	8
2.4 Highest activity at follow-up and change in status from first interview to follow-up	11
2.5 Conclusions	14
3 The quality of employment, training and education experiences since the first interview.....	15
3.1 Key findings	15
3.2 Introduction	15
3.3 Employment.....	16
3.4 Training.....	18
3.5 Education.....	20
3.6 Contact with Connexions and sources of advice.....	21
3.7 Conclusions	23
4 Impact on attitudes to learning and work.....	25
4.1 Key findings	25
4.2 Impact at the first interview from the quantitative evaluation report	25
4.3 Impact at the follow-up interview	25
4.4 Impacts on aspirations and confidence.....	26
4.5 Conclusions	28
5 Perceived impact of AA.....	29
5.1 Key findings	29
5.2 Introduction	29
5.3 Participant perceptions of the impact of AA	29
5.4 How positive activities engaged in since the first interview are associated with motivations for taking part in the AA programme.....	31
5.5 How positive activities engaged in since the first interview are associated with the value of the AA programme.....	32
5.6 How positive activities engaged in since the first interview are associated with activities done as part of the AA programme	33
5.7 Conclusions	34

6 Barriers to engaging in positive activities	35
6.1 Key findings	35
6.2 Introduction	35
6.3 Characteristics of consistently NEET participants	35
6.4 Engaging in non-EET activities	38
6.5 Perceived barriers to engaging in positive activities	41
6.6 Conclusions	44
7 Conclusions.....	45
Appendix A Key impact findings from the first interview	47
Appendix B Context for Activity Agreement Follow-up Study	50
Introduction	50
Distribution of sample across Connexions areas	50
Change in NEET rates.....	51
Labour Market Change.....	60
References	62

Tables

Table 1.1 AA participants selected for the sample from each activity group	3
Table 1.2 Variables used to match AA participants and comparison sample	4
Table 1.3 Survey response by sample type	4
Table 2.1 Participation in education and employment related activities	10
Table 2.2 Participation in work-based training since first interview	11
Table 2.3 Highest activity at follow-up.....	12
Table 2.4 Change in status from first interview to follow-up.....	13
Table 3.1 Number of jobs since first interview including current job(s)*	16
Table 3.2 Months in main current job to date	17
Table 3.3 Average length of jobs in months completed between first and follow-up interviews.....	17
Table 3.4 Highest National Statistics socio-economic classification (NSSEC) of jobs since first interview	18
Table 3.5 Training in current job	19
Table 3.6 Training in jobs since first interview (including current)	19
Table 3.7 Number of qualifications completed since first interview	20
Table 3.8 Number of qualifications stopped without completing since first interview	20
Table 3.9 Qualification level at first interview	21
Table 3.10 Qualification level at follow-up interview	21
Table 3.11 Sources of advice in young people's decision-making.....	22
Table 3.12 Most useful source of advice for young people.....	22
Table 3.13 Whether respondents had received support from Connexions in the last 12 months (since August 2008).....	23
Table 3.14 Frequency of Connexions support.....	23
Table 4.1 Attitudes to learning and work at the follow-up interview	26
Table 4.2 Aspirations for activities a year from the follow-up interview	27
Table 4.3 Confidence at the follow-up interview	28
Table 5.1 Perceived impact of AA on taking part in positive activities.....	30
Table 5.2 Perceived impact of AA participation	31
Table 5.3 Motives for AA participation by activity outcomes since the first interview.....	32
Table 5.4 Perceived value of taking part in AA by activity outcomes since the first interview.....	33
Table 5.5 Activities engaged in as part of AA by activity outcomes since the first interview	34
Table 6.1 Background characteristics of those in education, employment or training since THE FIRST INTERVIEW compared with NEET since first interview.....	37
Table 6.2 Logistic regression: factors associated with engaging in EET activities since the first interview	38
Table 6.3 Current non-EET activities by NEET status since the first interview	39
Table 6.4 Number of jobs applied for since the first interview.....	40
Table 6.5 Number of job offers received since the first interview.....	40
Table 6.6 Benefit receipt of those who were currently NEET.....	41

Figures

Figure 6.1 Barriers to EET for participants not in education, employment or training since the first interview	42
Figure 6.2 Barriers to work for participants not in employment or training since the first interview	43
Figure 6.3 Barriers to study for those not in education since the first interview	44

Executive Summary

This report presents findings from the follow-up survey of young people who took part in the first impact survey for the evaluation of the Activity Agreement Pilots (AA), an initiative using financial incentives, intensive support and tailored activities to encourage disengaged young people back into education, employment and training. The first survey took place between January 2007 and March 2008 and a sub-sample of these respondents was interviewed again in the follow-up survey between September and October 2009. The aim of the follow-up survey was to investigate the longer-term outcomes of involvement in the AA pilots with a particular focus on movement into education, employment and training and young people's attitudes and aspirations for the future.

The Activity Agreement Pilots

The Activity Agreement Pilots (AA) is an initiative aimed at testing the effectiveness of conditional financial incentives along with intensive support and brokerage of tailored activities in re-engaging young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The pilot was launched in April 2006 with the aim of encouraging disengaged young people back into education, employment (preferably with learning) or training. The pilot was overseen by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and delivered by the Connexions service in eight pilot areas across England.

Under the first AA pilot model, which ran for two years, the eligibility requirements¹ were that young people needed to be aged 16 or 17 and not to have been in any form of employment, education or training for a continuous period of at least 20 weeks. AA was therefore aimed at 'long-term NEET' young people. From April 2008, the programme was extended to trial some alternative approaches to raising post-16 participation in employment and learning. The new models tested earlier intervention (targeting young people who had been NEET for 13 rather than 20 weeks); targeting recipients of EMA; and vulnerable groups of young people such as carers and the homeless.

In testing different approaches to engaging young people, the AA pilots play a key role in addressing Government targets to reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET² and to prepare the way for raising the age of participation (RPA) in learning to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015³. In the current economic downturn, the need to identify effective strategies for engaging young people and to understand the outcomes of interventions such as AA has become even more critical. The policy focus around AA has evolved from testing the effectiveness of financial incentives, to encouraging engagement within the context of RPA, and now to identifying ways to engage young people during the recession.

¹ There were also stipulations relating to benefit receipt which are outlined in the research report from the first interview (Tanner et al, 2009).

² Department for Education and Skills (2005) 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper

³ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) Education and Skills Act 2008

The evaluation

The follow-up survey discussed in this report is part of a large-scale evaluation of AA commissioned by DCSF which has three strands:

- a **quantitative evaluation**, using surveys of young people to measure the impact of the pilots by comparing participants to similar young people in comparison areas;
- a **programme theory** element, focusing on testing some key aspects of the policy to identify what works, what does not and the reasons for this;
- a **process evaluation**, examining the ways in which the pilots have been set up and delivered and the main issues associated with their implementation.

This follow-up survey is part of the quantitative evaluation of AA. The overall objective of the quantitative evaluation was to measure the effectiveness of AA in increasing young peoples' participation in education and training. The evaluation also included softer measures of impact including 'distance travelled' towards this outcome. The approach was to collect survey data from long-term NEET young people in AA pilot areas as well as in comparison areas where the pilots were not being implemented, in order to produce a robust estimate of their impact. By matching AA participants with a comparison sample, it was possible to estimate what their behaviours would have been if AA had not been available, so that the 'added value' of AA could be assessed.

The evaluation is being carried out by a consortium of organisations comprising the Institute for Employment Studies (IES), the Centre for Education and Industry, University of Warwick (CEI) and NatCen. The quantitative evaluation described in this report was based on the first model of AA called Pilot 1. Subsequent models of AA have been investigated within the other strands of the evaluation.

The sample

The first survey involved interviews with 1,013 AA participants and 2,291 respondents in comparison areas who were used for the matched comparison analysis. The interviews for the first survey took place between January 2007 and March 2008. The follow-up sample was selected from respondents to the first survey.

To select the follow-up sample of young people living in AA pilot areas, participants responding to the first interview were stratified according to 'activity outcome' at the first interview which took into account all the activities they reported taking part in during the 12 months between becoming NEET and taking part in the interview. The four categories were studying, work with training, work without training and no activity. Respondents were hierarchically ordered into the most positive activity if they had done more than one type of activity (with studying being the most positive outcome). A random sample was selected from each activity group, excluding those who had requested not to be re-contacted (7%).

The follow-up sample of young people in comparison areas was selected using a method based on propensity scores whereby each AA participant responding to the first interview was matched to a weighted combination of individuals from comparison areas, thus creating a matched comparison sample. The samples were matched according to a large number of variables to ensure that the

follow-up sample of *issued* participants had similar characteristics to those of the comparison sample. Due to non-response some differences were introduced to the matched groups, so participants and individuals from the comparison areas were re-matched prior to analysis to correct for this.

505 interviews were achieved for the follow-up survey in September and October 2009 which was a response rate of 40% based on the issued sample. This was in line with expectations based on the time lag since the last interview and the transient nature of the population.

Measuring impact

Having created a suitable comparison group, the measurement of impact is then straightforward: it is simply the rate of outcomes (positive or negative) for AA participants minus the rate for the comparison group. For example, if 14% of participants take up work-based training and 12% of the comparison group do, then the estimate of impact is 2 percentage points (that is, 14% minus 12%). The interpretation of the 2 percentage points is that 2% of participants take up work-based training who otherwise wouldn't have.

Given the sample size (258 participants and 247 comparison sample), the ability to detect significant findings was limited. Where there are differences that were not significant, this is indicated in the language used to describe the findings (e.g., 'there appeared to be an impact on...').

Key findings

Impact on employment, education and training activities

- Two years after the first interview, AA had a sustained impact on participation in work-based training or studying towards a qualification. 48% of participants reported doing some studying or work-based training between the time of the first and follow-up interview, which is about 8% higher than would have happened without AA.
- AA had an impact (of about 9%) of moving young people who would have been in work with no training into education, work-based training or a job involving training.
- AA had no discernible effect on the proportion of NEETs at follow-up, but there is some evidence that of those who were NEET at follow-up, participants were slightly more likely than the comparison group to have done some kind of activity in the AA period.

The quality of employment, training and education experiences since the first interview

- Among those who had been employed since the first interview, participants appeared to have fewer jobs and jobs of a shorter duration compared to the comparison sample. This may be as a result of starting jobs later following education or training. It may also reflect the higher average rate of unemployment across AA areas compared to comparison areas, suggesting that jobs were more scarce (see Appendix B).
- Employed participants appeared to be working at a higher occupational level than the employed young people in the comparison sample. Participants were more likely to have intermediate occupations and less likely to have been in semi-routine jobs.
- 79% of participants in employment had some in-work training compared to 74% of comparison group members. The difference was most pronounced for training that took place away from the workplace – 26% of participants in employment reported off-site training compared to 17% of employed young people in the comparison group.
- Participants were more likely to have completed a qualification since the first interview than those in the comparison group (73% compared with 63%). During this period the proportion of participants with no achieved qualifications dropped from 18% to 12%.
- No differences were found between participants and the comparison group in the sources of advice that were most important in their decision making. However, among those who had had contact with Connexions during the last year, participants appeared to have had more frequent contact than the comparison sample.

Impact on attitudes to learning and work

- The impact of AA on attitudes to learning (identified in the first interview) was still evident at the follow-up interview. At the time of the follow-up interview only 12% of participants agreed with the statement “I am not interested in doing any learning”. This would have been about 7% higher without AA.
- Across a range of measures there is some evidence that AA had a small impact on young people’s aspirations. Participants were more likely to expect that they would be in studying or work-based training a year from now compared to the comparison sample.
- AA appeared to have a sustained impact on young people’s levels of general confidence (14% of participants agreed that they were less confident than at the first interview compared to 19% of the comparison sample). However, fewer AA participants than comparison young people agreed with the statement “I feel more confident with numbers (than I did [at the first interview])”.

Perceived impact of AA

- Thirty-six per cent of participants who had studied said that AA had helped them get on the course. Similarly 34% of participants who had been in work or training said that AA had helped them get their job or training place.
- Participants identified a number of benefits from taking part in AA. Almost three-quarters (74%) of participants said they were more aware of opportunities for training after taking part in AA, and two-thirds (67%) said they were more confident as a result of AA.

Conclusions

This report highlights some ways in which AA has been shown to have a positive sustained impact in the longer-term. With an impact on involvement in studying and work-based training and interest in learning, AA is likely to lead to higher quality jobs in the future. However, participants were less likely to be employed and were no less likely to be NEET than the comparison sample. The lower rate of involvement in employment may partly be explained by local labour market factors since AA areas appeared to have higher rates of unemployment and proportion of young people who were NEET than non-AA areas (and young people themselves identified lack of jobs as a key barrier to being employed).

An explanation for the mixed findings is likely to lie in the diversity of the NEET young people who took part in AA. While AA helped some young people to move from being NEET into education and study and gave others aspirations for the future, there was another group of young people who were unable to overcome the personal and contextual barriers they faced despite the experience of AA.

1 Introduction

This report presents findings from the follow-up survey of young people who took part in the first impact survey for the evaluation of the Activity Agreement Pilots (AA), an initiative using financial incentives, intensive support and tailored activities to encourage disengaged young people back into education, employment and training. The first survey took place between January 2007 and March 2008 and a sub-sample of these respondents was interviewed again in the follow-up survey between September and October 2009. The aim of the follow-up survey was to investigate the longer-term outcomes of involvement in the AA pilots with a particular focus on movement into education, employment and training and young people's attitudes and aspirations for the future.

1.1 The Activity Agreement Pilots

The Activity Agreement Pilot is an initiative aimed at testing the effectiveness of conditional financial incentives along with intensive support and brokerage of tailored activities in re-engaging young people aged 16-17 who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). The pilot was launched in April 2006 with the aim of encouraging disengaged young people back into education, employment (preferably with learning) or training. The pilot was overseen by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and delivered by the Connexions service in eight pilot areas across England.

Under the first AA pilot model, which ran for two years, the eligibility requirements⁴ were that young people needed to be aged 16 or 17 and not to have been in any form of employment, education or training for a continuous period of at least 20 weeks. AA was therefore aimed at 'long-term NEET' young people. From April 2008, the programme was extended to trial some alternative approaches to raising post-16 participation in employment and learning. The new models tested earlier intervention (targeting young people who had been NEET for 13 rather than 20 weeks); targeting recipients of EMA; and vulnerable groups of young people such as carers and the homeless.

In testing different approaches to engaging young people, the AA pilots play a key role in addressing Government targets to reduce the proportion of young people who are NEET⁵ and to prepare the way for raising the age of participation (RPA) in learning to 17 by 2013 and 18 by 2015⁶. In the current economic downturn, the need to identify effective strategies for engaging young people and to understand the outcomes of interventions such as AA has become even more critical. The policy focus around AA has evolved from testing the effectiveness of financial incentives, to encouraging engagement within the context of RPA, and now to identifying ways to engage young people during the recession.

⁴ There were also stipulations relating to benefit receipt which are outlined in the research report from the first interview (Tanner et al, 2009).

⁵ Department for Education and Skills (2005) *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper*

⁶ Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Education and Skills Act 2008*

1.2 The evaluation

The follow-up survey discussed in this report is part of a large-scale evaluation of AA commissioned by DCSF which has three strands:

- a **quantitative evaluation**, using surveys of young people to measure the impact of the pilots by comparing participants to similar young people in comparison areas;
- a **programme theory** element, focusing on testing some key aspects of the policy to identify what works, what does not and the reasons for this;
- a **process evaluation**, examining the ways in which the pilots have been set up and delivered and the main issues associated with their implementation.

The overall objective of the quantitative evaluation was to measure the effectiveness of AA in increasing young people's participation in education and training. The evaluation also included softer measures of impact including 'distance travelled' towards this outcome. The approach was to collect survey data from long-term NEET young people in AA pilot areas as well in comparison areas where the pilots were not being implemented, in order to produce a robust estimate of their impact. By matching AA participants with a comparison sample, it was possible to estimate what their behaviours would have been if AA had not been available, so that the 'added value' of AA could be assessed.

The first survey for the quantitative impact evaluation took place between January 2007 and March 2008. The follow up survey took place in September to October 2009.

1.3 Sample design for the first survey and follow-up survey

The first survey for the impact evaluation involved interviews with 1,013 AA participants. In addition, there were 2,291 respondents in comparison areas who were used for the matched comparison analysis. Sample records were provided by Connexions in each pilot and comparison area on a three month rolling basis to allow for ongoing sampling of long-term NEET young people. The fieldwork for the first survey took place between January 2007 and March 2008⁷. A sub-sample of AA participants (N=232) were interviewed for a second time between April and May 2008 to investigate their activities a few months after completing the programme. The sample for the follow-up study reported here was drawn from respondents to the first survey.

Selecting participants for the follow-up

To select the pilot sample, participants responding to the first interview were stratified according to 'activity outcome' at the first interview which took into account all the activities they reported taking part in during the 12 months between becoming NEET and taking part in the interview. The four categories are shown in Table 1.1 and respondents were hierarchically ordered into the most positive activity if they had done more than one type of activity (with studying being the most positive outcome). A random sample was selected from each activity group, excluding those who had requested not to be re-contacted (7%).

⁷ Full details of the sample design for the original survey are provided in Appendix G of the report from the first survey (Tanner et al, 2009).

Table 1.1 AA participants selected for the sample from each activity group

Survey

Activity	Participants from first interview %	Sample issues (including 50 reserve cases) %
Studying	292	201
Working with training	120	109
Work with no training	145	138
No activity	461	232
<i>Total</i>	<i>1,018</i>	<i>680</i>

Selecting the comparison sample for the follow-up

After the participant follow-up sample was selected, the comparison sample was selected using a method based on propensity scores. Each participant responding to the first interview was matched to a weighted combination of individuals from comparison areas, thus creating a matched comparison sample for issue. For matching to be successful it is crucial that as many predictors of outcomes as possible are used. We included data of five types (Table 1.2): demographic data on the respondent, geographical data based on the respondent's place of residence, data on the respondent's most recent school, data on the respondent's previous experiences, and a variable indicating whether the respondent was from the stock or flow sample (that is was NEET for at least 20 weeks when AA was launched, or who became eligible after the start of AA). This selection method ensured that the follow-up sample of *issued* participants would have similar characteristics to those of the comparison sample.

Table 1.2 Variables used to match AA participants and comparison sample

Variable type	Variables
Demographic	Gender Age at point when NEET for 20 weeks Ethnicity
Area-related	Overall Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) Scores IMD Score on the Employment Domain Urban/Rural Indicator
School-related	Proportion of pupils with 5 or more GCSEs at A-C Proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals
Previous experience	Attendance at school in Year 11 Any qualifications studied since school Qualifications of a known type studied since school Any paid work since school Any training since school Any personal development course since school Any volunteering since school GCSE grades at school (English and Maths) Age of leaving Year 11
Stock/Flow	Stock

Fieldwork and response

Prior to fieldwork the AA managers from the pilot Connexions areas requested the opportunity to check the sample before it was issued. The primary purpose of this was to check whether any young people had died, and to remove cases that had opted out of any further contact with Connexions. In addition, some areas wished to check the contact details. As a result of the cases removed and delays in transferring data, 627 participant cases were issued of which 44 were taken from the reserve sample. The fieldwork period lasted in total for 6 weeks during September and October 2009. The comparison sample was issued in full at the start of this period and the participant sample was issued in batches following the checking process. The last batch of sample had two weeks in the field.

Table 1.3 Survey response by sample type

Response	Survey		
	Participant sample	Comparison sample	Total
Issued sample	627	630	1257
Productive interviews	258	247	505
Response rate	41%	39%	40%

1.4 Questionnaire design

The sequence of topics was as follows:

- Update on household structure
- Current activities
- Attitudes to learning and work
- Outcome of qualifications studied at first interview
- Qualifications currently being studied
- Details of current employment and work-based training
- Details of personal development activities and voluntary work
- Activities since last interview: employment, education, personal development, voluntary work, job-seeking
- Barriers to taking part in employment, education or training (EET) activities
- Sources of advice and support
- Benefit receipt
- Perceived value of AA
- Distance travelled
- Aspirations for the future and anticipated barriers
- Childcare.

The questionnaire was programmed for computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) and tested in a small pilot with 12 issued cases and 5 completed interviews.

1.5 Weighting and analysis

Participants

The weight for analysing the participant sample consisted of two steps:

1. A selection weight to correct for the different probabilities of selection of participants based on their activity status at the first interview. The weight allocated to participants for analysis of survey data from the first interview was then multiplied by their selection weight for the follow-up survey to give a “pre-calibration” weight. This weight was trimmed slightly to ensure that no one individual could have too large an effect on the analysis.

2. The second step, the calibration step, weighted the responding follow-up participants so that they resembled participants at the first interview on sex, age at ‘NEET 20’ (when they had been NEET consistently for 20 weeks), whether they had done any work-based-training within a year of becoming NEET, and their work status at the first interview.

Comparison sample

A weight was calculated for the follow-up comparison sample to ensure that it matched the comparison sample for the first interview on the variables used for the weighting of participants: sex, age at NEET 20, whether they had done any work-based-training within a year of NEET, and their activity status at the first interview. Since the purpose of the comparison sample was for the propensity score matching and not to provide population estimates for comparison areas, no further weights were required.

Matching the responding follow-up sample

The selection method described above guaranteed that the follow-up sample of issued participants would have similar characteristics to those of the comparison sample. As a result, the follow-up sample of responding participants were likely to have similar characteristics to the responding comparison sample. However, non-response meant that some differences were introduced, so respondents were re-matched prior to analysis to correct for this.

Participants who responded to the follow-up survey were matched to young people from the comparison sample using the variables: sex, date at which they became NEET, the IMD score of their address, and on the attainment results of their school. Although they were not formally matched on age and their activities and qualifications at the time they became NEET, the fact that the *issued* comparison sample was matched with the *issued* participants before selection meant they tended to be similar on these other variables as well. This process ensured that former AA participants were compared with a group of young people in non-pilot areas who were, on average, very similar to the AA participants apart from the fact that they received standard services and not AA.

Having created a suitable comparison group, the measurement of impact is then straightforward: it is simply the rate of outcomes (positive or negative) for AA participants minus the rate for the comparison group. For example, if 14% of participants take up work-based training and 12% of the comparison group do, then the estimate of impact is 2 percentage points (that is, 14% minus 12%). The interpretation of the 2 percentage points is that 2% of participants take up work-based training who otherwise wouldn't have.

It should be noted that with an achieved sample of 505 interviews⁸, the sample size was fairly limited for some of the analysis in this report. The commentary includes reference to the non-significant findings since it is likely that they are meaningful and only not significant because of the small sample size.

⁸ The AA participants taking part in the survey were spread across eight large AA pilot areas comprising many local authorities. The comparison sample was drawn from 7 Connexions areas.

1.6 The report

Chapter 2 presents the findings from the analysis of the longer-term impact of AA on transitions into employment, education and training (EET) outcomes.

Chapter 3 reports more detailed findings about the quality and characteristics of employment and education episodes.

Chapter 4 focuses on the longer-term impact of AA on attitudes and aspirations.

Chapter 5 describes participants' perceptions of the ongoing value of AA.

Chapter 6 describes former participants' perceptions of barriers to taking up EET activities.

Chapter 7 summarises the key findings and draws conclusions.

Appendix A reproduces the three key impact tables from the report of the first survey for the quantitative evaluation.

Appendix B presents data on local labour markets and proportions of young people who are NEET to contextualise the impact findings.

The report's findings are displayed in tables within the chapters. Which sample members are included in each table, that is the composition of the table base, is described above it. Tables show both weighted and unweighted base sizes but it is the unweighted base sizes which show the number of individuals used in the analysis.

2 Impact on activities

2.1 Key findings

- Two years after the first interview AA had a sustained impact on participation in work-based training or studying towards a qualification. Forty-eight per cent of participants reported doing some studying or work-based training between the time of the first and follow-up interview, which is about 8% higher than would have happened without AA.
- AA had an impact (of about 9%) of moving young people who would have been in work with no training into education, Work-based training (WBT) or a job involving training.
- AA had no discernible effect on the proportion of NEETs at follow-up, but there is some evidence that of those who were NEET at follow-up, participants were slightly more likely than the comparison group to have done some kind of activity in the AA period.

2.2 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of longer-term impacts of AA on young peoples' activities in the period since the first interview. Section 2.3 presents the impacts on activities as reported at the follow-up interview. Section 2.4 then describes the trajectories of young people by describing their change in status between the time of the first and the follow-up interviews. For comparison, the impact findings of the first survey are reproduced from the report of the quantitative evaluation⁹ in Appendix A.

Throughout this chapter significant differences between the participant and comparison groups are marked with an asterisk¹⁰.

2.3 Longer-term impact at the follow-up interview

Of the young people interviewed at the first survey, 505 were followed up in a second interview, on average two years later than the first. They were asked about the different types of activities they had participated in during the period since the first interview. Table 2.1 shows the difference between the follow-up sample of former AA participants and their matched comparison sample at two points in time: in the first 12 months after becoming NEET (which sets them in the context of the findings of the 2009 report) and then around two years later. The rows at the top of the table show individual activities and lower down the table, the activities are grouped.

Two years after the first interview it appears that AA has had a sustained impact on participation in work-based training or studying towards a qualification (Table 2.1). The proportion of participants who had participated in these activities was 48%; without AA this proportion would have been just 40%.

⁹ Tanner, E., Purdon, S., D'Souza, J., and Finch, S., (2009) *Activity Agreement Pilots: Quantitative Evaluation*, Department for Children, Schools and Families.

¹⁰ As in the first survey, we have based all tests on a 10% significance level rather than the more conventional 5% level because most observed impacts are small yet the sample size is too small to allow for many of the smaller impacts to be detected with a 5% test. Using a 10% significance level does however increase the risk that some differences that are essentially due to sampling error are interpreted as real impacts.

There were other differences between former AA participants and the comparison sample at the two year stage that were not statistically significant, possibly due to the limited sample size. Participants appeared less likely to have participated in employment in that interval (an impact of -4%) which may be a reflection of their greater focus on learning or the higher local rates of unemployment (see Appendix B). They also appeared to have been less likely to have engaged in personal development activities (which includes activities such as short courses on healthy-living and building confidence).

Surprisingly, participants appear to have been no more likely than young people in the comparison group to have been in EET activities since the first interview (23% of participants and 22% of the comparison group had not been in education, employment or training). There are a number of possible reasons for this which will be explored further on in the report. One explanation may relate to the characteristics of local labour markets. As shown in Appendix B, the rate of unemployment was higher in AA areas than non-AA areas suggesting that it was harder for participants to find jobs. It is encouraging that AA had a positive impact on studying and work-based training since these activities are likely to lead to jobs of a higher quality in the future.

Table 2.1 Participation in education and employment related activities*Base Description: Young people taking part in the follow-up interview**Survey*

Activities	First interview data: activities in 12 months since becoming NEET			Follow-up interview data: activities since first interview		
	Participants %	Comparison group %	Difference ¹¹ ₁₂ %	Participants %	Comparison group %	Difference %
Study for a NQF qualification	23.8	20.6	3.2	36.8	30.4	6.4
WBT	14.2	11.8	2.4	17.4	15.3	2.1
Employment	22.4	38.3	-15.9*	57.1	61.6	-4.5
NEET	49.4	44.4	5.0	22.5	21.7	0.8
<i>Other personal development (PD) or training or volunteering</i>	21.8	3.3	18.5	2.5	6.4	-3.9
<i>Nothing</i>	27.5	41.0	-13.5*	20.0	15.3	4.7
Grouped activities						
Study for a qualification or work-based training	33.8	29.7	4.1	48.3	40.0	8.3*
Any EET activity (employment, work-based training or study for a qualification)	50.6	55.6	-5.0	77.5	78.3	-0.8
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	258	258		258	258	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	258	247		258	247	

Table 2.2 looks at participation in training in two ways. The first row shows whether participants and the comparison sample had participated in any job acquired through a government training scheme such as E2E, New Deal or similar. The second row shows whether any of their jobs since the first interview had provided training such as through classes and seminars at or away from the workplace, through logs or manuals and informal on-the-job training.

Although participants appeared less likely to have been in employment at follow-up than the comparison group, Table 2.2 shows that they were just as likely to have a current job with training as the comparison group. Thirty per cent of participants reported having a job involving some training compared with 29% in the comparison group. Furthermore, about 11% of participants obtained their current or previous job, or had some training through a government scheme, and we estimate this is about 3% higher than would have occurred without AA. This might indicate that participants may have been more likely to receive some help through a government training scheme than the comparison group, though this difference is not statistically significant and we cannot assert this with any confidence.

¹¹ A comparison of this column with the equivalent column in Table 8.1 shows that the participant and comparison groups at follow-up are similar in activity to those at Wave 1. This shows that the weighting and propensity score matching has been successful.

¹² As information about activity at Wave 1 was used in Wave 2 selection and weighting, the asterisks used in this column can not be regarded as exact indicators of significance, but can be regarded as an approximation

Taking these findings together, it appears that AA significantly increased the proportion of young people who are engaged with study for a qualification or work-based training.

Table 2.2 Participation in work-based training since first interview

Base Description: Young people taking part in the follow-up interview Survey

Type of work-based training	Participants %	Comparison group %	Difference %
Any current or previous job or training obtained through a government scheme	10.5	7.5	3.0
Any training as part of current job	30.1	29.4	0.7
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	258	258	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	258	247	

2.4 Highest activity at follow-up and change in status from first interview to follow-up

In this section, the impact of AA on activities is explored slightly differently by first, reporting the impact of AA on the highest status of participants and then secondly, by describing the change in status between the first interview and the follow-up. The purpose of this analysis is to explore the trajectories of participants and the comparison sample between the first and second interviews.

Status of highest activity

Respondents were classified according to their highest activity performed, based on the following four-level classification. (Note that since paid work is split here between work with training and work without training, the categories are slightly different from in Table 1.1).

1. Studying for a NQF qualification
2. WBT or paid-work involving training (not studying)
3. Paid-work (no training, or studying)
4. None of the above (NEET)

At the first interview they were classified based on any activity they had participated in within 12 months of becoming NEET; at follow-up they were classified based on current activity or any activity since the time of the first interview.

Table 2.3 describes respondents' activities in the two time-periods, but where a respondent was involved in two or more positive activities it classifies them according to the highest. It shows that at the time of the first interview AA had an impact (of about 9%) of moving young people away from work with no training¹³. At follow-up the impact away from work with no training is the same, but whereas at the first interview many of these young people were NEET (this includes people doing only voluntary

¹³ Using the full dataset collected at the first interview would give a more precise estimate.

work or personal development courses) by the time of the follow-up the impact was mainly towards education, WBT or a job involving training. This suggests the long-term results may be more positive than was apparent at the time of the first interview.

On the other hand AA has had no obvious effect on the proportion of NEETs at follow-up (the impact was less than 1%).

Table 2.3 Highest activity at follow-up

Base Description: Young people taking part in the follow-up interview

Survey

	Highest activity at first interview			Highest activity at follow-up		
	Participants	Comparison group	Difference	Participants	Comparison group	Difference
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Studying for a NQF qualification	23.8	20.6	3.2	36.8	30.4	6.4
WBT or paid-work involving training (not studying)	13.7	12.4	1.2	11.5	9.6	1.9
Paid-work (no training, or studying)	13.1	22.5	-9.4*	29.2	38.3	-9.1*
NEET	49.4	44.4	5.0	22.5	21.7	0.8
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	258	258		258	258	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	258	247		258	247	

The figures in Table 2.3 can be explained, to a certain extent, by Table 2.4 below. The first column represents the respondent's highest activity in the 12 months since becoming NEET; the second column shows their highest activity in the period between the first and follow-up interviews. Table 2.4, therefore, details transitions of respondents' from the first interview to the follow-up.

The key result is that 18% of participants were NEET at the time of the first interview but studying for an NQF qualification by the time of the follow-up. We estimate this is 6% more than would have been the case without AA. That is, 6% of participants who were NEET during the 12 months prior to the first interview were studying for an NQF qualification by the time of the follow-up interview as a result of AA.

The other statistically significant result from Table 2.4 is that only 6% of participants were in work with no training at both first interview and follow-up, compared with 15% of the comparison group. A plausible explanation for this is that many of those who would have been in this category throughout the period appear to have been diverted into training or education.

Around 14% of participants were consistently NEET. Although not significant, it appears that the proportion of participants who were consistently NEET between the first and follow-up interviews was smaller than for the comparison group (14% compared to 17%).

Table 2.4 Change in status from first interview to follow-up

Base Description: Young people taking part in the follow-up interview

Highest activity at First interview	Highest activity at follow-up	Participants %	Comparison group %	Difference
NEET	NEET	14.4	17.1	-2.7
	Paid-work (no training, or studying	10.5	11.4	-0.9
	WBT or paid-work involving training (not studying)	6.6	4.3	2.3
	Studying for a NQF qualification	18.0	11.6	6.3*
Work no training	NEET	1.8	1.8	-0.1
	Paid-work (no training, or studying	5.8	14.7	-8.9*
	WBT or paid-work involving training (not studying)	2.8	2.2	0.6
	Studying for a NQF qualification	2.7	3.8	-1.0
WBT or work with training (no studying)	NEET	1.0	0.0	1.0
	Paid-work (no training, or studying	5.1	6.7	-1.6
	WBT or paid-work involving training (not studying)	0.9	1.9	-1.0
	Studying for a NQF qualification	6.7	3.8	2.9
Studying for an NQF qualification	NEET	5.4	2.8	2.6
	Paid-work (no training, or studying	7.8	5.5	2.3
	WBT or paid-work involving training (not studying)	1.3	1.2	0.1
	Studying for a NQF qualification	9.3	11.1	-1.8
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>		258	258	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>		258	247	

2.5 Conclusions

In this chapter we have examined the impact AA has had on the activities of participants between the first and follow-up interviews to explore longer-term impacts.

The main positive finding is that AA moved young people away from jobs without training or NEET status into studying or work-based training. About 8% more young people were studying or doing work-based training than otherwise would have done.

However, participation in AA was not found to have reduced the NEET rate nor to raise levels of participation in employment. The remainder of this report investigates possible reasons that may account for these mixed findings.

3 The quality of employment, training and education experiences since the first interview

3.1 Key findings

- Among those who had been employed since the first interview, participants appeared to have fewer jobs and jobs of a shorter duration compared to the comparison sample. This may be as a result of starting jobs later following education or training. It may also reflect the higher average rate of unemployment across AA areas compared to comparison areas, suggesting that jobs were more scarce (see Appendix B).
- Employed participants appeared to be working at a higher occupational level than the employed young people in the comparison sample. Participants were more likely to have intermediate occupations and less likely to have been in semi-routine jobs.
- 79% of participants in employment had some in-work training compared to 74% young people in the comparison group members. The difference was most pronounced for training that took place away from the workplace – 26% of participants in employment reported off-site training compared to 17% of employed young people in the comparison group.
- Participants were more likely to have completed a qualification since the first interview than those in the comparison group (73% compared with 63%). During this period the proportion of participants with no achieved qualifications dropped from 18% to 12%.
- Participants appeared more likely to have followed qualifications through to completion. Among those who reported studying between the first and follow-up interview, 75% of participants had not stopped a qualification before completing it compared to 62% of the comparison group. However this difference was not significant.
- No differences were found between participants and the comparison group in the sources of advice that were most important in their decision making. However, among those who had had contact with Connexions during the last year, participants appeared to have had more frequent contact than the comparison sample.

3.2 Introduction

The primary aim of the follow-up study was to investigate the longer term impact of AA on participation in employment, education and training. As reported in Chapter 1, AA was found to have a sustained impact on participation in work-based training and studying towards a qualification, but overall, did not reduce the likelihood of remaining NEET. However, given that the purpose of AA was not solely to encourage young people to move into jobs, but rather to set them on a trajectory towards higher quality jobs (as well as raising attainment levels and narrowing the gaps between young people from different backgrounds), a secondary aim of the study was to investigate whether AA had an impact on the types of jobs that young people were in some time after completing the programme.

This section reports the differences between former AA participants and the young people in the comparison group in the number, duration and quality of employment and learning episodes that they

had experienced between the first and follow-up interviews. The analysis was designed to explore the possibility that while AA did not lead to a higher rate of participation in EET activities in the period measured, it may have moved young people towards jobs of a higher quality that may result in more positive outcomes in the future.

It should be noted that the AA mechanism behind any differences between, say, participants in employment and comparison members in employment is not entirely clear. It is probable (based on the evidence in this chapter) that AA diverts some young people from one type of employment to another, but we also have evidence that AA diverts some young people away from employment altogether and into training. So differences between the participant and comparison sub-groups reported in this chapter are not interpreted straightforwardly as 'impact', because these sub-samples may represent rather different sub-populations of young people. Nevertheless comparing the two groups does yield useful information on how AA participants experience employment and training, and how this contrasts with the experiences of those in the comparison group who also follow employment and/or training pathways.

3.3 Employment

Number of jobs

The survey respondents were asked to describe each of the jobs they had done since the first interview including their current job. Among the respondents who had been employed at some point since the first interview, participants reported having done fewer jobs than those in the comparison group of young people, although the difference was not significant. They appeared more likely to have done one or two jobs since the first interview and less likely to have done three or more jobs.

Table 3.1 Number of jobs since first interview including current job(s)*

Base: Respondents who had been employed since first interview

	Sample type		Survey
	Participants	Comparison	Difference
Number of jobs	%	%	%
1	58.0	54.6	3.4
2	27.0	23.2	3.8
3 or more	15.0	22.2	-7.2
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	152	162	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	161	158	

*Respondents were asked whether they had one current job or more than one. If they reported that they had more than one, they are coded as having 2 jobs.

Duration of jobs

Respondents were also asked about the duration of jobs. Those who were currently in employment provided a start date for their job and the interval between this and the month of interview was calculated. Former AA participants had been in their current job for a shorter period, on average, than the young people in the comparison group (that is, they started their current job later) although the difference was not significant. A possible explanation is that AA diverted young people into training or other activities, delaying their entry into paid employment.

Table 3.2 Months in main current job to date*Base: Respondents who were employed at the time of interview*

	Unweighted base	Mean	Std. Error	95% confidence interval	
				Lower	Upper
Participants	99	12.2	8.8	-5.3	29.6
Comparison	102	27.4	20.1	-12.3	67.1

The following table (Table 3.3) describes the average duration of the jobs that participants and comparison young people completed prior to the follow-up interview. Again, the jobs of participants were, on average, shorter than those of the comparison sample (by about one month), although the difference was not significant.

Table 3.3 Average length of jobs in months completed between first and follow-up interviews*Base: Respondents who were employed between the first and follow-up interviews*

	Unweighted base	Mean*	Std. Error	95% confidence interval	
				Lower	Upper
Participants	88	6.1	0.7	4.8	7.4
Comparison	99	7.2	0.8	5.6	8.9

*This is the mean across all jobs completed between the first and follow-up interviews.

Taken together, the findings seem to show that not only were former AA participants less likely to do paid jobs in the period since the first interview, but among those who were employed, participants had fewer and shorter jobs. The following sections explore other aspects of the quality of jobs.

Occupational level

Most of the jobs reported by young people who had been employed since the first interview were routine or semi-routine. Participants were somewhat less likely to have done jobs that were semi-routine than the comparison group and more likely to have done intermediate jobs. Although the differences were not significant, the findings do suggest that among those who had been employed, participants were working at a higher occupational level than the comparison sample.

Table 3.4 Highest National Statistics socio-economic classification (NSSEC) of jobs since first interview

Base: Respondents who were employed at the time of interview

	Sample type		Survey
	Participants	Comparison	Difference
NSSEC of current job	%	%	%
Higher managerial and professional occupations	0.2	0.0	0.2
Lower managerial or professional occupations	3.3	4.4	-1.1
Intermediate occupations	18.3	12.5	5.8
Small employers	3.2	3.1	0.1
Lower supervisory and technical operations	15.7	13.0	2.7
Semi-routine occupations	25.9	32.0	-6.1
Routine occupations	25.1	25.6	-0.5
Missing	8.1	9.4	-1.3
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	152	162	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	161	158	

3.4 Training

Training in current job

Even though AA participants reported fewer and shorter jobs since the first interview, the following table (Table 3.5) suggests that where these young people were in employment, their jobs were more likely to provide training and in this way, to be of a higher quality (although the differences were not significant). Overall, 79% of participants in employment had some in-work training – a rate 6 percentage points above that for the comparison group members who were in employment. The difference was most pronounced for training away from the workplace – participants in employment were more likely to have off-site training than the comparison group members in employment.

Table 3.5 Training in current job*Base: Respondents who were employed at the time of interview*

	Sample type		Survey
	Participants	Comparison	Difference
	%	%	%
Training in current job			
Classes, lectures, seminars, tutorials etc at workplace	32.2	29.2	3.1
Classes, lectures, seminars, tutorials etc away from workplace	26.0	16.9	9.1
Training manual or log	28.1	27.8	0.3
Informal on-the-job training	67.7	60.8	6.9
Any of the above	79.2	73.6	5.6
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	98	103	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	99	101	

The differences between former AA participants and the comparison group in training were smaller when all jobs since the first interview were taken into account (Table 3.6). The largest difference was that participants were more likely to report workplace classes or tutorials, although again the difference was not significant. Taken together these findings on training suggest that AA participation may have delayed entry into jobs with training, but that by the time of the follow-up interview, participants had begun to catch up and even overtake the comparison group in this regard.

Table 3.6 Training in jobs since first interview (including current)*Base: Respondents who had been employed since first interview*

	Sample type		Survey
	Participants	Comparison	Difference
	%	%	%
Training in current job			
Classes, lectures, seminars, tutorials etc at workplace	37.5	32.6	4.9
Classes, lectures, seminars, tutorials etc away from workplace	21.2	18.3	2.9
Training manual or log	29.8	27.9	1.9
Informal on-the-job training	66.2	67.5	-1.3
Any of the above	79.2	81.3	-2.1
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	152	162	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	161	158	

3.5 Education

Participants were more likely to have completed a qualification since the first interview. A higher proportion of participants had studied for one qualification (58% compared with 38% of the comparison group), and participants were less likely to not have completed any qualifications (27% compared with 37% of the comparison group). However the participants were also less likely than the comparison group to have completed three or more qualifications (4% compared with 15%).

Table 3.7 Number of qualifications completed since first interview

Base: Respondents studying between first interview and second interview

Number of qualifications	Sample type		Survey
	Participants	Comparison	Difference
	%	%	%
None	26.9	37.3	-10.4
One	58.4	37.6	20.8
Two	10.6	10.4	0.2
Three or more	4.0	14.6	-10.6
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>80</i>	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>86</i>	

The majority of respondents who had studied for a qualification since the first interview had not stopped before completing their qualification. Participants appeared more likely to have completed their qualification, with 75% of participants saying this compared with 62% of the comparison group. However this difference was not significant.

Table 3.8 Number of qualifications stopped without completing since first interview

Base: Respondents studying between first interview and second interview

Number of qualifications	Sample type		Survey
	Participants	Comparison	Difference
	%	%	%
None	75.4	61.5	13.9
One	22.3	33.3	-11.0
Two	0.9	2.5	-1.7
Three	1.4	2.6	-1.3
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>80</i>	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>110</i>	<i>86</i>	

The next two tables report the level of achieved qualifications for the young people involved in the follow-up interview. At the first interview (Table 3.9), participants appeared to have lower levels of qualifications than the comparison group (although the differences were not significant). They were less likely to have Level 2 qualifications and more likely to have no achieved qualifications. However, by the time of the follow-up interview (Table 3.10), these differences were smaller. The proportion of participants with no achieved qualifications had fallen from 18% to 12%, narrowing the gap with the comparison sample.

Table 3.9 Qualification level at first interview*Base: All respondents**Survey*

Qualification level	Sample type		Difference %
	Participants	Comparison	
	%	%	
Level 1	46.2	46.7	-0.5
Level 2	25.8	32.5	-6.7
Level 3	5.7	6.0	-0.3
Level 4	0.5	0.2	0.3
Don't know	3.9	3.1	0.7
No achieved qualifications	18.0	11.5	6.5
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>258</i>	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>247</i>	

Table 3.10 Qualification level at follow-up interview*Base: All respondents**Survey*

Qualification level	Sample type		Difference %
	Participants	Comparison	
	%	%	
Level 1	42.9	43.4	-0.5
Level 2	30.0	34.9	-4.8
Level 3	8.9	8.5	0.4
Level 4	0.5	0.2	0.3
Don't know	5.5	2.8	2.7
No achieved qualifications	12.2	10.3	1.9
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>258</i>	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>247</i>	

3.6 Contact with Connexions and sources of advice

Respondents were asked whether they had received advice to help in their decision-making from various sources (Table 3.11). The most common sources of advice for young people was their parents, with 82% of participants and 84% of the comparison group mentioning this. Both participants and the comparison group also commonly mentioned family members (47% and 48% respectively), siblings (44% and 47% respectively) and Connexions (44% and 47% respectively). There were few differences between the two groups on the sources they cited, however the comparison group were more likely to mention a colleague at work (37% compared with 27% of participants), reflecting the finding that they were more likely to have been in employment during this period.

Table 3.11 Sources of advice in young people's decision-making

Base: All respondents

Survey

Source	Sample type		Difference
	Participants	Comparison	
	%	%	%
Parents	82.3	84.2	-1.9
Family member or relatives	47.0	47.8	-0.8
Siblings	44.0	47.4	-3.4
Connexions	43.8	46.5	-2.7
Teacher or tutor at college	28.8	30.5	-1.6
An employer	28.1	33.3	-5.2
A colleague at work	26.7	36.8	-10.1*
A training provider	24.8	19.5	5.3
Friends*	1.0	2.3	-1.7
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	258	258	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	258	247	

*This code was added after fieldwork from the open responses.

Respondents were also asked which of the sources of advice they mentioned had been the most useful. Again parents were most commonly mentioned, with 36% of participants and 31% of the comparison group saying this. Around one in ten said that friends (11% of participants and 11% of comparison) and Connexions (9% of participants and 11% of comparison) were the most useful sources of advice to them. There were no differences between participants and young people in the comparison group in which source of advice they thought was most useful to them.

Table 3.12 Most useful source of advice for young people

Base: All respondents

Survey

Source	Sample type		Difference
	Participants	Comparison	
	%	%	%
Parents	35.7	31.4	4.3
Friends	10.8	11.1	-0.3
Connexions	9.2	11.3	-2.1
Teacher or tutor at college	7.7	6.2	1.5
Family member or relatives	4.2	1.8	2.4
Siblings	3.6	4.2	-0.7
A training provider	3.6	4.8	-1.2
A colleague at work	2.9	4.9	-2.0
An employer	2.3	6.8	-4.6
<i>Other</i>	4.0	3.6	0.4
<i>Missing</i>	16.0	13.7	2.3
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	258	258	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	258	247	

Eighteen per cent of participants and 16% of the comparison group had received support from Connexions in the last 12 months (Table 3.13). Of those that had received support from Connexions, a higher proportion of participants reported that they received support from Connexions once a week, with 25% of participants saying this compared to 8% of the comparison group. However due to small base sizes a significant difference could not be detected.

Table 3.13 Whether respondents had received support from Connexions in the last 12 months (since August 2008)

Base: All respondents

	Sample type		Survey
	Participants	Comparison	Difference
	%	%	%
Had received support from Connexions	17.9	16.3	1.6
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	258	258	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	258	247	

Table 3.14 Frequency of Connexions support

Base: Respondents receiving support from Connexions in last 12 months

Frequency of support from Connexions	Sample type		Survey
	Participants	Comparison	Difference
	%	%	%
Once a week	25.4	7.6	17.8
At least once a month	19.9	21.5	-1.5
At least once every few months	26.9	34.9	-8.0
Less frequently	27.8	36.0	-8.2
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	46	42	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	44	38	

3.7 Conclusions

The aim of this chapter was to look in more detail at the characteristics and quality of the employment, education and training activities that young people had engaged in between the first and follow-up interviews. As mentioned at the outset, the data provided in this chapter cannot be interpreted as a straightforward indication of the impact of AA because the tables were based on subgroups rather than all respondents. Instead, this chapter compared the young people who had done each type of activity to explore whether and how the experiences of former AA participants varied from the comparison sample.

In terms of paid employment, we know from the previous chapter that participants were less likely to have been employed overall since the first interview. The findings from this chapter are somewhat

more positive. Among those who *had* been employed since the first interview, participants may have had fewer jobs and jobs of a shorter duration compared to the comparison sample, but the jobs that they had experienced were more likely to be at a higher occupational level and to offer training.

Participants were more likely to have completed a qualification since the first interview than those in the comparison group (73% compared with 63%). During this period the proportion of participants with no achieved qualifications dropped from 18% to 12%.

No differences were found between participants and the comparison group in the sources of advice that were most important in their decision making. However, among those who had contact with Connexions during the last year, participants appeared to have had more frequent contact than the comparison sample.

4 Impact on attitudes to learning and work

4.1 Key findings

- The impact of AA on attitudes to learning (identified in the first interview) was still evident at the follow-up interview. At the time of the follow-up interview only 12% of participants agreed with the statement “I am not interested in doing any learning”. This would have been about 7% higher without AA.
- Across a range of measures there is some evidence that AA had a small impact on young people’s aspirations. Participants were more likely to expect that they would be in studying or work-based training a year from now compared to the comparison sample.
- AA appeared to have a sustained impact on young people’s levels of general confidence (14% of participants agreed that they were less confident than at the first interview compared to 19% of the comparison sample). However, fewer AA participants than comparison young people agreed with the statement “I feel more confident with numbers (than I did [at the first interview])”.

4.2 Impact at the first interview from the quantitative evaluation report

At the time of the first interview, AA was found to have had an impact on interest in learning (see Appendix A). Participants were less likely to agree with the statement ‘I’m not interested in doing any learning’ than the comparison young people. They were also less likely to agree with the statement, ‘The skills you need at work can’t be learned in a classroom situation’.

AA was not found to have an impact at the first interview on attitudes to work more generally. In particular, there is no evidence that AA has had any impact on the percentage of young people who would prioritise jobs with training over jobs with higher pay.

4.3 Impact at the follow-up interview

At the follow-up interview, the impact of AA on interest in learning had increased (Table 4.1). Only 12% of participants said that they were not interested in doing any learning. This compares with 19% of young people in the comparison sample who said this (an increase from 14% of this group who said this at the first interview).

There were no other significant differences between the attitudes of participants and young people in the comparison group at the follow-up interview.

Table 4.1 Attitudes to learning and work at the follow-up interview*Base Description: Young people taking part in the follow-up interview*

	First interview			Follow-up interview		
	Participants	Comparison group	Difference	Participants	Comparison group	Difference
	% agree	% agree	%	% agree	% agree	%
I'm not interested in doing any learning	13.7	13.7	0.0	11.5	18.5	-7.0*
Learning is only worth doing if there is a qualification at the end of it	55.5	47.0	8.5*	52.4	48.7	3.8
You need to have qualifications in order to have a job worth having	56.1	56.3	-0.2	56.4	53.1	3.3
The skills you need at work can't be learned in a classroom situation	42.7	45.1	-2.4	42.7	44.5	-1.8
Earning money is more important to me than staying on in education	49.0	41.5	7.6*	49.8	43.3	6.5
In looking for a job, I am more concerned to find one with training than one that pays the best	50.5	53.5	-3.0	53.1	50.8	2.2
I am prepared to take any job I can do	67.7	66.2	1.5	69.5	66.9	2.6
Once you've got a job, it's very important to hang on to it, even if you don't really like it	67.2	64.7	2.5	71.8	70.7	1.0
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>258</i>		<i>258</i>	<i>258</i>	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>247</i>		<i>258</i>	<i>247</i>	

4.4 Impacts on aspirations and confidence

The evaluation has monitored whether AA impacted on young people's confidence or their aspirations. Attitudinal questions were asked to measure this and Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 below summarise respondents' answers to these questions. The impact on participants' aspirations was quite small. Of those that were statistically significant, it is worth noting that participants were more likely to mention training or personal development activities as an activity they envisaged doing a year in the future. The results suggest that they may also have been more likely to aspire to training, education or study, though the difference was not statistically significant.

Participants were less likely to mention looking for a job, education or training place, or looking after the home or family.

Table 4.2 Aspirations for activities a year from the follow-up interview*Base Description: Young people taking part in the follow-up interview*

	Follow-up interview		
	Participants	Comparison group	Difference
	% Mentioned	% Mentioned	%
Paid work or work-based training	71.1	73.9	-2.7
Education or study leading to a qualification	34.1	30.7	3.5
Voluntary work	0.9	1.2	-0.3
Other training or personal development courses / activities	5.1	1.3	3.8*
Looking for a job, education or training place	0.8	3.2	-2.4*
Taking a break from study or work (INCLUDE TAKING A GAP YEAR)	1.3	0.7	0.6
Looking after your child (children)	5.3	8.6	-3.4
Looking after the home or family in other ways	1.0	3.6	-2.5*
Activity a year from now: Being inactive because of an illness or disability	0.0	1.2	-1.2*
Grouped activities			
Education/Study or Training (PD)	37.2	31.4	5.8
Mentioned Education/Study or Training (PD) or paid work/WBT	91.3	89.7	1.5
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	258	258	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	258	247	

The following table reports changes in attitudes relating to confidence since the first interview. Participants appeared to show a higher level of confidence in general (14% agreed that they felt less confidence than at the first interview compared to 19% of the comparison sample which was close to significance). (This finding resonates with Table 5.2 in the following chapter in which 67% of participants reported that AA had led to increased confidence in general.)

As shown in Table 4.3, AA participants were less likely than the matched comparison group to have increased in confidence with numbers since the first interview. One possible explanation might be that, as a result of AA, participants had built their confidence in numbers *before* the first interview, whereas the comparison group had experienced an increase in confidence *since* the first interview. Another explanation may be that the higher levels of confidence among the comparison sample are related to their greater involvement in paid work since the first interview.

Table 4.3 Confidence at the follow-up interview*Base Description: Young people taking part in the follow-up interview*

	Follow-up interview		
	Participants	Comparison group	Difference
	% agree	% agree	%
I have clearer ideas about what I want to do in the future	73.9	75.8	-1.8
I feel that the things that I have been doing since will help me in the future	75.2	74.9	0.3
I feel less confident (than I did in first interview)	13.7	18.9	-5.2
I feel more independent now (than I did in the first interview)	92.0	92.3	-0.3
I feel more confident now about seeking help or advice (than I did in the first interview)	85.9	85.9	0.0
I feel more able to write a job application or update my CV (than I did in the first interview)	85.3	83.8	1.5
I feel more confident with reading and writing (than I did in the first interview)	75.0	77.6	-2.6
I feel more confident with numbers (than I did in the first interview)	71.6	79.4	-7.8*
More positive about the future, compared to previous year	65.3	64.3	1.0
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	258	258	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	258	247	

4.5 Conclusions

This chapter has identified a sustained impact of AA in the longer-term on interest in learning and on confidence. This is reflected in the difference between participants and the comparison sample in their aspirations for the future. Participants were more likely to expect to be involved in studying or training in a year's time compared to the comparison sample. These findings suggest that AA may have set some participants on a trajectory towards more learning and higher quality jobs in the future.

5 Perceived impact of AA

5.1 Key findings

- Thirty-seven per cent of participants who had studied said that AA had helped them get on the course. Similarly, 34% of participants who had been in work or training said that AA had helped them get their job or training place.
- Participants identified a number of benefits from taking part in AA. Almost three-quarters (74%) of participants said they were more aware of opportunities for training after taking part in AA, and two-thirds (67%) said they were more confident as a result of AA.

5.2 Introduction

Chapters 5 and 6 are different from previous chapters in that they concentrate on former AA participants only, and not the comparison sample. This chapter describes participant perceptions of the ongoing impact of AA on their lives, and explores whether the attitudes they expressed at the first interview are related to the activities they subsequently engaged in.

5.3 Participant perceptions of the impact of AA

All participants who had engaged in any positive activity since the first interview were asked whether they felt AA had helped them to engage in the activity or activities they had done. For the purposes of this question, activities were grouped into three broad types; jobs and training, education and voluntary jobs and personal development activities.

The proportion of participants who said that AA had helped them engage in an activity varied between activity types. Respondents who had studied or had a job or training place since the first interview were more likely to say that AA had helped them to engage in that activity than for voluntary jobs and personal development activities. Thirty-seven per cent of those who had studied since the first interview said that AA had helped them get a place on a course (with 24% saying AA helped “a lot”, and 12% “a little”). Similarly, 34% of those who had taken part in paid work or work-based training said that AA had helped them get their job (with 21% saying “a lot” and 13% “a little”).

Slightly lower proportions reported that AA helped them to get their voluntary job or to get onto their personal development activity. Twenty per cent said that AA had helped them “a lot”, while 7% said AA had helped “a little”, and 72% said it had not helped.

Table 5.1 Perceived impact of AA on taking part in positive activities

Bases: Participants who had engaged in the activity type since the first interview

	Yes helped a lot %	Yes helped a little %	No %	Don't know %	Bases (weighted)	Bases (unweighted)
AA helped to get job/training place	21	13	62	4	163	168
AA helped to get on the course	24	12	63	-	95	85
AA helped to get voluntary job or onto a personal development course / activity	20	7	72	-	39	43

¹Please note this is a very small base size so these findings should be treated as indicative

Participants were also asked about a number of other possible outcomes of taking part in the scheme, including skills, confidence, awareness and participation in future activities. The responses are presented in Table 5.2; statements are listed in order of proportion of positive answers to the statements (note this could be agree or disagree depending on the statement).

Three of the statements referred to the perceived impact of AA on jobs and training opportunities. Almost three quarters (74%) agreed that they were more aware of opportunities for training as a result of taking part in AA. A lower proportion of 60% agreed that they have clearer ideas about the sort of job they would like to do, and 55% disagreed with the statement “I don’t think I’m any more likely to get a job after doing my Activity Agreement”.

Respondents were also asked about perceived impact of AA on awareness of qualification types. Almost two-thirds of respondents (63%) disagreed with the statement “I don’t know much more about qualifications that I could study after doing the scheme”.

Finally, respondents were asked whether they agreed with statements about how AA has affected their confidence and skills. Two-thirds (67%) said that they felt more confident after taking part in AA, while a lower proportion of 58% agreed that AA had given them new skills.

Table 5.2 Perceived impact of AA participation*Bases: All AA participants*

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Bases (weighted)	Bases (unweighted)
	%	%	%	%		
I'm more aware of opportunities for training after doing my Activity Agreement	74	2	21	3	258	258
I feel more confident after doing my Activity Agreement	67	4	26	3	258	258
I don't know much more about qualifications that I could study after doing the scheme	32	1	63	4	258	258
I have clearer ideas about the sort of job I'd like to do after doing my Activity Agreement	60	5	32	3	258	258
Taking part in the scheme has given me new skills	58	5	34	3	258	258
I don't think I'm any more likely to get a job after doing my Activity Agreement	37	5	55	3	258	258

5.4 How positive activities engaged in since the first interview are associated with motivations for taking part in the AA programme

At the first interview AA participants were asked what motivated them to take part in the scheme. Table 5.3 shows the proportion of respondents mentioning each motive by activity type. Respondents were divided into four groups, which take into account their highest positive activity engaged in since the first interview; the highest being education, followed by work based training, jobs without training, and NEET.

Overall the most commonly mentioned motives for taking part in the scheme were 'something to do' (37%), 'help finding a job' (37%), 'for experience' (21%) and 'help with education' (21%). Slightly lower proportions mentioned money or scheme payments as a motive for joining the programme (16%), and advice or support from Connexions (12%). Only a small proportion (3%) mentioned that they joined to meet new people, while just one per cent said they joined to build confidence.

Generally, motivations for taking part in the AA programme were similar between the four groups. However, there were differences between groups in the proportion who joined the scheme to receive help or support with their education. The proportion of participants mentioning 'help with education' as a motive was highest among JWT and NEET young people (both 25%), and those who had been in education (21%) while only 1% of those in jobs with training mentioning this. A possible explanation for this large difference is that participants who had had jobs with training were more likely than other groups to be motivated by a desire for practical work experience rather than gaining a qualification.

Those in jobs with training appeared to be more motivated by gaining experience than other groups, with 38% mentioning this as a motive compared with between 16% and 23% in other groups. However this difference was not significant.

Table 5.3 Motives for AA participation by activity outcomes since the first interview

Base: All AA participants

Motives for taking part in AA (at first interview)	Highest positive activity since the first interview				Total
	In education	Job with training ¹	Job without training (JWT)	NEET	
	%	%	%	%	%
Something to do/bored otherwise	48	34	29	33	37
Help finding job	36	30	40	40	37
For experience	16	38	23	18	21
Help with education	21	1	25	25	21
Money	17	16	14	19	16
Advice support from CXS	12	11	9	18	12
To meet new people	-	-	7	4	3
To build confidence	2	-	1	1	1
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	95	30	75	58	258
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	85	23	90	60	258

¹Please note this is a very small base size so these findings should be treated as indicative. Column percentages do not add up to 100 because more than one response could be selected.

5.5 How positive activities engaged in since the first interview are associated with the value of the AA programme

At the first interview participants were also asked what they valued about the AA programme. Participants most commonly mentioned help finding a job or help with future career (30%) and gaining more experience or confidence (29%). Also mentioned were getting advice or support from Connexions (20%), getting help to find education or a course (16%), something to do (14%), getting qualifications or skills (14%), for money or scheme payment (10%), and meeting new people (9%). Fifteen per cent had said that they got nothing out of the scheme or that it was not useful.

As with motives for joining AA, the participants in the four groups tended to value similar aspects of the AA programme, with the only large difference being the proportion valuing help or support with education. No respondents who had had a job with training mentioned that they valued the help they received in finding an education or course, while 23% of those who had been in education, 21% of NEET young people, and 10% of those who had been in jobs without training mentioned this (Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 Perceived value of taking part in AA by activity outcomes since the first interview

Base: All AA participants

Value of AA (at first interview)	Highest positive activity since the first interview				Total
	In education	Job with training ¹	Job without training (JWT)	NEET	
	%	%	%	%	%
Help finding job/ future career	30	47	31	21	30
More experience/confidence	28	20	30	32	29
Advice/support from CXS	25	16	15	22	20
Help to find education/course	23	-	10	21	16
Something to do/ bored otherwise	18	9	11	15	14
Got quals/ skills	13	12	13	17	14
Money, scheme payments	10	6	8	17	10
Meeting new people	9	2	14	7	9
Nothing/not useful	14	27	13	14	15
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>258</i>
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>258</i>

¹Please note this is a very small base size so these findings should be treated as indicative. Column percentages do not add up to 100 because more than one response could be selected.

5.6 How positive activities engaged in since the first interview are associated with activities done as part of the AA programme

At the first interview, participants were asked about the activities they had done as part of their involvement in the AA programme. This included activities related to getting a job (such as job searches, writing CVs and mock interviews), college based activities related to gaining a qualification (such as looking at colleges or course, filling in applications or attending open days), going on personal development courses to gain skills or build confidence, doing voluntary work and other types of activities done as part of an Activity Agreement.

Overall, the participants were most likely to have done job-related activities as part of their Activity Agreement (65%), followed by personal development activities (51%), college-based activities (50%), voluntary work (14%) and other activities (11%). Seven per cent had not taken part in any AA activities.

Those who had done jobs with training since the first interview appeared to be more likely than other activity types to have done personal development activities (60% compared with 50%-51% in other groups), and college-based activities (65% compared with 44%-57% in other groups), and less likely to have done *no* activities as part of the AA programme (0% compared with 4%-10% in other groups). However these differences were not found to be significant.

Table 5.5 Activities engaged in as part of AA by activity outcomes since the first interview

Base: All AA participants

AA Activities (at first interview)	Highest positive activity since the first interview				Total
	In education	Job with training¹	Job without training	NEET	
	%	%	%	%	%
Job-related	61	72	67	67	65
Personal development	50	60	51	50	51
College-based	44	65	57	45	50
Voluntary work	15	8	11	21	14
Other	11	18	12	4	11
None	10	-	4	9	7
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>95</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>258</i>
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>85</i>	<i>23</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>258</i>

¹Please note this is a very small base size so these findings should be treated as indicative. Column percentages do not add up to 100 because more than one response could be selected.

5.7 Conclusions

This chapter explored the relationship between attitudes and activities and in particular looked at the participants' perceptions of the value of AA.

In evaluating the benefits of taking part in AA, the most positive finding related to awareness of training opportunities with 74% agreeing that their awareness had increased since AA. The majority of participants also demonstrated positive attitudes in relation to confidence, ideas about the sort of job they wanted to do, awareness of qualifications and skills acquisition.

6 Barriers to engaging in positive activities

6.1 Key findings

- Among participants, being consistently NEET since the first interview was associated with less work experience and lower qualification levels at the time of the first interview, and being female. The gender difference can be explained with reference to parenting responsibilities.
- Among participants who were currently NEET, a little under half (44%) were looking for a job, education or training place. Other non-EET activities mentioned included looking after children, home or family members, being inactive due to illness or disability and waiting for a job or course to start. Only 32% of those currently NEET reported doing none of these activities.
- More than half (54%) of participants who had *not* been in paid work since the first interview had applied for jobs (and been unsuccessful), with 36% applying for 11 or more jobs.
- The barriers perceived to be most important by participants were lack of opportunities in the local area, and not having the right skills or qualifications.

6.2 Introduction

While previous chapters have focussed on those engaged in positive activities, this chapter will focus on those who have not taken part in education, employment or training since the first interview. The reasons why some AA participants have remained out of EET activities will be explored by looking at differences in characteristics between those who had been consistently NEET since the first interview, and those who had not. The section also describes the activities NEET participants engage in, as well as what participants perceive to be the barriers they have faced to engaging in either education, employment or both of these.

This section describes the experiences of AA participants only, and does not report findings for the comparison sample. This is because it is not directly about the impact of AA, but rather exploring the motivational and wider contextual factors of those former participants who are not fully engaged in education, employment or training.

6.3 Characteristics of consistently NEET participants

At the time of the second interview, just over half the participants (53%) were NEET. Twenty-two per cent of participants had been consistently NEET since the first interview. The background characteristics of the two groups are shown in Table 6.1. The groups were compared in two ways: firstly by testing for significant differences between the groups, and secondly by using logistic regression.

Testing for significant differences showed that there were some differences in the background characteristics of participants who had been consistently NEET since the first interview (60 participants), and those who had not (198 participants). A higher proportion of those who had been consistently NEET since the first interview were female compared with the EET group (58% compared with 37%). Linked to this is the fact that participants who were consistently NEET since the first interview were more likely to have children (29% compared with 10%).

There were also differences in the qualification and work experience level reported at the first interview between the two groups. Those who had been consistently NEET were less likely to have

had a level 2 qualification at the first interview than participants who had been consistently NEET (13% compared with 29%), and were more likely to have had no qualifications at the first interview than those who had engaged in a positive activity since the first interview (33% compared with 14%).

None of the participants in the consistently NEET group had done any work-based training work experience at the first interview, while 9% of those who had engaged in a positive activity since the first interview had done so. Similarly only 5% of NEETs had done some paid work at the first interview compared with 14% of those who were not consistently NEET.

Table 6.1 Background characteristics of those in education, employment or training since THE FIRST INTERVIEW compared with NEET since first interview

Base: AA participants

Survey

Background characteristics	Consistently NEET since first interview %	In any education, employment or training since first interview %	Total %
Sex			
Male	42	63	58
Female	58	37	42
Ethnicity			
White	85	87	86
Asian	5	5	5
Black	7	4	5
Mixed Race	3	4	4
Other	1	*	*
Marital Status			
Married / civil partnership	2	1	1
Living with partner	9	5	6
Single	90	94	93
Other	-	-	-
Household composition			
Living with parents	65	73	71
Living with partner	9	8	8
Living with others	13	12	12
Living on own	13	7	8
Has children	29	10	14
Qualification level at first interview			
level 1	46	46	46
level 2	13	29	26
level 3	5	6	6
level 4	-	1	*
Not sure/don't know	3	4	4
No achieved qualifications	33	14	18
Work experience at first interview			
Work-based training	-	9	7
Paid work without training	5	14	12
Voluntary work	8	2	3
No work experience	88	76	78
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	58	200	258
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	60	198	258

Logistic regression analysis was undertaken to identify which characteristics listed in Table 6.1 were independently associated with engaging in education, employment or training (EET) activities since the first interview (i.e. *not* being consistently NEET). Overall the differences found above were reflected by the regression results (Table 6.2).

Three variables were found to be significant:

- Gender: Women were less likely than males to have engaged in an EET activity since the first interview
- Qualification level at the first interview: participants whose highest qualification at the first interview was level 2 or above were more likely to have engaged in an EET activity since the first interview than those no qualifications achieved.
- Work experience at the first interview: participants who had experience of paid work or work-based training at the time of the first interview were more likely to have engaged in an EET activity.

During analysis gender was found to be closely associated with whether or not the young person had a child (34 of the 36 young people saying they had a child were female). Because of this strong correlation, having a child was not *independently* associated with being consistently NEET since the first interview although it was part of the reason for women having a lower rate of engagement in EET activities since the first interview.

Table 6.2 Logistic regression: factors associated with engaging in EET activities since the first interview

Base: AA participants (258)

	N	Odds ratio	95% confidence interval
Sex (p<0.05)			
Male	146	1	
Female	112	0.3	0.2 - 0.6
Qualification level at first interview (p<0.05)			
No qualifications achieved	40	1	
Level 1	122	2.1	1.0 - 4.5
Level 2 or above	96	4.5	1.8 - 11.1
Work experience at first interview (p<0.05)			
Had not done any WBT or paid work	192	1	
Had done WBT or paid work	66	5.1	1.4 - 19.0

6.4 Engaging in non-EET activities

In order to gain understanding of the reasons why some participants did not engage in education, employment or training, it is informative to look at the activities they *were* engaging in. This section describes other activities that participants were engaging in, these are referred to as non-EET activities; that is activities other than employment, education or training.

Table 6.3 shows the responses to this question by participants who were consistently NEET since the first interview, and participants who had engaged in an EET activity since the first interview.

The most common non-EET activity mentioned by participants was looking for a job, education or training place, mentioned by 44% of participants overall. There was no significant difference in the

proportion mentioning this between those who had been NEET since the first interview and those who had not.

A significant minority of participants mentioned caring responsibilities. Thirteen per cent said they were looking after a child or children and over one in ten participants (11%) said they were looking after the home or family members. However while there was no significant difference between the NEET and EET groups in the proportion looking after family members, those who had been consistently NEET since the first interview were much more likely to mention looking after a child or children. Twenty-nine per cent of participants who had been consistently NEET the since first interview said they were currently looking after children, compared with 9% of those who had engaged in any education, employment or training since the first interview. This again highlights that having caring responsibilities for children is a key barrier for participants to engaging in EET activities.

Another major difference between the groups was that those who had been consistently NEET since the first interview were also more likely to have a long-term illness or disability, with 22% of the consistently NEET group compared to just 3% of those in the EET group.

Overall, 32% of participants said they did none of the activities listed. However amongst the consistently NEET group only 3% said they had done none of these activities, while 40% of those who had done any education, employment or training since the first interview had done none of these activities.

Table 6.3 Current non-EET activities by NEET status since the first interview

Base: AA participants

Survey

Non-EET activities	Consistently NEET since the first interview	In any education, employment or training since the first interview	Total
	%	%	%
Looking for a job, education or training place	53	42	44
Looking after child or children	29	9	13
Looking after the home or other family members	12	11	11
Being inactive because of an illness or disability	22	3	7
Waiting for new course or job to start	4	3	4
Inactive due to pregnancy	4	1	2
Taking a break from study or work (includes gap year)	1	-	-
None of these	3	40	32
Don't know	-	4	3
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>258</i>
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>258</i>

Job-seeking

Respondents who had not engaged in paid work or work-based training since the first interview were asked about any job-seeking they had done during this period. Over half (54%) said they had applied for one or more jobs since the first interview (and by implication had been unsuccessful).

Many participants applied for a high volume of positions. While 15% said they had applied for between 1 and 10 jobs since the first interview, 22% had applied for between 11 and 25 jobs while 14% applied for between 26 and 50 jobs (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4 Number of jobs applied for since the first interview

Base: AA participants not in paid work or WBT since the first interview

	Survey
	Total
Number of jobs	%
No jobs applied for	46
Between 1 and 10	15
Between 11 and 25	22
Between 26 and 50	14
Don't know	3
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	95
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	90

The majority (76%) of those who had applied for jobs had not received any offers since the first interview. Twenty-four per cent (13 young people) of those applying for jobs had received one or more job offers, with a small number of young people receiving up to 10 offers.

Table 6.5 Number of job offers received since the first interview

Base: AA participants not in paid work or WBT since the first interview who applied for jobs

	Survey
	Total
Number of jobs	%
None	76
Between 1 and 5	13
Between 6 and 10	11
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	49
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	48

Benefits

Fifty-two per cent of the AA participants were receiving at least one type of benefit at the time of interview. Amongst participants who had been consistently NEET since the first interview this was 91%. As might be expected, the most common benefit received by this group was Jobseekers Allowance (46%), although many also received Income Support (27%), Council Tax Benefit (27%) and Housing Benefit (28%).

Twenty-eight per cent received Child Benefit, while 26% received Child Tax Credit. This was a notably higher proportion than for participants who had been in a positive activity since the first interview (10% and 9% respectively). Incapacity Benefit was also higher among the consistently NEET group, with 18% receiving this compared with 5% of those who had been in an activity (Table 6.6). This reflects the higher proportion of young people in the consistently NEET group who were inactive because of an illness or disability (Table 6.3).

Table 6.6 Benefit receipt of those who were currently NEET

Base: AA participants

Survey

Benefits receive	Consistently NEET since the first interview	In any education, employment or training since the first interview	Total
	%	%	%
Jobseekers Allowance or JSA	46	23	29
Income Support	27	10	14
Council Tax Benefit	27	13	16
Housing Benefit or Local Housing Allowance	28	15	18
Child Benefit	28	10	14
Child Tax Credit	26	9	13
Incapacity benefit or Employment and Support Allowance	18	5	8
Disability Living Allowance	6	2	3
Working Tax Credit	0	3	2
Receives any benefits	91	40	52
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>58</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>258</i>
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>198</i>	<i>258</i>

6.5 Perceived barriers to engaging in positive activities

Three groups of participants were asked about the barriers they had experienced in engaging with positive activities. The first group was young people who had not engaged in any positive activities since the first interview; that is those who were consistently NEET since the first interview. The second group was participants who were not in employment or training since the first interview, but who did participate in some form of study or education. The third group was participants who had studied or been in education since the first interview, but who had not done any form of work-based training or paid work. The barriers mentioned by these three groups are discussed separately below.

Barriers experienced by participants not in education, employment or training since the first interview

Sixty-one per cent of participants who had been consistently NEET since the first interview mentioned that there were not many jobs where they lived, this was the most commonly mentioned barrier amongst the consistently NEET group. A lack of available courses in the local area was mentioned by

fewer people, with 34% saying this was a reason they had found it difficult to engage in a positive activity. Another barrier related to resources in the local area was the availability of transport, which was mentioned by over a fifth (21%).

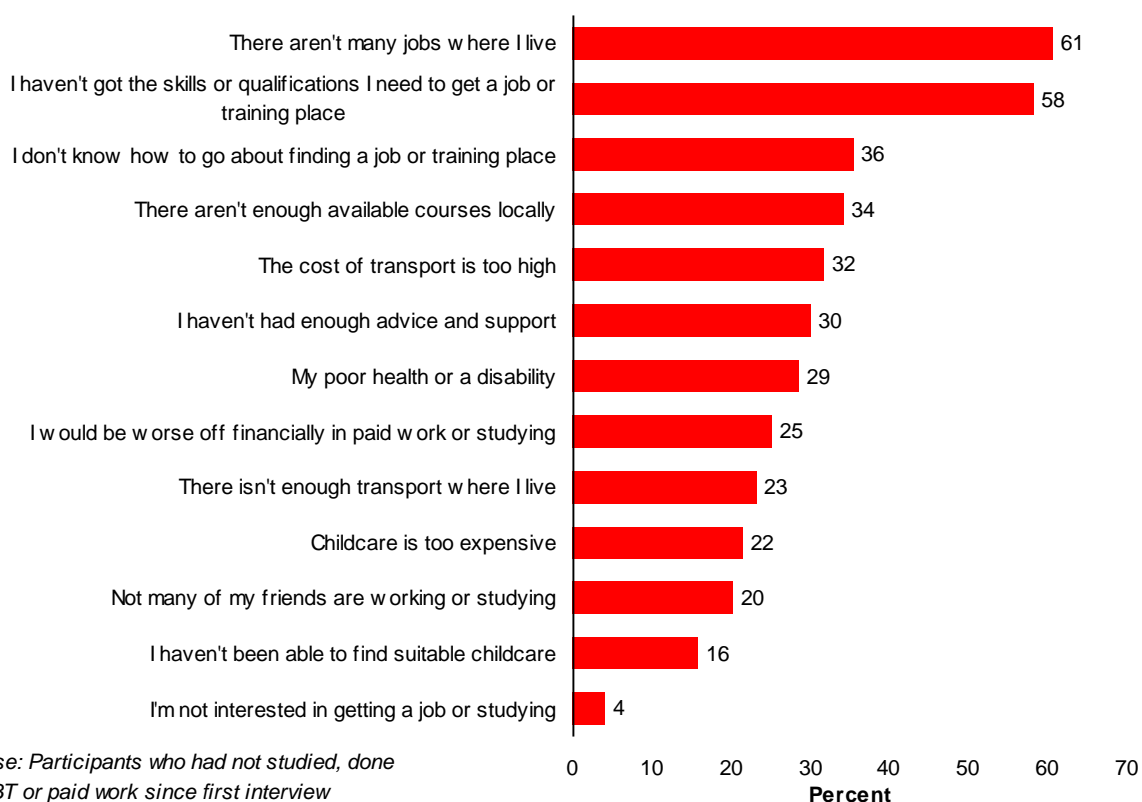
Job-related barriers tended to be important for the consistently NEET group. As well as a high proportion mentioning the number of jobs where they lived, 58% said that they did not have the skills or qualifications they needed to get a job or training place, and 36% said that they did not know how to go about finding a job or training place.

Some participants mentioned financial barriers to becoming engaged in a positive activity, with 32% saying the cost of transport was too high, a quarter (25%) saying that they would be worse off financially in paid work or study, and 22% saying the cost of childcare acted as barrier.

Other barriers mentioned were that they had not received enough advice and support (30%), their poor health or a disability had made it difficult (29%), that not many of their friends were working or studying (20%), and that they had not been able to find childcare (16%).

Notably, only a very small proportion mentioned a lack of motivation to get a job or to study (4%).

Figure 6.1 Barriers to EET for participants not in education, employment or training since the first interview

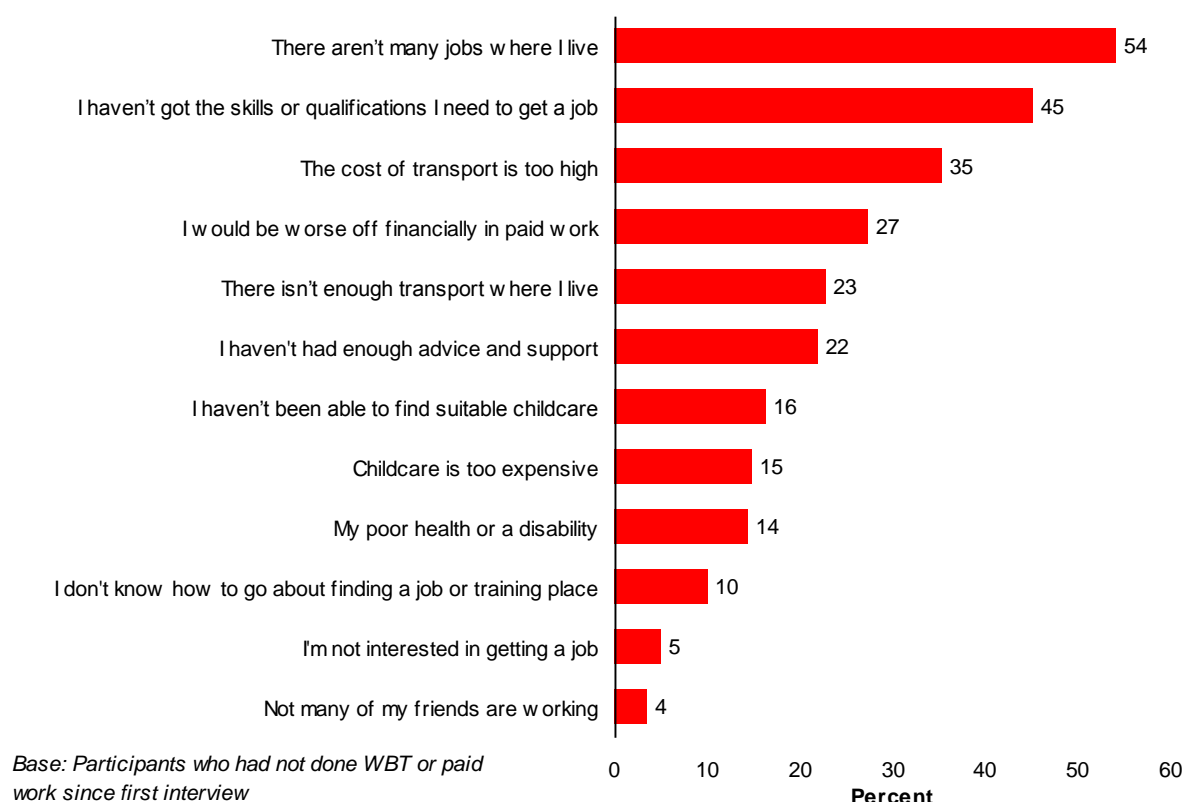


Barriers experienced by participants not in employment or training since the first interview

Those who had not been in employment or training since the first interview (but had been in education) were asked about the barriers they had experienced to getting a job or training place. Overall, the barriers mentioned by this group were similar to that of the NEET group described above. As with the NEET group, the most commonly mentioned barriers were that there were not many jobs in the area (54%), and that they did not feel they had enough skills or qualifications to get a job (45%).

One main difference between the two groups was that fewer participants in this group mentioned not knowing how to go about finding a job or training place than participants in the NEET group, with just 10% mentioning this (compared with 36% in the NEET group).

Figure 6.2 Barriers to work for participants not in employment or training since the first interview



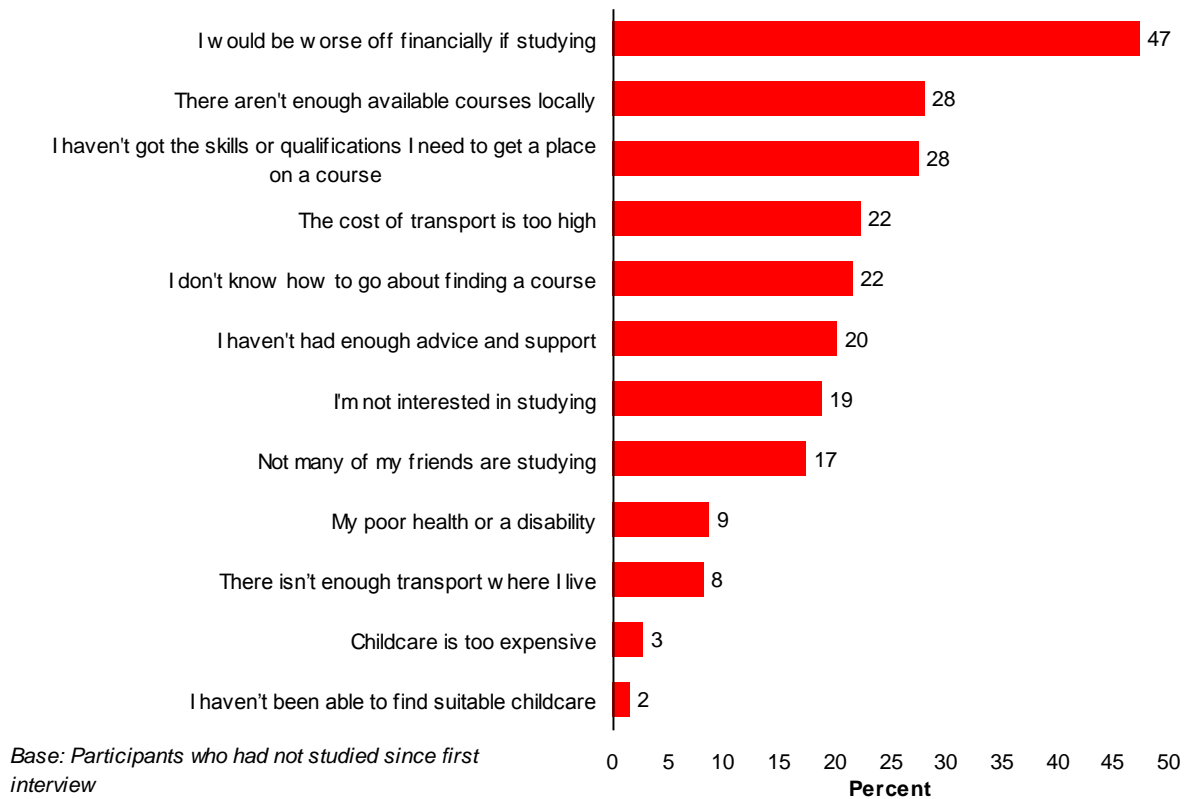
Barriers experienced by participants not in education since the first interview

Barriers mentioned by those who had not engaged in education (but had been in paid work or work based training) since the first interview were, on the whole, quite different to those mentioned by the first two groups. In contrast to the other two groups the most common barrier to engaging in education was a financial one. Nearly half (47%) said that they would be worse off financially if they were studying. A lower proportion mentioned that there were not enough courses locally (28%), and that they did not have the skills or qualifications to get a place on a course (28%).

Another important difference is that while 4% of the NEET group mentioned being not interested in getting a job or studying, and 5% of those who had not been in work or training mentioned being not

interested in getting a job, nearly a fifth (19%) of this group said that they were not interested in studying.

Figure 6.3 Barriers to study for those not in education since the first interview



6.6 Conclusions

This chapter focused on participants who had remained NEET since the first interview and by consequence, were not successfully supported by AA. The chapter explored the activities that they were engaged in, prior experience associated with remaining NEET and the participants' perceptions of the barriers they faced.

While experience and qualification level were important in predicting whether a participant was consistently NEET since the first interview, two key personal barriers to engagement in EET activities were having children (particularly for women), and having an illness or disability. When participants were asked about the factors that had made it difficult for them to engage in employment, education or training since the first interview, they mostly referred to labour market issues and financial difficulties as barriers. Very few cited their own motivation as holding them back from engagement.

7 Conclusions

This section sets out the main conclusions from the follow-up survey in the quantitative evaluation of the Activity Agreement (Pilot 1). The evaluation used a robust comparison design, whereby the experiences of participants in AA areas were compared with the experiences of similar young people in areas where standard support arrangements applied. This allowed estimation of the impact or 'added value' of AA on outcomes for young people. The report of the findings from the first interviews, which focused on the short-term impact of AA during the 12 months after the young people became NEET, was published in April 2009 (Tanner et al, 2009). The follow-up survey investigated the longer-term impact of AA on participants approximately two years after their involvement with AA had ended. The follow-up survey was carried out with a sub-set of young people who had taken part in the first interview. The sample for this follow-up report is 258 participants and 247 young people in the comparison sample compared to 1018 participants and 2291 young people in the comparison sample in the first report.

AA had a sustained impact on involvement in studying or work-based training. 48% of participants reported doing some studying or work-based training at the time of the follow-up interview, which is about 8% higher than would have happened without AA. By comparing activity status at the first and follow-up interviews, it was possible to identify an impact of AA (of about 9%) on moving young people who would have been in work with no training/studying into education, work-based training or a job involving training.

Participants were more likely to have completed a qualification since the first interview than those in the comparison group. During this period the proportion of participants with no achieved qualifications dropped by 6 percentage points.

AA had a sustained impact on interest in learning. This is reflected in the difference between participants and the comparison sample in their aspirations for the future. Participants were more likely to expect to be involved in studying or training in a year's time compared to the comparison sample. These findings suggest that AA may have set some participants on a trajectory towards more learning and higher quality jobs in the future.

Participants perceived a number of positive benefits from AA. The most positive finding related to awareness of training opportunities with 74% agreeing that their awareness had increased since AA. The majority of participants also demonstrated positive attitudes in relation to confidence, ideas about the sort of job they wanted to do, awareness of qualifications and skills acquisition.

The lower rate of employment among AA participants may have a positive interpretation. AA participants were found to be less likely to be employed between the first and follow-up interviews. Among the young people who were employed, participants reported jobs that were fewer and of shorter duration. However, the fact that participants had jobs at a higher occupational level with more training, and were more interested in learning, suggests that they may have been on a path to higher quality jobs in the future. This would need to be confirmed with further research.

Being consistently NEET during this period was associated with less work experience and lower qualification levels at the first interview and with higher parenting responsibilities. Other key factors identified as barriers to participation in EET activities included perceived lack of jobs,

financial insecurity and illness or disability. Lack of motivation was not a key factor in explaining why people were NEET. The main activity among those who were currently NEET was looking for a job or training place and more than half of those who had *not* been in paid work since the first interview had applied for jobs (and been unsuccessful).

This report has highlighted some ways in which AA has been shown to have a positive sustained impact in the longer-term. With an impact on involvement in studying and work-based training and interest in learning, AA is likely to lead to higher quality jobs in the future. However, alongside the impact on involvement in studying and training, participants were less likely to be employed and were no less likely to be NEET than the comparison sample. The lower rate of involvement in employment may partly be explained by local labour market factors since AA areas appeared to have higher rates of unemployment and proportion of young people who were NEET than non-AA areas (and young people themselves identified lack of jobs as a key barrier to being employed).

An explanation for the mixed findings is likely to lie in the diversity of the NEET young people who took part in AA. The findings from this report suggest that while AA helped some young people to move from being NEET into education and study and gave others aspirations for the future, there was another group of young people who were unable to overcome the personal and contextual barriers they faced despite the experience of AA.

Appendix A Key impact findings from the first interview

In this section, the key impact findings from the first interview are reproduced from the published report (Tanner et al, 2009). The first table shows the impact on participation in activities during the 12 months since becoming NEET (which included the time spent involved in AA). During this period, AA had an impact on participation in personal development activities, studying for a qualification and participation in work-based training, and led to lower participation rates in jobs without training. AA participants were less likely to remain NEET during this period.

Participation in education and employment related activities within 12 months of becoming NEET

Base Description: All respondents

	Participants	Comparison group	Difference
	%	%	%
Personal development activities	30.0	4.4	25.6*
Work-based training	14.3	11.0	3.3*
Other work – with in-house training	7.0	7.9	-0.9
<i>Of which:</i>			
<i>non-elementary occupation</i>	5.1	4.9	0.2
<i>elementary occupation</i>	1.9	3.0	-1.0
Other work – without in-house training	16.9	26.5	-9.6*
<i>Of which:</i>			
<i>non-elementary occupation</i>	8.7	13.3	-4.6*
<i>elementary occupation</i>	8.2	13.2	-5.0*
Voluntary work	7.2	5.5	1.7
Studying for NQF qualification	23.6	18.3	5.3*
Studying for other qualification	4.0	1.8	2.2*
None of the above in the 12 months	28.8	41.8	-13.1*
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	1013	1013	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	1013	2291	

Among the young people who had completed their Activity Agreement within 9 months of becoming NEET, it was possible to investigate the short-term impact three months after completing their agreement. AA continued to have a significant impact on increasing participation in personal development activities and work-based training, and reducing participation in work without training.

Participation in education and employment related activities for the 3 months post-participation

Base Description: Participants completing AA within 9 months of first becoming NEET

	Participants	Comparison group	Difference
	%	%	%
Personal development activities	11.2	3.0	8.2*
Work-based training	16.3	10.3	6.0*
Other work – with in-house training	6.9	7.8	-0.9
<i>Of which:</i>			
<i>non-elementary occupation</i>	5.3	5.3	0.0
<i>elementary occupation</i>	1.6	2.5	-1.0
Other work – without in-house training	15.8	24.1	-8.3*
<i>Of which:</i>			
<i>non-elementary occupation</i>	9.6	14.4	-4.8
<i>elementary occupation</i>	6.2	9.7	-3.5
Voluntary work	5.2	4.7	0.5
Studying for NQF qualification	25.2	20.1	5.1
Studying for other qualification	6.4	4.7	1.7
None of the above in the 12 months	34.9	39.6	-4.7
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	321	321	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	321	1082	

The following table shows the impact of AA on attitudes to learning and work at the first interview.

Attitudes to learning and work at the first interview

Base Description: Young people taking part in the first interview

	Participants	Comparison group	Difference
	% agree	% agree	%
I'm not interested in doing any learning	14	19.6	-4.6*
Learning is only worth doing if there is a qualification at the end of it	57.5	59.4	-1.9
You need to have qualifications in order to have a job worth having	56.3	55.2	1.1
The skills you need at work can't be learned in a classroom situation	38.7	44.8	-6.1*
Earning money is more important to me than staying on in education	46.5	44.9	1.6
In looking for a job, I am more concerned to find one with training than one that pays the best	56.3	56.3	0
I am prepared to take any job I can do	69.2	69.7	-0.5
Once you've got a job, it's very important to hang on to it, even if you don't really like it	67	68.3	-1.3
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>1013</i>	<i>1013</i>	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>1013</i>	<i>2291</i>	

Appendix B Context for Activity Agreement follow-up study

Introduction

This note provides contextual data to assist the analysis and interpretation of findings derived from the follow-up survey of young people participating in Activity Agreements (AA). The three areas identified as requiring further background information, relating to both AA pilot areas and comparison areas, were:

- Changes in the local labour markets;
- Differences in local authority provision and support; and
- Changes in the rate of NEET.

Within the limited time available to complete this task, it was apparent that identifying and analysing evidence to produce meaningful information on the second of these (local authority provision and support) was not feasible. Therefore, the note concentrates on changes in local labour markets and rates of NEET.

The main source of data for the consideration of local labour market changes was the ONS report *The Labour Market across the UK in the current recession*, which was published in November 2009. Where possible, this was supplemented by information from local and regional reports. The NEET data was based on the DCSF statistics.¹⁴

Distribution of sample across Connexions areas

The following table shows the distribution of the sample who responded to the follow-up survey across the AA and non-AA Connexions areas. It shows that particular consideration should be given to labour market statistics in Merseyside, Cheshire & Warrington and North London in explaining the impact findings from the survey.

¹⁴ DCSF 14-19 Reform: NEET Data. NEET Figures for Local Authority Areas, 2006, 2007, 2008.

Table 0 Distribution of responding sample across Connexions areas

AA areas	% of respondents
Merseyside	14
Central London	6
Kent & Medway	3
Tyne & Wear	8
Greater Manchester	5
West Yorkshire	6
London East	5
Cornwall & Devon	5
<i>Total</i>	<i>51</i>
Non AA areas	
Cheshire & Warrington	
	10
South Central	5
South London	5
Somerset	2
Hereford & Worcestershire	3
North London	15
County Durham	9
<i>Total</i>	<i>49</i>

Change in NEET rates

Key Points

- Overall figures for an area can mask significant differences between constituent LAs. For example, the figures for Kent and Medway show that, in 2006, the NEET rates for the two authorities were similar (6.4% for Kent, 6.1% for Medway). However, by 2008, the figure for Kent had declined to 4.7%, whereas that for Medway had jumped to 9.5%. Similarly, within Merseyside there were considerable differences in 2008 between Sefton (7.6%) and Knowsley (14.4%). With the follow-up sample spread thinly between local authority areas, it is not possible to assess fully the implications of these local area differences on the activity status of the young people.
- Some areas (e.g. Merseyside and Greater Manchester) exhibit significant differences between LAs, while others (eg West Yorkshire) show consistency across them.
- The fact that NEET rates in AA areas tended to fall to a greater degree than was the case in non-AA areas may indicate an AA effect.
- **However, despite the fall in NEET rate, the average NEET rate per AA area in 2008 continued to be higher than in non-AA areas (7.8% compared to 6.3%¹⁵) resulting in a more challenging environment in which to find jobs.**

In terms of the overall trends in NEET rates, the NEET Statistics Quarterly Brief for November 2009 stated that “following two years of falling NEET rates, the rate has increased in each of the last four quarters”. This was attributed to a decline in the number of job opportunities available:

¹⁵ Note that this was calculated as a simple mean of the rate per area and does not take account of different population sizes within areas.

“Despite the increase in participation in education and training, the proportion of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) also increased; from 9.7 per cent at end 2007 to 10.3 per cent at end 2008. This is due to reduced employment amongst young people not in education or training. In 2007, 56 per cent of those young people not in education or training were in work. In 2008, this had fallen to 49 per cent.”¹⁶

Table 1 shows the proportions of 16-18 year olds categorised as NEET according to destination data collected by Connexions, for the years 2006 to 2008. The figures are based on the April to March period – therefore, that for 2008 represents the period April 2008 to March 2009.

Table 1 AA areas: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08

Area	2006	% change	2007	% change	2008	% point
	%	in cohort	%	in cohort	%	change in
		size 06/07		size 07/08		rate 2006-08
Merseyside	10.9	-1.1	10.1	-1.6	9.8	-1.1
Central London	8.4	+2.3	7.3	+0.5	6.5	-1.9
Kent & Medway	6.4	+3.6	5.3	+0.4	5.5	-0.9
Tyne & Wear	11.4	-1.4	10.5	+1.4	10.2	-1.2
Gt Manchester	10.0	+6.6	8.4	+2.1	8.4	-1.6
West Yorks	9.7	+1.2	9.4	0.0	9.4	-0.3
London East	8.8	-3.2	7.3	-0.5	6.7	-2.1
Cornwall & Devon	6.0	-4.1	5.8	+2.2	6.2	+0.2
Mean % per AA area	9.0	+0.5	8.0	+0.6	7.8	-1.1

What is striking about the figures is that, with the single exception of Cornwall and Devon, all areas show a reduction in the rate between 2006 and 2008. It may have been anticipated that the onset of the recession would have had some effect, although the Quarterly Brief statement quoted above suggests that a subsequent trend for a rise in NEET rates will be apparent in next year’s figures.

The largest reductions were in Central and East London and Greater Manchester, while West Yorkshire exhibited the smallest decrease (notwithstanding the slight rise in Cornwall and Devon).

The pattern for the non-AA areas is less positive (Table 2), with two areas (Cheshire and Warrington and South Central) showing a rise in the rates. It is also interesting that the decreases in South London (-0.5%) and North London (-0.8%) are smaller than those found in Central London (-1.9%) and London East (-2.1%). The higher rate of decrease for the AA areas may indicate an AA effect in contributing to the reduction of the numbers who are NEET.

¹⁶ It should be noted that the figures on which the Quarterly Brief are based are derived from the Labour Force Survey, rather than from the Connexions destinations data, which is used for the local authority figures.

Table 2 Non-AA areas: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08

Area	2006	% change	2007	% change	2008	% point
	%	in cohort	%	in cohort	%	change in
		size 06/07		size 07/08		rate 2006-08
Cheshire & W'ton	5.7	-0.1	4.9	-0.4	5.8	+0.1
South Central	6.1	+0.5	6.2	+0.4	6.9	+0.8
South London	5.6	-2.5	5.1	-0.8	5.1	-0.5
Somerset	4.8	-13.3	4.3	+17.3	3.8	-1.0
Hereford & Worcs	5.5	+1.1	4.8	-0.4	5.4	-0.1
North London	6.9	-4.6	6.4	+1.2	6.1	-0.8
County Durham	12.9	+1.0	10.4	+1.2	10.8	-2.1
Mean % per non-AA area	6.8	-2.6	6.0	+2.6	6.3	-0.5

AA areas

This section considers the NEET rates within each of the AA areas.

Merseyside

Table 3 shows the rates for each local authority in Merseyside. Sefton clearly has a significantly lower rate than all other LAs throughout the period. In 2006, Knowsley had the highest rate (13.7%), ahead of Liverpool (13.2%). However, by 2008, Knowsley (14.4%) was still the highest, but Halton (13.2%) was second. The interesting point here is the difference in the patterns exhibited by LAs. The rate in Halton rose by 1.4 percentage points between 2006 and 2008, while that for Liverpool decreased by 2.8 percentage points.

Although it was shown that, in comparison to the national average rate of overall unemployment, the extent to which Halton was above that average had declined in recent months, a Greater Merseyside Connexions note of April 2009 conceded that "there are pockets of high unemployment within Halton which coincide with high NEET suggesting that unemployment is embedded across generations".

Table 3 Merseyside: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08 by LA

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	% point
	%	%	%	change in
				rate 2006-08
Halton	11.8	11.5	13.2	+1.4
Knowsley	13.7	15.0	14.4	+0.7
Liverpool	13.2	11.5	10.4	-2.8
Sefton	7.6	7.2	7.6	0.0
St Helens	10.0	8.5	8.1	-1.9
Wirral	10.0	9.5	9.1	-0.9

Unemployment in Merseyside, as measured by those claiming Jobseekers Allowance, rose markedly in the second half of 2008¹⁷. For young people in this period, those employed in the Construction and Retail sectors were most adversely affected, with these two sectors accounting for 26% of redundancies among young people. Knowsley was particularly affected by a decline of jobs in these sectors. A note on the local context produced by Greater Merseyside Connexions in May 2009 stated that in the three years up to February 2009 there had been “a decline in the employment of young people (16-19) in key sectors that have traditionally recruited young workers, eg admin/clerical and construction”. It was emphasised that this trend preceded the onset of the recession.

Central London

Unlike in Merseyside, the figures for Central London (Table 4) show a reasonable degree of consistency across LAs, with decreases ranging from 0.5 percentage points in Kensington and Chelsea to 2.6 percentage points in Lambeth.

Table 4 Central London: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08 by LA

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	% point change in rate 2006- 08
	%	%	%	
Camden	7.5	6.5	6.5	-1.0
Islington	8.6	9.5	7.7	-0.9
Ken & Chelsea	7.9	5.8	5.4	-0.5
Lambeth	10.5	9.8	7.9	-2.6
Southwark	11.7	10.0	8.8	-1.2
Wandsworth	6.0	4.5	4.4	-1.6
Westminster	6.5	5.3	5.0	-1.5

Kent & Medway

As indicated earlier, the Kent and Medway figures are notable for the divergence in the trajectories of the NEET rates between 2007 and 2008, with that for Kent declining from 6.4% to 4.7%, while that for Medway rose from 6.1% to 9.6%.

Tyne & Wear

In Tyne and Wear, three of the five LAs had significant reductions in NEET rates between 2006 and 2007, before smaller decreases in the following year (Table 5). For Newcastle upon Tyne, the reduction was less pronounced between 2006 and 2007, while in Sunderland a 0.5 percentage point decrease in that period was almost offset by a 0.4 percentage point increase in the following year.

¹⁷ Greater Merseyside Connexions Labour Market Newsletter Issue 50, May/June 2009

Table 5 Tyne & Wear: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08 by LA

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	% point change in rate 2006- 08
	%	%	%	
Sunderland	13.3	12.8	13.2	-0.1
Gateshead	12.3	10.4	10.2	-2.1
Newcastle-u-Tyne	9.4	9.3	8.5	-0.9
North Tyneside	11.4	8.8	9.0	-2.4
South Tyneside	11.3	10.6	10.2	-1.1

Greater Manchester

At one level, the figures for Greater Manchester point to variability in the incidence of young people being NEET, with the rates ranging from 7.3% in Trafford to 12.75 in Bolton (2006). In comparison to other areas, the rates were relatively high. However, it is apparent that, without exception, all ten LAs experienced a percentage point reduction in NEET of 1.0 or more by 2008. This differentiates it from all other areas. However, rather than the continuing decline (or at least plateauing) in successive years which was evident in Central London, there were increases in the rate from 2007 to 2008 in five of the LAs (Bury, City of Manchester, Salford, Stockport and Wigan).

Table 6 Greater Manchester: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08 by LA

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	% point change in rate 2006- 08
	%	%	%	
Bolton	12.7	11.8	10.5	-2.2
Bury	8.0	6.5	6.6	-1.4
City of Manchester	11.4	9.5	10.2	-1.2
Oldham	8.8	7.7	7.2	-1.6
Rochdale	12.1	10.9	10.5	-1.6
Salford	10.2	7.6	8.1	-2.1
Stockport	8.8	6.9	7.1	-1.7
Trafford	7.3	6.6	6.3	-1.0
Tameside	9.1	8.1	8.1	-1.0
Wigan	9.9	8.2	8.5	-1.4

Although using different data and a slightly different time period, an LSC North West report¹⁸ pointed out the success of some LAs in addressing the issue of young people who are NEET and stated that:

“The NEET rate in the North West is higher than England at all ages; however, the gap has narrowed at all ages since January 2008. At Local Authority level, particular attention should be paid to the significant reduction in NEET amongst 16 year olds in Bolton (-3.7% points in a year). There has also been a positive reduction in 18 year old NEET in St Helens of -2.8% points, compared with a slight increase nationally.”

West Yorkshire

The figures for West Yorkshire (Table 7) show very little variation between the five LAs in the NEET rate. There is also little difference in the level in successive years, so that, between 2006 and 2008, Bradford, Calderdale and Wakefield experienced slight reductions, there was a small increase in the level in Leeds, while Kirklees had returned to 9.7% after a 0.9 percentage point fall in 2007.

Table 7 West Yorkshire: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08 by LA

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	% point change in rate 2006- 08
	%	%	%	
Bradford	9.8	9.4	8.8	-1.0
Calderdale	9.7	8.2	8.3	-1.4
Kirklees	9.7	8.8	9.7	0.0
Leeds	9.1	10.0	9.5	+0.4
Wakefield	10.6	9.8	10.2	-0.4

London East

The figures for London East (Table 8) show a different pattern than other areas with a large number of LAs (ten in this case). Even when the entirely atypical City of London is discounted, the starting point in 2006 shows great variation between LAs, ranging from 4.8% in Redbridge to 13.1% in Hackney. This variability is again evident in subsequent years. What is striking, however, is the relatively high level of overall percentage point decrease from 2006 to 2008 in all LAs. The percentage point reductions in Barking and Dagenham (-3.5), Hackney (3.1) and Newham (3.1) are particularly notable. Moreover, decreases occurred across all LAs in both 2007 and 2008.

¹⁸ LSC North West (2009) *Regional 14-19 Strategic Analysis 2009*.

Table 8 London East: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08 by LA

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	% point change in rate 2006- 08
	%	%	%	
Barking & Dag	11.4	9.7	8.9	-3.5
Bexley	6.9	6.5	5.3	-1.6
City of London	1.1	1.0	0.6	-0.5
Greenwich	12.0	9.6	9.5	-2.5
Hackney	13.1	11.7	10.0	-3.1
Havering	6.1	5.8	5.2	-0.9
Lewisham	6.7	6.1	5.5	-1.2
Newham	10.8	8.7	7.7	-3.1
Redbridge	4.8	4.3	4.2	-0.6
Tower Hamlets	10.9	8.2	6.7	-4.2

Cornwall & Devon

The two LAs of Cornwall and Devon have very similar rates of NEET in all three years. The rates for Cornwall for each successive year are: 6.1%, 5.8% and 6.1%, while those for Devon are: 6.0%, 5.9% and 6.4%.

Non-AA areas

Cheshire & Warrington

The rates for Warrington are higher than those for Cheshire across all three years, being 7.0%, 5.8% and 7.2%, with those for Cheshire being 5.4%, 4.7% and 5.4% respectively.

South Central

The pattern for South Central (Table 9) shows a clear distinction between the urban localities of Southampton and Portsmouth on the one hand and the more dispersed populations of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight on the other. The former LAs have higher rates of NEET, with those for 2008 being the same as in 2006, while the Isle of Wight experienced a slight increase and Hampshire a more substantial one of 1.1 percentage points.

Table 9 South Central: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08 by LA

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	% point change in rate 2006- 08
	%	%	%	
Portsmouth	9.9	9.6	9.9	0.0
Southampton	9.4	10.4	9.4	0.0
Isle of Wight	5.9	6.0	6.0	+0.1
Hampshire	5.2	5.2	6.3	+1.1

South London

The pattern for South London is consistent across LAs, with each LA experiencing a small percentage point decrease in the rate of NEET over the three years. There is some variation in level, ranging from, in 2006, 3.4% in Bromley to 8.1% in Croydon.

Table 10 South London: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08 by LA

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	% point change in rate 2006- 08
	%	%	%	
Bromley	5.0	4.7	4.6	-0.4
Croydon	8.1	7.6	7.1	-1.0
Kingston	3.4	3.2	3.2	-0.2
Merton	6.7	6.1	5.8	-0.9
Richmond	4.0	2.6	3.4	-0.6
Sutton	4.8	4.6	4.4	-0.4

Somerset

Somerset's NEET rate remains relatively low across the three years, with a 0.5 percentage point decrease between 2006 and 2007. The figures for the three years are: 4.8%, 4.3% and 4.3%.

Hereford & Worcestershire

The NEET rates for Herefordshire and for Worcestershire are similar in level, although those for Herefordshire show a 0.3 percentage point increase between 2006 and 2008, whereas those for Worcestershire decrease by 0.3 percentage points. The figures for Herefordshire are: 5.5%, 5.4% and 5.8%, while those for Worcestershire are 5.5%, 4.6% and 5.3%.

North London

The North London NEET rates (Table 9) are noteworthy for the significant decrease in the Haringey figures, from 12.5% in 2006 to 6.8% in 2008. Waltham Forest also exhibits notable decrease of 3.5 percentage points over the period, while much smaller decreases are evident in the other two boroughs: Barnet and Enfield.

Table 9 North London: Proportion of 16-18 year olds NEET 2006-08 by LA

Local Authority	2006	2007	2008	% point change in rate 2006- 08
	%	%	%	
Barnet	4.8	4.6	4.1	-0.7
Enfield	7.0	7.2	6.4	-0.6
Haringey	12.5	10.3	6.8	-5.7
Waltham Forest	8.2	5.4	4.7	-3.5

County Durham

County Durham's NEET rates for the three years are relatively high, at 12.9% in 2006, 10.4% in 2007 and 10.8% in 2008. They do, however, show a 2.1 percentage point reduction over the three years.

Labour Market Change

Key Points

Tables 10 and 11 show the changes in a) the employment rate and b) the unemployment rate in the AA areas and non-AA areas respectively for 2008 and 2009. Unsurprisingly, both sets of figures indicate an overall trend for reductions in the employment rate and increases in the unemployment rate. This reflects the overall trend for England as a whole. However, what is striking is the fact that, as far as the employment rate is concerned, only County Durham has a decrease as high as the 2.1 percentage point change for England¹⁹. Although the figure for Cornwall, at -2.4 percentage points, is higher, this is offset by the 1.6 percentage point increase in the neighbouring Devon local authority which combines with Cornwall to make up the AA area. As indicated in the footnote to the table, the figures have been given separately for the two LAs because of the stark contrast between them

Furthermore, several other areas (London East, South Central, Somerset, Hereford and Worcestershire) show an increase in employment. There are also examples of areas where, despite an overall 2.4 percentage point decrease in the unemployment rate for England, reductions in unemployment have occurred – Kent and Medway and London East. No change was recorded for Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Of importance for understanding the impact findings from the survey is the difference in unemployment rate between AA areas and non-AA areas. The average rate per AA area was 7.1% in 2009 compared to 5.9% in non-AA areas suggesting that jobs were more scarce in AA areas²⁰.

¹⁹ It should be noted that the England figure is based on LFS data rather than the Annual Population Survey, which is the basis for the LA figures

²⁰ Again, this is an average across the rates per area and does not take into account the different population sizes.

Table 10 AA areas: Labour Market Indicators 2008-2009

Area	Emp rate	Emp rate	% point	Unemp	Unemp	% point
	2008	2009	change	rate 2008	rate 2009	change
	%	%		%	%	
Merseyside	67.4	66.0	-1.4	7.1	8.0	+0.9
Central London	70.0	69.9	-0.1	6.2	6.9	+0.7
Kent & Medway	76.7	76.2	-0.5	5.6	5.5	-0.1
Tyne & Wear	70.2	69.7	-0.5	6.8	8.6	+1.8
Gt Manchester	71.3	70.0	-1.3	6.6	7.6	+1.0
West Yorks	73.3	72.3	-1.0	5.8	7.0	+1.2
London East	65.2	66.2	+1.0	9.6	9.2	-0.4
Cornwall*	75.3	72.9	-2.4	4.8	6.8	+2.0
Devon	76.6	78.2	+1.6	4.6	4.4	-0.2
Mean across areas	71.8	71.3	-0.5	6.4	7.1	0.7
England	74.9	72.8	-2.2	5.5	7.9	+2.4

Source: ONS (2009) *The Labour Market across the UK in the current recession. November.*

Table 11 Non-AA areas: Labour Market Indicators 2008-2009

Area	Emp rate	Emp rate	% point	Unemp	Unemp	% point
	2008	2009	change	rate 2008	rate 2009	change
	%	%		%	%	
Cheshire & W'ton	76.5	76.0	-0.5	3.9	5.8	+1.9
South Central	78.1	78.5	+0.4	4.0	4.9	+0.9
South London	77.5	75.7	-1.8	4.8	5.5	+0.7
Somerset	79.6	79.7	+0.1	4.0	4.9	+0.9
Hereford & Worcs	77.2	78.2	+1.0	4.3	4.4	+0.1
North London	70.3	69.0	-1.3	5.9	7.7	+1.8
County Durham	73.8	71.7	-2.1	5.1	8.0	+2.9
Mean across areas	76.2	75.6	-0.6	4.6	5.9	1.3
England	74.9	72.8	-2.1	5.5	7.9	+2.4

Source: ONS (2009) *The Labour Market across the UK in the current recession. November.*

* Data for Cornwall and Devon have been given separately to highlight differences.

References

Department for Education and Skills (2005) *14-19 Education and Skills White Paper*

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2008) *Education and Skills Act 2008*

Tanner, E., Purdon, S., D'Souza, J., and Finch, S., (2009) *Activity Agreement Pilots: Quantitative Evaluation*, Department for Children, Schools and Families

Ref: DFE-RR010

ISBN: 978-1-84775-769-2

© NatCen Studies

July 2010