



Breaking Barriers Innovations: Education to Employment

Interim Report on Stage One –
September 2018. Submission to
Sunderland City Council

Dr Jon Bashford
George Evans-Jones
Nicholas Werran



September
2018



Contents

Executive Summary	5
1. Introduction	16
2. The national and local strategic context for skills requirements from employers and industry	20
3. The factors that influence young people when they are making decisions about career choices	46
4. Communication and the relevance of the local education to employment offer	74
5. Engaging industry in the skills agenda	86
6. Conclusions and Next Steps	92
7. Bibliography	96

Acknowledgements

This programme of work would not have been possible without the support of the many individuals who contributed their time and shared their views and experiences in interviews. As these interviews were conducted on a confidential basis we cannot acknowledge the individuals, but they represented a range of organisations and sectors including:

Sunderland City Council	North East LEP
Springboard	Centre for Cities
Geek Talent	Liebherr Sunderland
Sunderland College	Sandhill View Academy
University of Sunderland	Sunderland Youth Parliament
Together for Children Sunderland	Department for Work and Pensions
South Tyneside Council	Volunteer and Community Action Sunderland (VCAS)

We are especially grateful to Irene Lucas (Chief Executive Officer, Sunderland City Council); Fiona Brown (Executive Director of People Services, Sunderland City Council); Sarah Reed (Director of Strategy, Partnerships and Transformation, Sunderland City Council); Jill Laverick (Corporate Affairs Manager, Sunderland City Council); Jane Hibberd (Head of Strategy & Policy for People & Neighbourhoods, Sunderland City Council); Simon Marshall (Director of Education, Together for Children)

We also like to thank Professor Philip Garner (University of Northampton) for his advice and expertise.

Executive Summary

This is an interim report that presents the findings from the engagement undertaken as stage one of the Sunderland programme. The report is intended to provide a springboard for discussion and to inform the development of local plans and strategies for ensuring radical improvement in the aspirations and life chances for post 16 - 19 year olds in further education, training and employment. The primary focus for the programme thus far has been on those who are NEET or disadvantaged and what this means for the strategic context for skills requirements from industry and the local authority, and Together for Children. Additionally, we examine the factors that influence children and young people's decision-making on employment choices, the communication and relevance of the local education to employment offer and how to further engage industry in the skills agenda for this group of children and young people.

It is also the intention that this report and the findings can be used to highlight key

issues that Sunderland and similar cities face in developing skills and meeting the needs of those children and young people who are NEET and disadvantaged as part of an inclusive growth strategy.

Sunderland has a good track record on growth and a strong vision for its long-term economic future. The city has encouraged significant inward investment and created new employment opportunities by building on its strengths and ensuring the right infrastructure is in place. However, in line with many other key cities it also faces some significant challenges, in particular being able to radically improve the life chances and aspirations of its young people including those who are disadvantaged or NEET. Some of the challenges in achieving this are highlighted in the report include:

The national and local strategic context for skills requirements from employers and industry

Although the UK economy has been steadily strengthening in recent years these are challenging times for industry and local authorities following years of cuts to public services and the ongoing uncertainty over Brexit. For cities like Sunderland that are dominated by some large employers and have a relatively narrow employment base across a diverse supply chain of Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), the challenges can be especially acute. The strategic context for skills requirements includes some important issues for the local authority, education providers, industry and government including:

- the need to raise aspirations and opportunities for young people to obtain higher and more diverse skills levels;
- ensuring that the benefits of the government's Industrial Strategy are realised for cities like Sunderland and do not just feed into larger, more prosperous cities;
- strengthening the local area mechanisms for improving collaboration between the local authority, industry,

education providers and central government;

- supporting the local authority and education providers to raise the recognition and perceived value of vocational training, such as T-Levels and to ensure that these and other new vocational qualifications are part of the local education to employment offer;
- taking adequate account of the educational needs and aspirations of children and young people who are disadvantaged including those with disabilities and who are at risk of becoming NEET as part of a local inclusive plan for skills;
- providing support to SMEs across more diverse supply chains so that smaller and medium sized employers and business can be part of the offer for vocational training and employment;
- recognising that the type and mix of secondary school and Academy provision varies across the city and that those with less capacity and/or fewer arrangements for collaboration, such as becoming multi-academy trusts, require additional support and leadership to ensure that all schools

and Academies can raise educational attainment;

- having a sufficiently mixed curriculum to be attractive and relevant to a more diverse range of pupil needs, for example enabling those with less academic potential to thrive within a vocational pathway in education.

Having a more inclusive approach to addressing skills requirements should include greater recognition of the needs and characteristics of those who are NEET. For example, many children and young people who are NEET experience greater levels of complex needs and problems including mental health problems, problems with substance use and challenging family backgrounds. There is a need to ensure that these children and young people have access to an appropriate range of support services, with capacity for more intensive one to one support.

Mental health is a particular concern amongst the NEET groups of young people and there is increasing evidence that mental health is having a detrimental impact on productivity for employees and across industry. There may be significant benefit in engaging and learning from those young people who are NEET and

have mental health problems as part of more informed and evidenced based strategies for providing mental health support to the whole workforce.

Local authorities face a difficult task in fulfilling their leadership role as they have responsibility and accountability for vulnerable children and young people but less ability to influence the direction and delivery of educational provision. Nevertheless, structures are in place in Sunderland by which the local authority brings together relevant partners such as through the Education and Economic Leadership Boards and the Children's Strategic Partnership. It is important that the strategy and work of these partnership boards is increasingly able to operate on an integrated basis supported by robust and up-to-date evidence and information. There is also an important ongoing agenda for the inclusion and participation of young people in decision-making and planning, including those who are more disadvantaged and NEET.

The factors that influence young people when they are making decisions about career choices

The strategic context is important and there are specific actions that are needed to support local planning and collaboration for skills. It is also important that this is informed by greater understanding about the factors that influence young people when they are making decisions about career choices. These factors can be multiple, but the main ones that have been raised by respondents include:

Subject selection in school – transition from primary to secondary

There is increasing recognition that young people begin to make choices about careers early in their education. However, this may be an issue for Sunderland and similar areas where there are outstanding primary schools but a drop in performance and ratings at secondary levels. There is a need for increasing focus on this transition and ensuring that aspiration and engagement with children and young people is maintained. Head teachers are influential in this and respondents also viewed the development of more multi-academy trusts as being a way to increase capacity for schools and academies to

sustain a high quality educational offer, with greater choice and flexibility in curriculum and subjects.

Educational progress and attainment

In so far as educational progress and attainment is a factor that influences the employment chances and choices that young people make, it is important that there is a nuanced and sensitive approach to the data that can better inform strategy and local skills plans.

Educational progress and attainment are measured using national systems known as Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores. These are based on results in up to eight qualifications, which include English, maths, three English Baccalaureate qualifications and three other qualifications.

It is not a perfect system and has not been without its critics, but it does provide a means to measure progress from the end of key stage 2 (age 11) to the end of key stage 4 (age 16). These are key points during which children and young people are making decisions that will greatly impact on their future career and employment choices.

The report contains some preliminary analysis Breaking Barriers Innovations have done of Sunderland's Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores. It has been included in the report to indicate that there are important trends and differences in educational attainment that lie below average Progress 8 scores, for example:

- the average score for Sunderland as a whole is -0.31 compared to -0.21 for the North East and -0.03 for all state funded schools;
- if the schools and academies with a score of below average were brought to within the average range, the overall Sunderland score would be improved from -0.31 to -0.15;
- there has been a small improvement in the overall gap between girls and boys at level 4 English and maths. However, there are larger differences in the attainment gap between girls and boys for those schools and academies that are performing at average and well below the average for Progress 8;
- in addition to a further decline amongst boys in the average group (from -0.14 in 2016 to -0.27 in 2017) girls have declined in attainment for Progress 8 (from 0.04,

which was above average in 2016 to -0.16 in 2017);

- the attainment gap for maths has almost disappeared from 2016 to 2017 (-3.2 in 2016 to -0.4 in 2017), while the gap in attainment for English has increased (from -13.4 in 2016 to -14.7 in 2017);
- in all schools and academies in 2017 pupils on Free School Meals (FSM) perform less well on Progress 8 than those not on FSM and the gap is much larger for those schools that have an above average score for Progress 8;
- comparison amongst schools and academies with above average, average and well below average scores for Level 4 English and maths shows that the schools and academies that have performed above average have a declining performance for pupils on FSM between 2016 and 2017 (from -24.5 to -33.5);
- there has been a small improvement in the attainment gap for pupils from IMD20 between 2016 and 2017. However, pupils in schools and academies with higher needs (as suggested by their relative deprivation)

may receive more attention at Key Stage 2 but the apparent benefits of this falls off at Key Stage 4. Furthermore, this effect is masked by the Progress 8 scores for all schools and academies.

Perceptions and misconceptions about the labour market

Children and young people have a variety of perceptions and misconceptions about the labour market, some of which are positive but many are negative. For example, respondents thought that many children and young people are influenced in their career choices by perceptions about potential financial rewards, but that these can be unrealistic. Respondents also spoke about the mind set and family culture for some young people and how negative or unrealistic attitudes about employment can affect young people's chances of finding work.

Some respondents thought it was important to note that not all young people have negative attitudes nor severe personal problems and that their aspirations should be recognised more. This may be a significant point as other research has highlighted the dangers in grouping young people into a homogenous category of being NEET.

Influence of parents

Parental experiences and attitudes to work are viewed as a significant influence on young people, in particular with respect to understanding about the employment market.

There are some concerns about the increasing rates of children and young people being home schooled and the way in which parental influence may be impacting on these children and young people. Some respondents thought that increasing pressures placed on pupils as a result of the drive in schools for better Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores could be driving some parents to elect for home schooling, because they would not be subject to the same pressures on subjects and the national curriculum.

Some respondents also reported that more pupils were being home schooled and they questioned if this was a way of avoiding exclusions. Alongside this, there has been a national trend for increasing numbers of children to be excluded from school that is causing concern.

Parental engagement is widely perceived by respondents as a priority area for development that can bring significant

benefits in terms of raising young people's aspirations and addressing the cycle of disadvantage and poor educational attainment.

Parental engagement is something that industry needs to be doing, not just schools. If parents themselves are engaged in re-education, up-skilling and re-skilling this is thought to be particularly helpful for young people. Research also suggests that families from disadvantaged backgrounds have high aspirations but they need the information and understanding on how to mobilise these effectively to achieve better outcomes for children. However, the evidence also suggests that many practitioners do not have appropriate skills, knowledge and confidence to work with parents, particularly those from deprived communities.

Influence from peers and siblings

Siblings are viewed as having influence, particularly if there are no older siblings that have progressed to higher education routes. Some respondents thought that the influence of peers could have a bigger impact on aspirations and breaking the cycle of disadvantage.

Many respondents viewed development

and wider use of role models from outside the family as a way to raise aspirations. Respondents thought that it was necessary for role models to come from a similar background to those children and young people they are seeking to influence.

Opportunities for vocational education and training

Lack of knowledge and awareness about vocational training opportunities were thought to be a factor influencing young people's choices. The focus on Progress 8 and Attainment 8 and the restricted options for curriculum development were also thought by respondents to be restricting the amount of vocational courses available for students.

Respondents thought that vocational options needed to be made available at an earlier point, for example at 14 years old and that the focus should not only be on those students staying in education.

Communication and relevance of the local education to employment offer

Ensuring that there is effective communication of the local education to employment offer that this is relevant to children, young people and their parents and/or carers is not the sole responsibility of the local authority or Together for Children. Rather, this is something that needs to be done by all partners working collaboratively including schools and academies, local industry, further and higher education and social and independent sector agencies

that work in supporting children and young people through education and into employment.

Respondents thought that there are barriers for young people and parents in navigating routes to employment post 16. Work experience is viewed as a good way to promote understanding about different employment options. However, respondents identified some barriers to this including employer selectivity. Work experience programmes are viewed as working well for the local automotive industries, but this does not suit all children and young people.

One particularly successful and innovative programme in Sunderland that demonstrates this collaboration is the city's Work Discovery Programme.

Sunderland's Work Discovery Programme is an annual work experience programme that has gained national recognition for engaging young people with business, and how to encourage them to gain the skills to improve their employability. The programme involves activities throughout the year, but this was not fully appreciated by all respondents who misunderstood the programme to solely be about 'Work Discovery Week' in June each year. This

may simply be a historical branding issue, but as one of the city's flagship programmes it could be worth exploring how to better communicate the other ways in which the programme involves young people and businesses throughout the year.

Some respondents, while appreciating the value of the programme, questioned the degree to which it impacts on disadvantaged children and young people including those how are NEET.

The North East LEP is recognised for its positive work on developing careers advice in schools (Social Mobility Commission, 2017). Respondents did recognise that some schools were improving their approach to career guidance and the provision of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG). However, as a national programme, respondents had concerns about the consistency and quality of IAG in schools. This was thought to be a particular problem when industry were not directly involved in IAG. Respondents expressed some concerns about the decline in availability of the local Connexions service.

There is a need to recognise the full diversity of children and young people when considering communication and relevance of the local education to employment offer,

for example understanding the NEET population and characteristics of disadvantage such as young parents and care leavers. Also, those with protected characteristics including gender, ethnicity, disability etc.

When talking about the NEET population in Sunderland respondents highlighted the complex range of needs amongst this population, including mental health problems, drug and/or alcohol use and problematic family backgrounds. Respondents also thought it was important to recognise the numbers of NEET young people that have particular high levels of need, for example care leavers, those in the criminal justice system and as a result of being pregnant at a young age. Respondents thought that working effectively with the NEET population of young people required more intensive, one-to-one work. Respondents also thought that there was a lack of knowledge and understanding about how to work effectively with NEET young people.

Engaging industry in the skills agenda

Respondents expressed concerns that young people at risk of being NEET or who

were already NEET were not work ready and that industry needs to be more engaged in addressing these issues. However, capacity to work with NEET applicants and understanding about their needs as employees are thought to be lacking.

Some respondents thought that local employers lacked medium and long-term strategies for addressing these problems. Respondents saw this as being linked to business imperatives or the 'bottom line', something that can be particularly difficult for SMEs. For larger employers, the focus is viewed as being on the existing workforce and lifelong learning, rather than creating new entry points.

Sunderland fosters positive relationships between key stakeholders which are designed to increase engagement between industry and education, in particular with schools. Some respondents thought that strategies for increasing engagement between industry and education needed to start at an earlier point in the education cycle, for example at primary school level. Respondents thought that local industry could make more use of the networks that surround schools including parents and communities.

Many respondents however, thought that there should be greater co-ordination between the regional and local authority level strategies for skills, education and employment and individual industry strategies.

Some respondents gave examples of individual industries where apprenticeships are working well. However, there are problems regarding general awareness about apprenticeships, for example feedback suggests that nearly 30% of learners on apprenticeships didn't realise they were on an apprenticeship programme and nearly half (46%) said an apprenticeship wasn't their first option. There has also been criticism from industry and learners that education providers aren't informing young people sufficiently about vocational opportunities. Additionally, there is a view that apprenticeships are not being targeted at the right groups and skills base. Apprenticeships, therefore, were thought to be failing NEET populations in particular, especially those from more deprived backgrounds.



1 Introduction

Although Sunderland has successfully replaced its former heavy industries of shipbuilding and coalmining with new sectors of car manufacturing and contact centres and digital, there is wide recognition that the local economy still offers too narrow a base of opportunity, especially for young people. It is worth noting that most of these industries have a significant requirement for current and future replacement labour demand, and this is coupled with healthy growth projections, particularly for the larger employers. However, the changing scope of the economy and the dominance of a select few large businesses in the area create narrow employment paths for some young people.

The council's corporate plans and strategies are focusing on mapping future growth areas and making sure that the right kind of skills base is invested in for the future. But, the city still does not have the volume of well-paid jobs necessary to retain more of the younger population and to ensure a

resilient economy for the future. The council is especially concerned that for those who face the most complex challenges such as young people who are NEET, these opportunities are simply out of reach.

There are deep generational values ingrained across the city, stemming from a history well developed in successful industry. The scale and pace of recent educational reforms and the condition of the city's economy means that young people are experiencing starkly different career paths and challenges to those of their parents. Despite these generational differences, parents remain one of the most significant influencers on a young person's educational and employment choices (Kintrea, et al., 2011). A review by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation of the available evidence on the causal impact on educational outcomes of aspirations, attitudes, and behaviours of young people and their parents found an association between parental expectations and their

child's attainment but no clear evidence that parental expectations could affect later participation in education or employment. They conclude that this is an area that should be the subject of further study, in particular as part of development of interventions for parental involvement (Gorard et al. 2012).

Education providers sometimes face challenges in communicating with parents effectively, in particular guaranteeing an accurate message is delivered. There are, in some places, good strategies in place to develop parental engagement, however, considering that the parents that most need to be engaged are often those most reluctant to engage, there is a need for these strategies to be more focused on corresponding with the right cohorts of parents. The council's corporate plan for regenerating the city and protecting vulnerable children and families has resulted in a number of schemes and programme to address the challenges and increase opportunities. However, the council also recognises that there is a need to understand why existing opportunities aren't always being utilised or developed fully and effectively.

This is especially important from an inclusion

perspective and ensuring that all children and young people have aspirations that can be fulfilled and that they can all share in the planned economic growth and renewal, including those with more complex needs and those experiencing greater disadvantage.

Moreover, at a national level, there is a need to ensure that government departments and executive agencies understand the context and challenges of a city like Sunderland and that national policy and regulation can appropriately support local innovation in overcoming the challenges.

The Breaking Barriers Innovations' Education into Employment programme for Sunderland City Council commenced in January 2018.

The programme seeks to address the question: 'How can aspirations and life chances for post 16 - 19 year olds be radically improved in further education, training and employment?' In particular, the programme is focused on those who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) and/or from deprived backgrounds or neighbourhoods. There are four areas of inquiry:

- The national and local strategic context for skills requirements from employers and industry.
- The factors that influence young people when they are making decisions about career choices.
- Communication and relevance of the local education to employment offer.
- Engaging industry in the skills agenda.

This interim report presents the findings from the first stage of the inquiry. The aim of the report is to summarise the views and opinions of respondents who have been engaged in the first stage and to use this as a basis for discussions with the council. Importantly, it is a first glance analysis. A chance to gain an initial insight into the challenges facing those are NEET and disadvantaged, and an opportunity to

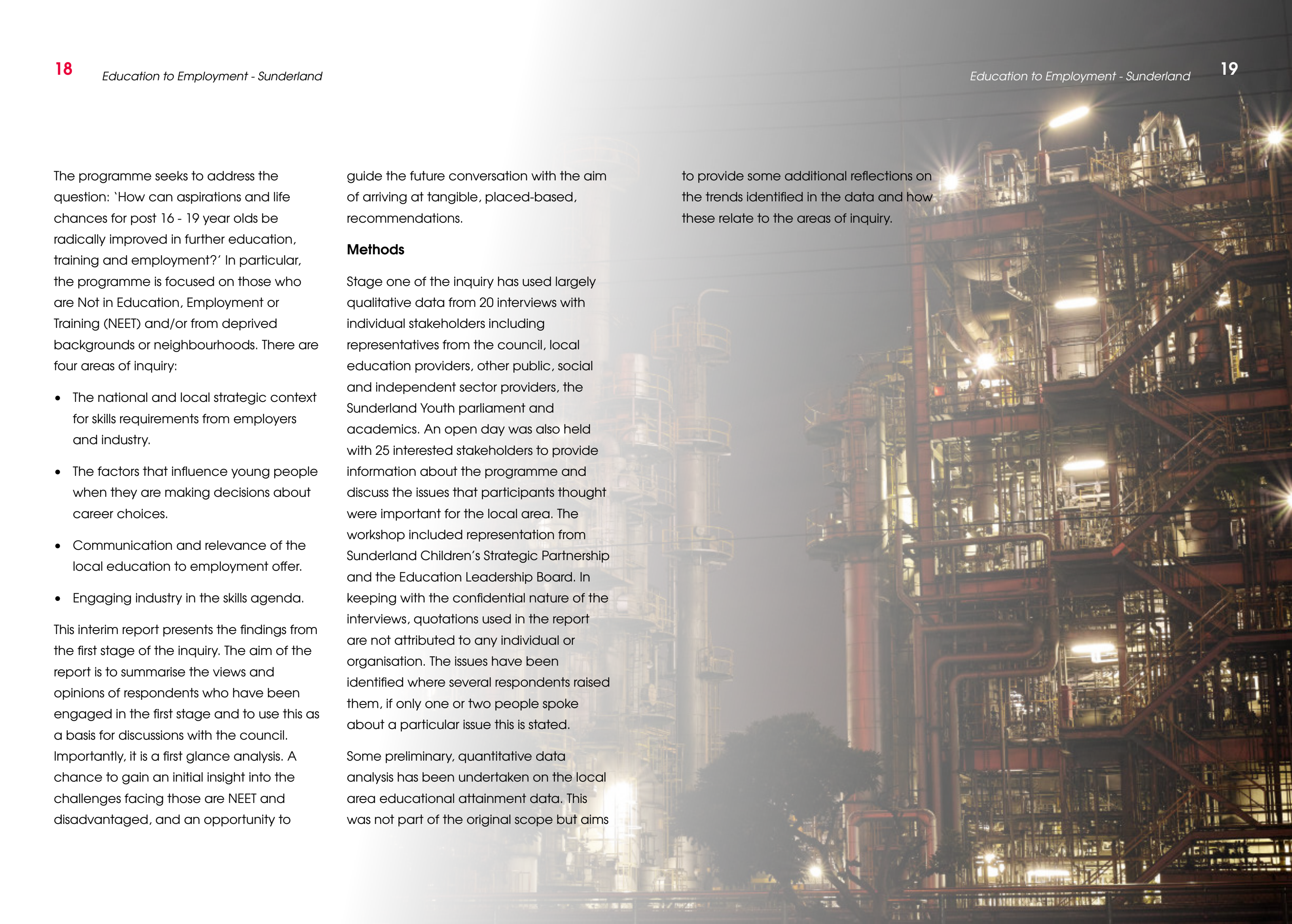
guide the future conversation with the aim of arriving at tangible, placed-based, recommendations.

Methods

Stage one of the inquiry has used largely qualitative data from 20 interviews with individual stakeholders including representatives from the council, local education providers, other public, social and independent sector providers, the Sunderland Youth parliament and academics. An open day was also held with 25 interested stakeholders to provide information about the programme and discuss the issues that participants thought were important for the local area. The workshop included representation from Sunderland Children's Strategic Partnership and the Education Leadership Board. In keeping with the confidential nature of the interviews, quotations used in the report are not attributed to any individual or organisation. The issues have been identified where several respondents raised them, if only one or two people spoke about a particular issue this is stated.

Some preliminary, quantitative data analysis has been undertaken on the local area educational attainment data. This was not part of the original scope but aims

to provide some additional reflections on the trends identified in the data and how these relate to the areas of inquiry.



2

The national and local strategic context for skills requirements from employers and industry

The focus of this programme is on children and young people, but this must be considered in the wider context of adult skills deficits and unemployment in the city. For example, Sunderland has a high percentage of its residents qualified to NVQ Level 1 (or equivalent) when compared with the region and UK average but has a smaller percentage of its working age population that are qualified to NVQ Levels 2, 3 and 4 (or equivalent) – with the latter more likely to be earning higher wages:

"The relatively low skills of the resident population, coupled with the perceived lack of opportunities to realise individual ambitions, results in residents earning less than in-commuters. Relatively few of the resident population are highly qualified and there is still a significant proportion of the working age population that are not in work and are therefore not benefiting from the growing economy."

(Sunderland City Council, 2017).

The city's Education Leadership Board has

been established to deliver a partnership skills strategy and align education, training and jobs to help residents and businesses reach their full potential and support inward investment. This includes a commitment to working collaboratively to:

"...maximise opportunity and increase economic inclusivity to transform the city's economy into one that is knowledge-based with higher value and better paid jobs, greater levels of innovation, new business generation and rising employment including:

- strengthening and deepening the relationship between schools and businesses;
- working with the further and higher education sector to address skills and employability for 16 to 19 year olds, specifically focusing on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) skills; and
- a whole University City approach that addresses skills deficits across the

workforce"

The UK economy has grown modestly over the last year and employment rates have continued to increase. But the continuing uncertainty over Brexit makes the national and local strategic context for skills requirements from employers and industry challenging. The OECD stated in its Economic Forecast Summary for May 2018 that:

"...authorities should stand ready to further increase productivity-enhancing measures on investment if growth weakens significantly ahead of Brexit. Greater spending on education and training of low-skilled workers would increase productivity and enhance inclusiveness."

(OECD, 2018)

The government's Industrial Strategy (HM Government, 2017) sets out a long term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. The strategy has five foundations to align the government's vision for a transformed economy:

- **ideas:** the world's most innovative economy
- **people:** good jobs and greater earning

power for all

- **infrastructure:** a major upgrade to the UK's infrastructure
- **business environment:** the best place to start and grow a business
- **places:** prosperous communities across the UK

The strategy contains a number of key policies, some of which are particularly relevant to this programme including:

- Establish a technical education system that rivals the best in the world to stand alongside our world-class higher education system
- Invest an additional £406m in maths, digital and technical education, helping to address the shortage of STEM skills
- Create a new National Retraining Scheme that supports people to re-skill, beginning with a £64m investment for digital and construction training
- Launch and roll-out Sector Deals – partnerships between government and industry aiming to increase sector productivity. The first Sector Deals are in life sciences, construction, artificial

intelligence and the automotive sector

- Launch a review of the actions that could be most effective in improving the productivity and growth of small and medium-sized businesses, including how to address what has been called the 'long tail' of lower productivity firms
- Agree Local Industrial Strategies that build on local strengths and deliver on economic opportunities
- Provide £42m to pilot a Teacher Development Premium. This will test the impact of a £1,000 budget for high-quality professional development for teachers working in areas that have fallen behind

The Key Cities Group, which includes Sunderland and was founded in 2013 brings together more than 20 of the UK's cities to support them providing a key role in their regional economies. In its report in June 2018, the groups states:

"The Key Cities include some of the most productive and innovative locations in the UK. But they also include some of the poorest and most economically challenging parts. Creating a policy environment within which all Key Cities can achieve the same outcomes as the national average would be a major boost not

just to the UK's economic health but also to the achievement of growth that benefits all parts of the country."

(Key Cities Group, 2018)

In its report from 2017, the Key Cities Group recommended devolved local skills budgets to enable cities to support academic-business-government collaboration – further facilitating knowledge transfer but also ensuring education and skills are geared towards developing the workforce of the future.

Furthermore, the report states that Sunderland Software City has helped over 400 businesses access opportunities and skills programme and that it aims to create 2,000 new jobs in the digital sector by 2020 (Key Cities Group, 2017). In March 2018 the Business Secretary, Greg Clark announced that £15 million had been awarded to three projects in the North East including £5 million of funding for a project led by Durham University which includes Newcastle University, Northumbria University and the University of Sunderland to deliver a step change in commercialising research and drive economic improvement in support of the North East's technology and industrial sectors. Called Northern Accelerator, the

project will build on an existing project of the same name and establish a seed capital investment fund to help turn concepts into new businesses or products.

The Governments' Post 16 Skills Plan (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Education, 2016) provides a framework to support young people and adults to secure a lifetime of sustained skilled employment and meet the needs of the growing and rapidly changing economy. Based on a review by Lord Sainsbury, the Skills Plan seeks to enhance the regard for technical training options post 16 years so that these are viewed on a par with academic ones. The plan proposes new technical options, which will cover college-based and employment-based education (apprenticeships), building on previous reforms. It states that employers will sit at the heart of the system and take the lead in setting the standards. In line with the Sainsbury recommendations the Skills Plan is intended to result in streamlining of the system and the creation of a common framework consisting of 15 routes across all technical education. The routes will group occupations together to reflect where there are shared training requirements.

This includes a new system of technical

education to provide a high quality technical option alongside an academic option for students aged 16 to 19, known as T levels. In 2017 the Department for Education published the T Level Action Plan and confirmed that:

- the first teaching of three T Levels by a small number of providers would start from September 2020
- further T Levels would be delivered from September 2021 introduced in annual waves

52 colleges and post-16 education providers who will teach the new T-levels were named on 27th May. Courses in construction, digital and education and childcare will be first taught from September 2020. A further 22 courses will be rolled out in stages from 2021, which will cover sectors such as finance & accounting, engineering and manufacturing, and creative & design. To be treated on par with A-levels. A key component of the T-level qualification is the requirement to undertake a high quality industry placement with an external employer, for a minimum of 45 days. The Department for Education had committed £500 million specifically for T-

levels and in the autumn budget (2017) the Chancellor announced an extra £20 million to support FE colleges to prepare for them. However, although four of the new providers for T levels are in the North East, none are in Sunderland: Durham Sixth Form Centre, Gateshead College, New College Durham and St Thomas More Catholic School.

There are also plans to make sure that skills provision, including T Levels, meets local skills needs, such as plans to introduce Skills Advisory Panels (SAPs) and Local Digital Skills Partnerships (LDSPs).

These will work within existing local infrastructures, such as Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), to bring together local businesses and providers to work together to meet current and future skills needs.

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will make additional 16 to 19 Bursary funding available to institutions that are delivering T-level industry placements in the 2018/19 academic year through the Capacity and Delivery Fund.

Additional resources may need to be factored in to cater for certain needs, for example there has been a collective call

for flexibility and support for students with additional needs, for example those with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities (SEND) and carers.

The Department for Education issued a consultation in November 2017 to obtain views on the major aspects of the proposals for implementing T Levels, and this consultation closed on 8 February 2018 (Department for Education, 2018a). The consultation was limited with respect to local authorities. For example, out of 430 respondents, local authorities/LEPs made up only 11 of the government's consultation responses.

Industry recognises the value of work placements such as the Department for Education's proposal to incorporate industry placements within T-level programmes and the value of young people experiencing the 'real world of work.' However, in feedback to the Department of Education they have outlined a series of challenges to the delivery of these placements:

- Placement opportunities being dependent on geographical location
- Small and micro businesses may not be able to support the 45-60 day

placement

- Some placements may need to be longer to enable "threshold confidence" to be achieved
- Strong case made for additional financial support, particularly for SMEs, which would help them to cover additional costs in resources, supervision, mentoring and pastoral care

Students from 13 different education institutions from the North East to the South West, including further education (FE) colleges, sixth-form colleges and school sixth forms were consulted. The main findings were:

- the opportunity to obtain experience in industry is the most valuable feature of the programme;
- worry that there will not be enough good employers offering industry placements in their local area;
- constraints on where they can get to for an industry placement because of available public transport links, travel time and cost;
- want T Levels to be as well respected as A levels. They also want the option to move onto further study (including

university) after they complete their T Level;

- willing to use their summer holidays to gain experience of work; and
- choosing an occupational specialism is a difficult decision. They want experiences of different occupations so they can try a range of specialisms before they commit to just one.

Schools Reform

Led initially by the then Secretary of State the Right Hon. Michael Gove MP, there has been significant change and reform of the educational system, not only structural reform, but also change to the content of the school curriculum. Moreover, establishment of Free Schools and the rapid conversion of local authority-maintained schools into self-governing academies has characterised the government's position and proved to be a formative change across the country. However, the pace of reform and local make-up of educational provision has not been uniform. For example in Sunderland:

- five secondary schools are sponsor led academies
- ten have converted to being

- Academies from local authority control
- two remain maintained by the local authority
 - twelve provide post 16 educational routes
 - Sunderland has no Studio Schools or University Technical Colleges (UTCs), although the local university, the University of Sunderland is the sponsor of two UTCs outside of Sunderland.

Many academies around the country have become Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs). These are groups of schools working in collaboration as one entity to improve and maintain high educational standards across the Trust. MATs are governed through a single set of members and directors. To date only four of Sunderland’s Academies¹ have become MATs.

¹ Farringdon Community Academy, Portland Academy, Southmoor Academy, Barbra Priestman Academy and Monkwearmouth Academy

The following table lists the schools and academies by type of provision and educational phases covered:

Name	Type	Education Phase
Academy 360	Academy Sponsor Led Mainstream	Primary and Secondary
Biddick Academy	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary
Castle View Enterprise Academy	Academy Sponsor Led Mainstream	Secondary
Farringdon Community Academy	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary
Grindon Hall Christian School	Free School – Mainstream	Primary, Secondary and 16 to 18
Kepier	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary
Monkwearmouth Academy	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary and 16 to 18
Oxclose Community Academy	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary
Red House Academy	Academy Sponsor Led Mainstream	Secondary
Sandhill View Academy	Academy Sponsor Led Mainstream	Secondary
Southmoor Academy	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary and 16 to 18
St Aidan's Catholic Academy	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary and 16 to 18
St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary and 16 to 18
Thornhill Academy	Academy Sponsor Led Mainstream	Secondary
Venerable Bede Church of England Academy	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary
Washington Academy	Academy - Converter Mainstream	Secondary
Argyle House School	Other Independent School	Primary, Secondary and 16 to 18
Hetton School	Community School	Secondary
St Robert of Newminster Roman Catholic School	Voluntary Aided School	Secondary and 16 to 18
Ashbrooke School	Other Independent Special School	Primary, Secondary and 16 to 18
Barbara Priestman Academy	Academy - Converter Special School	Secondary and 16 to 18
The New Bridge Academy	Academy - Converter Special School	Secondary and 16 to 18
Portland Academy	Academy - Converter Special School	Secondary and 16 to 18
Thornhill Park School	Other Independent School	Primary, Secondary and 16 to 18

In addition to significant structural change, there have been profound reforms to the curriculum too. Most noticeably, the introduction of a new grading system which replaced letter grading, for example in 2017, pupils sat reformed GCSEs in English language, English literature and maths for the first time, graded on a 9 to 1 scale. A focus on traditional academic subjects, as demonstrated through the English and International Baccalaureate, and changes to examinations such as the removal of AS exams, have further shifted the national agenda.

A new secondary school accountability system was introduced in 2016, involving two principal scoring mechanisms, Progress 8 and Attainment 8. These scores aim to capture the progress a pupil makes from the end of primary school to the end of key stage 4. They are a type of value added measure, which means that pupils' results are compared to the progress of other pupils nationally with similar prior attainment. Every increase in every grade a pupil achieves will attract additional credit in the performance tables.

There are evident tensions in the drive for improved educational attainment, as measured through Progress 8 and the

requirement for more vocational training that meets the strategic skills needs of employers and industry. The issues become even more critical for disadvantaged children and young people and those who are NEET, for whom the pressure for educational attainment is especially problematic. For example, the degree of special educational needs and severity of personal problems was thought to be the biggest factor explaining why this population do not do well in English and maths:

"Special Educational Needs and personal problems mean it's nearly impossible for them to do well in basic levels for English or maths."

Respondents thought that the way in which the curriculum is managed in schools could be a barrier for some young people:

"For a head, it's all about curriculum – EBacc (English Baccalaureate) is going to be very hard in getting a significant portion of students into a path that might not be suitable e.g. humanities subjects requiring extended writing which some simply can't do."

"The approach to teaching Maths and English to young people at risk of being NEET is changing, but schools need to make sure it's

being delivered through a course young people want to be part of."

"It is about meeting the needs of the children against adhering to the curriculum."

"The curriculum is getting narrower and schools are struggling to find teachers."

"The curriculum schools are teaching doesn't meet the needs of the young people who are at risk of becoming NEET."

National educational strategy and regulation is also viewed as having a negative impact in terms of restricting local actions and choices, for example restricting schools and Academies from exercising greater flexibility in the local school curriculum:

"There is more that could be done in terms of relaxing national regulations, Ofsted is very much key to this."

"The government strategy needs to focus on primary schools, making them more enterprising rather than just having focus on STEM skills."

The Sunderland Children and Young People's Plan (2017-2022) has six priorities including: All children and young people do well at all levels of learning and have ambition and the skills for life (Priority Four). The planned actions for improvement in this

area are:

- Develop a Positive Transitions Programme for all schools and settings to ensure children are supported at key transitions in their education
- Conduct a piece of research to understand why young people, particularly those between Key Stages 3 and 4, disengage from education and act on the findings
- Learn from those schools that make the best use of Pupil Premium and roll out best practice across the city
- Review the role of the Virtual School and its impact in narrowing gaps in performance for looked after children

In particular, the plan states that:

"We know that many young people disengage from education at around age 14 – in between key stages 3 and 4. We must identify the trigger points to prevent this from happening and apply early intervention processes when it does."

(Sunderland Children's Strategic Partnership, 2017).

Sunderland NEET population

The Department for Education provides the framework for increasing participation in education, employment or training and reducing the proportion of young people who are NEET. However, the responsibility and accountability lies with local authorities. In fulfilling their role and participation duties, including Raising the Participation Age (RPA) related duties local authorities need to understand the characteristics and current activity of the young people in their area. Together for Children in Sunderland tracks the data on the NEET population monthly.

The most recent statistical release for the proportions of NEET young people aged 16 – 24 is to the end of 2016. These figures show that Sunderland has the third largest NEET population aged 16 – 17 in the North East:

North East Total number NEET (including not known)

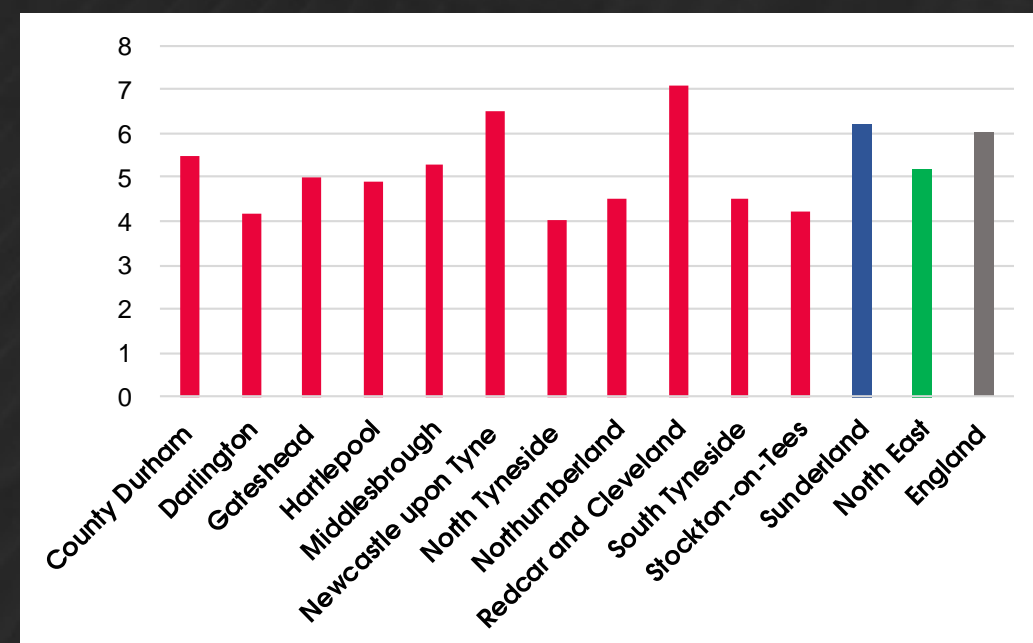


Figure 1: Proportion of 16-17 year olds recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known, end 2016. Source: Department for Education Local Authority NEET figures, 2016

The percentages where activity is not known are higher in Sunderland than the North East average, but below the average for England:

% of NEET activity not known

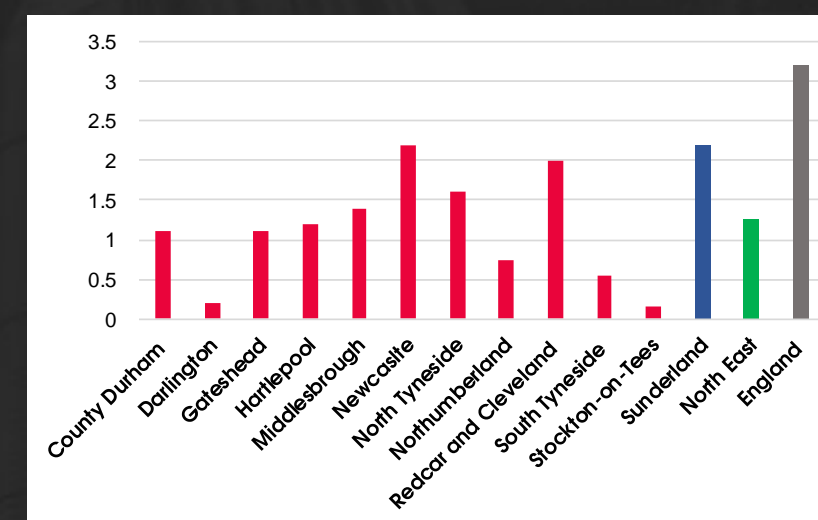


Figure 2: Percentages of 16-17 year olds NEET whose activity is not known, end 2016. Source: Department for Education Local Authority NEET figures, 2016

It is worth noting that:

- From September 2016 the Department for Education relaxed the requirement on authorities to track academic age 18-year-olds. Local Authorities (LAs) are now only required to track and submit information about young people up to the end of the academic year in which they have their 18th birthday i.e. academic age 16 and 17-year-olds.
- Young people with a current education, health and care (EHC) plan should still be tracked and reported on until their EHC plan ceases, which can occur at any point up to the end of the academic year in which they have their 25th birthday. In the case of Together for Children, they track all SEN pupils up to aged 25, not just those with an EHC plan

Refugees, asylum seekers and young adult offenders are excluded from the denominator used to calculate the proportions of young people participating in education or training, meeting the duty to participate in education or training whose activity is not known.

Alongside this change in requirement, the Department for Education also introduced a new performance measure to focus on reducing the proportion of young people whose activity is recorded as 'not known' as well as those who are NEET. The new measure will be calculated by adding the proportion of young people that are NEET to the proportion whose activity is recorded as not known. This new measure will replace the previous 'adjusted' NEET figure and indicate how well local authorities are performing at both tracking young people and managing the proportion that are NEET.

Nationally and regionally the percentages of 16 and 17 years olds known to be NEET has been falling year on year since 2013:

Percentage of 16 and 17 year olds known to be NEET 2012 - 2016

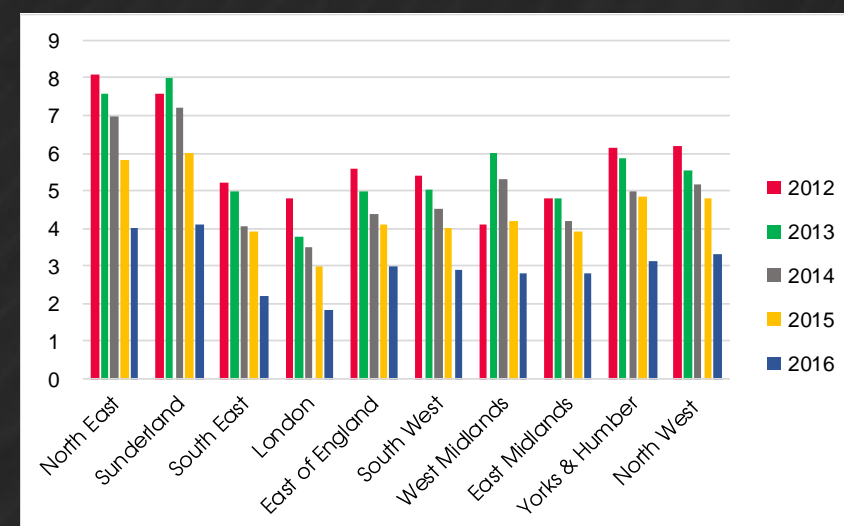


Figure 3 Percentage of 16 and 17 year olds known to be NEET 2012-2016 in regions of England

Throughout the time period the North East and Sunderland have had the highest percentages of 16 and 17 year olds who are NEET. There has been a sharper fall in the percentages of those whose participation is not known:

Percentage of 16 and 17 year olds not known 2012 - 2016

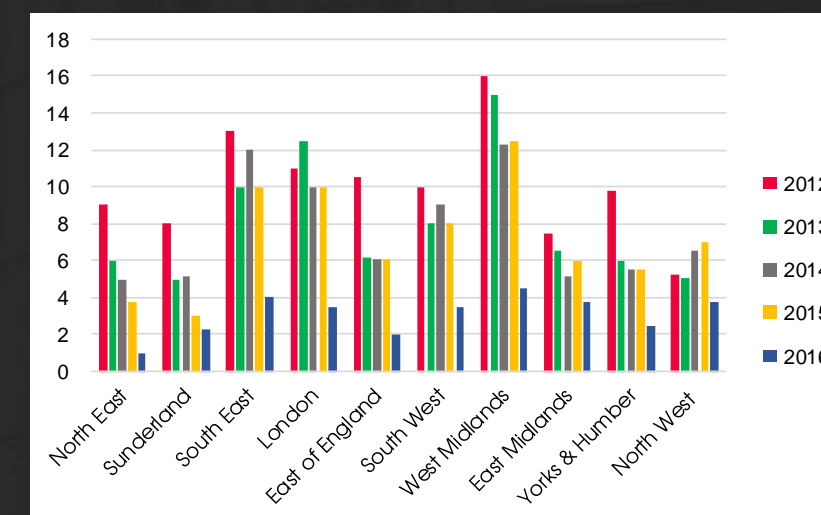


Figure 4 Percentage of 16 and 17 year olds not know 2012-2016 in regions of England The North East and Sunderland have seen a more marked decrease in the percentages of not known since 2015.

At the end of December 2017, the total number of NEET young people in years 12 and 13 (those who have reached the statutory school leaving age) was 196, which is 3.3% of the total cohort for years 12 and 13.

NEET group available for the labour market at end December 2017					
	Yr 12	%	Yr 13	%	Yr 12-Yr 13 Total
Cohort total	2921	49.50%	2977	50.50%	5898
NEET Group	73	2.50%	123	4.10%	196
Available to labour market	58	79.50%	82	66.60%	140
Working not for reward	0		1	1.20%	1
Not yet ready for work or learning	0		1	1.20%	1
Start date agreed (other)	1	1.70%	0	-	1
Start date agreed (RPA compliant)	2	3%	4	4.90%	6
Seeking employment, education or training	55	95.30%	76	92.70%	131

The following table shows the status of those not available for the labour market (56 or 28% of the NEET group):

NEET group not available for the labour market at end December 2017			
	Yr 12	Yr 13	Yr 12-Yr 13 Total
Not available to labour market	15	41	56
Carer	1	1	2
Teenage parents	4	8	12
Illness	5	21	26
Pregnancy	4	7	11
Religious grounds	0	0	0
Unlikely to be economically active	0	0	0
Other reason	1	4	5

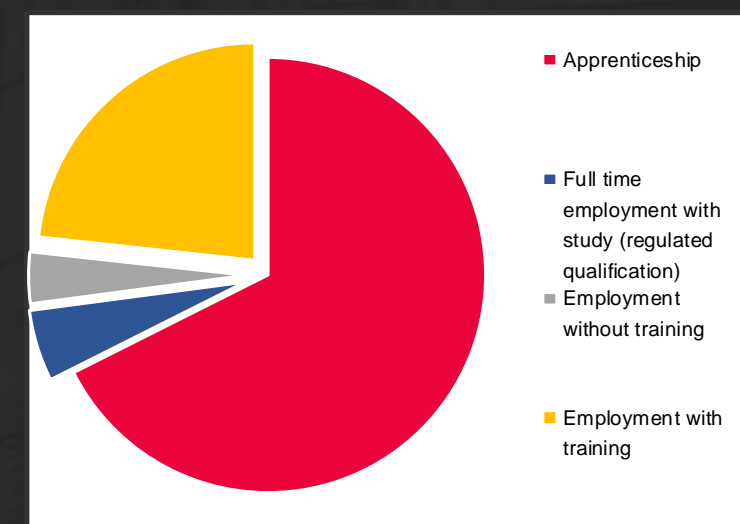
Illness accounts for the largest percentage of those not available for the labour market (46.4%). Teenage parents account for 21% and pregnancy a further 19.6%.

The following table shows the breakdown for those whose current situation is not known (356 or 6% of the total cohort).

Not known at end December 2017		
	Yr 12	Yr 13
Current situation not known	44	356
Current situation not known	37	153
Cannot Be Contacted	5	10
Refused to disclose activity	0	0
Currency Expired – EET	2	193
Currency Expired – Other	0	0

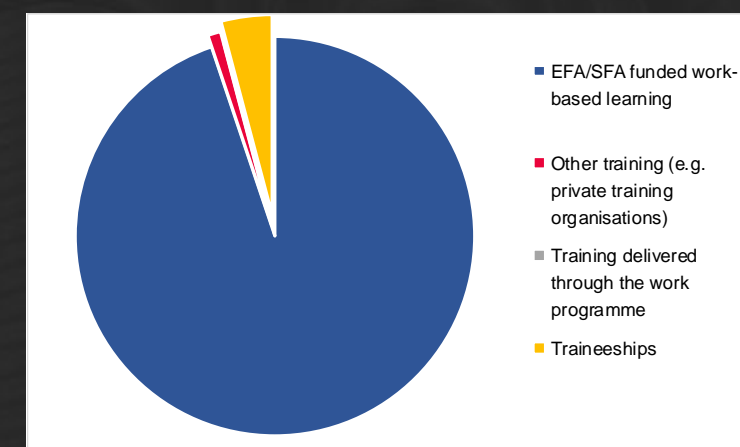
Amongst those known to be in employment: 72.6% are undertaking an apprenticeship; 16.5% are in employment with training; 5.7% are in full time employment with study for a regulated qualification and 4.1% are in employment with no training.

Numbers of young people in employment (end December, 2017) n = 581



For those in training at the end of December 2017 (304 or 5% of the total cohort) 94.7% were in Education Funding Agency (EFA) or Skills Funding Agency (SFA) work based learning; 5% were in traineeships:

Numbers of young people in training (end December, 2017) n = 304



Special Educational Needs and Disability

Most children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will have their needs met in local mainstream settings. However, some of these children and young people may not make expected progress, despite efforts to identify, assess and meet their special educational needs. In this situation, Together for Children will conduct an assessment, which normally involves gathering information from the relevant people or agencies, including the views, interests and aspirations of the parents and child or young person.

Together for Children uses the assessment to determine whether or not additional support and provision is required. This will be provided through an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan. These plans replace statements of Special Educational need (SEN) and Learning Difficulty Assessments (LDAs) for children and young people with the most complex needs, from birth up to the age 25.

The total cohort of SEND children and young people in years 12 and 13 at the end of December 2017 was 207. Amongst these the NEET group were 14 (7.1%) and there were 14 for whom their situation was not known.

The number of children and young people in Sunderland with EHC plans at the time of writing this report is 1,261.

NEET and gender

In 2016 there are differences by gender in the proportions of young people aged 16 and 17 who were NEET. Most authorities, with the exception of Newcastle upon Tyne, had more male NEET than female. In Sunderland 6.9% were male and 5.8% female:

North East NEET by gender

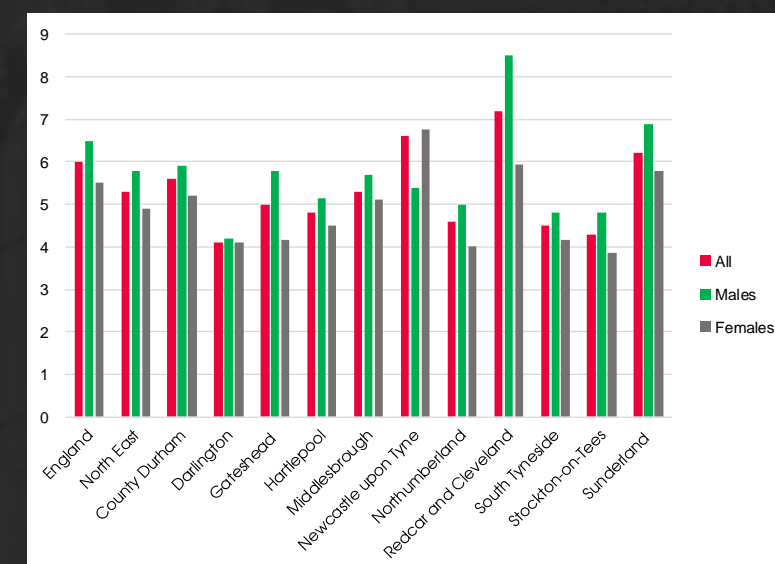


Figure 5 Proportion of 16-17 year olds recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known, end 2016. Source: Department for Education Local Authority NEET Figures, 2016

The following chart shows the percentage differences between males and females at ages 16 and 17 for Sunderland:

Sunderland NEET by gender 2016

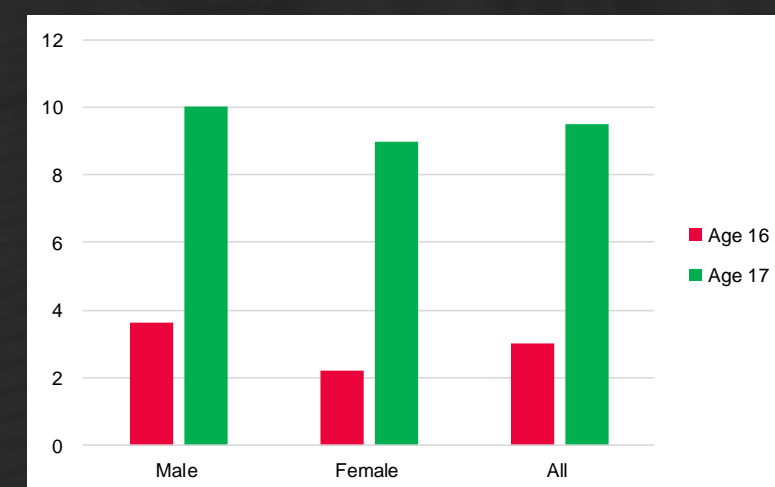
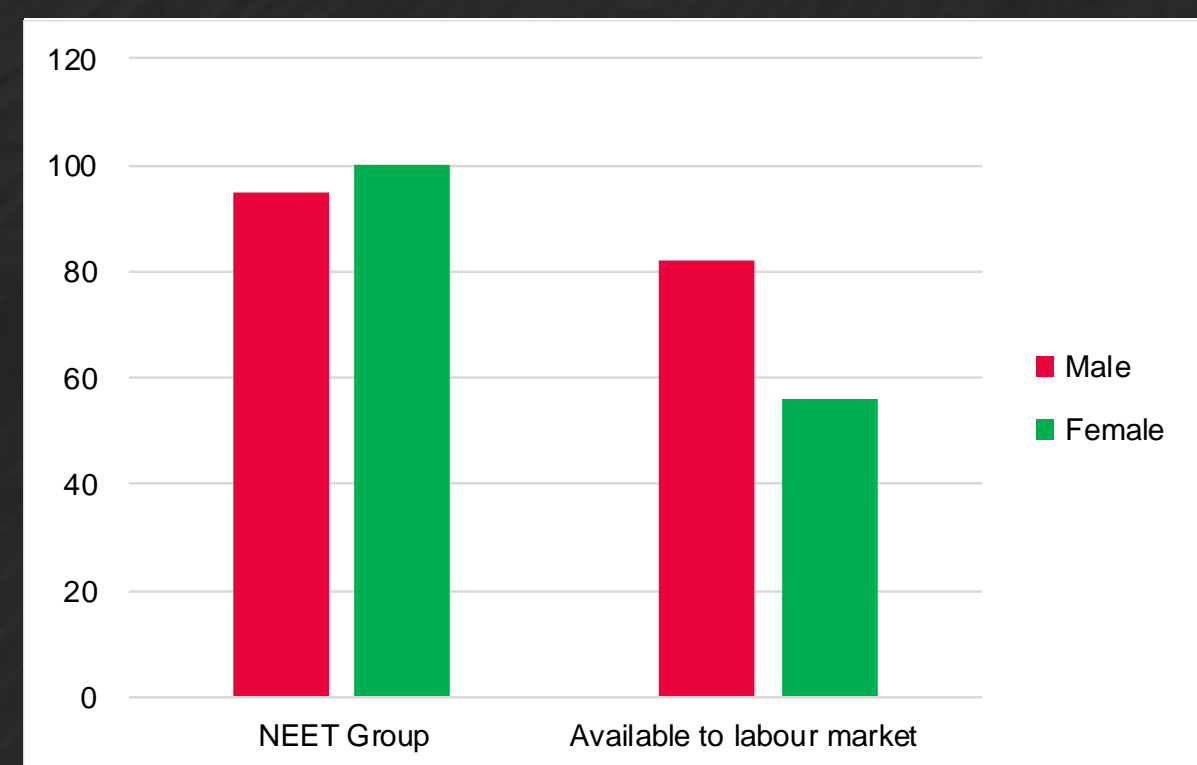


Figure 6 Proportion of 16-17 year olds recorded as not in education, employment or training (NEET) or whose activity is not known, end 2016. Source: Department for Education Local Authority NEET Figures, 2016

There is a slight increase in the percentage difference between males and females in Sunderland at age 17 (from 10.2% males to 9.0% females, compared to 3.5% males at age 16 to 2.6% females).

At the end of December 2017 slightly more females were NEET compared to males:



NEET and ethnicity

The majority of the NEET group for years 12 and 13 at the end of December 2017 were White British (177 or 90%). Amongst the Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) young people information about ethnicity was not obtained for 68%. This left 2.5% for whom ethnicity was recorded: 1 mixed race; 1 African; 1 any other ethnic group. Three refused to give information on their ethnicity.

The following section contains some preliminary analysis of Sunderland's Progress 8 and Attainment 8 data. This is intended to provide some insights into the skills issues for children and young people at key stage four and beyond.

Readiness for work

One of the most common complaints from industry is that young people, especially those that are NEET, are not ready for work. Industry respondents thought that there needed to be greater focus on the 'soft' skills of employment such as turning up on time and presenting yourself appropriately in a work setting. However, some respondents thought that industry lacked understanding about the kind of support that is required to help the NEET population find employment and being work ready:

"There is a lack of understanding about young people and employment, and what their needs are, some find it difficult to wake up before 10 am and those with mental health problems have a lot more issues. This lack of support can come from high up and from business."

"The young people require more explanations, they expect more and need better inductions to employment but it needs a shift in attitude. Wider thinking and support is needed about helping these young people."

Mental health

Mental health problems were thought to be especially significant with respect to the NEET and disadvantaged population of children and young people:

"There are huge problems with mental health, it limits young people, and they're not well enough to be able to move into the world of work."

This is an issue that is of strategic and economic significance for employers and industry, not just in relation to the NEET population, but also with respect to their entire employment base. For example, there is increasing evidence that mental health problems are having a significant impact on businesses productivity. In its latest annual survey exploring issues of health, well-being and absence in UK workplaces (based on replies from 1,021 organisations across the UK covering 4.6 million employees) the CIPD found that:

- 86% of organisations have observed presenteeism² over the past 12 months, when people were unwell but still came into work
- Organisations report that stress-related absence has increased from 31% in 2016 to 37%
- Organisations have seen an increase in reported common mental health problems from 41% in 2016 to 55% in 2018

The CIPD reports that:

² The practice of being in work when sick, causing productivity loss, poor health and exhaustion

"Our findings show that mental health emerges as an even more significant challenge than in previous years. Over a fifth now report that mental ill health is the primary cause of long-term absence (22% of organisations compared with 13% in 2016) and there has been a significant increase in the number of organisations that include it among their top three causes of long-term absence. There has also been a significant increase in the number of reported common mental health conditions, such as anxiety and depression, among employees in the last 12 months."

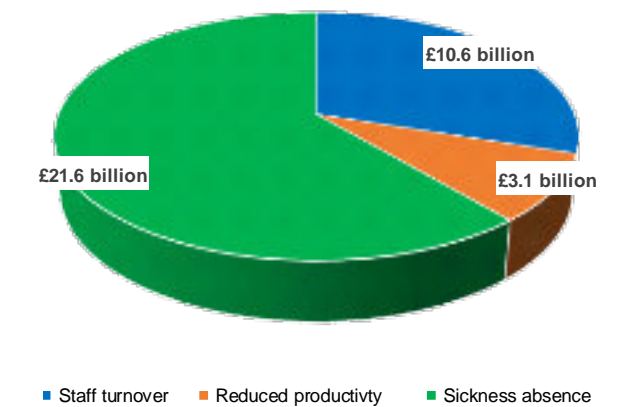
(CIPD, 2018. Page 10)

The Centre for Mental Health (Parsonage and Saini, 2017) published figures that mental health problems in the UK workforce cost employers almost £35 billion last year.

The updated figures highlight that the overall costs are broken down into:

- £10.6 billion in sickness absence;
- £21.2 billion in reduced productivity at work, or 'presenteeism'
- £3.1 billion in replacing staff who leave their jobs because of their mental health

The Business Costs of Mental Ill Health at Work



What these figures show is that employers and business need to be able to address mental health problems amongst their workforce, whether or not they come from a deprived or NEET background. In fact, learning how to better engage with and support prospective employees who are NEET could help employers and industry address and deal more effectively with the mental health and wellbeing issues of their entire workforce. This in turn will bring benefits in productivity and reduce costs due to the loss of trained employees. In recent weeks and months, there have been several national news stories bringing this salient issue to light.

The role of the local authority & Together for Children

Respondents view the local authority role as essential for strategy and co-ordination of activities and programmes. However, respondents recognised the difficult context within which the authority is operating. Importantly, those who operated within either the Council or Together for Children had a clear understanding of the distinct roles both parties fulfil. However, for those working outside of either organisation, that distinction is less well known and appreciated:

"We know the job of the local authority isn't easy, they're operating in an environment that is politically antagonistic to them. Education reforms have taken power and money away from them, there has been an assault on the role of the local authorities, and they're the ones that everyone complains about."

"There are some brilliant, inspirational people that are working in an incredibly difficult environment."

"There is a long term diminishing role for local authorities in education, but there are a range of things that can be done, for example, Together for Children working with partners on social worker recruitment but we need to be

realistic about what the authority can do."

Nevertheless, many respondents thought that there could be a stronger role in terms of strategy, co-ordination and decision-making:

"Within Sunderland there are relatively small number of secondary schools, colleges and a university, so we should be able to join up strategy, but it's not happening."

"The local authority needs to work more on co-ordination and decision making."

In particular, respondents thought that the local authority could coordinate strategy better with employers:

"Employers are willing but they need a clear ask, a strategy, this needs co-ordinating more."

Some respondents recognised that more was being done to align employment and skills strategies with economic growth:

"Previously employment and skills were separated from business growth in the local strategy, with hindsight this was not the best thing to do, it was viewed as too hard a problem but actually it is fundamental. It has been changed in 369 strategy document, bringing skills agenda in to future growth and with timelines over 5 – 6 - 9 years where we want to be."

"The decision making and coordination is something the local authority could improve, making decisions across the different partnership boards together."

But there is a view that decision-making could be strengthened with more robust data collection and analysis:

"Decision making is important, as recently there was a meeting between health, education and economic boards to increase the volume of right decisions which are being made, as these decisions seem slow. It's useful to base these decisions on empirical, reliable data, to give a broad brush to help with these decisions. Focusing on the unknowns, which you can't just ask and get an answer."

"It would be useful to have an idea of where the system isn't working. Having measurable outcomes at the end, knowing the goal, a date and the context of what's currently happening. Also knowing how it can be self-sustaining as there have been some previous initiatives, which have started but couldn't continue as they didn't have the money, it shouldn't just be living by a funding window."

Respondents thought that the North East LEP had brought some benefits in terms of the focus on primary education, but that this regional level of strategy was less

effective for addressing local issues with the NEET population:

"The LEP target is for world class information and guidance but it is not clear where will this come from for the NEET group. They fall through the net and there is nothing else to pick them up. We need to recognise that they will take longer on the journey, they are in and out of crisis and personal, family events, the recognition has to be there that they need more flexible local solutions."

"I am doubtful about the aims of the LEP. It will work for some of the schools with bright pupils and solid families, but for the NEET population, that support simply isn't there. They will take longer to go through the programmes and have more bumps along the way, there has to be more recognition that there will be difficult times and it won't go to plan."

Respondents thought that piece meal funding of different programmes did not work and that there needed to be a broader strategic focus across the local area:

"Currently the system sees a problem, funds something to address it and expects amazing results, but because of the level of disadvantage, this doesn't happen. There has to be a more comprehensive, joined up local

approaches to tackling these problems.”

“People see a problem, fund something and expect widely successful results – but this is not reality, it’s not working, not creating a healthier, coherent economy. People will fill the funding requirements they have to, but piecemeal approaches are not working, they may be successful in themselves not as a totality. One funder looked at 4,000 small charities projects and none had failed, but as a whole they hadn’t actually made a difference.”

“The issues are not being dealt with at a broader strategic level, it needs more co-ordination.”

Respondents thought that young people themselves could be brought into the strategy and decision making more than they were:

“There needs to be a commitment to listen and hear what the people say and be prepared to do something. The young people understand money is short, if they were to explain why something can’t happen, the children are receptive to that, and can come up with compromises.”



3

The factors that influence young people when they are making decisions about career choices

There are multiple factors that influence young people when they are making decisions about career choices including:

- Subject selection in school – transition from primary to secondary
- Quality of subject teaching / engagement
- Quality of information, advice and guidance (IAG)
- Educational progress and attainment
- Influence of head of school
- Perceptions and misconceptions about the labour market
- Influence of parents
- Influence from peers and siblings
- Opportunities for vocational education and training

In addition to the above there are also differences across demographic groups that may be an important factor influencing decision-making, for example

ethnicity, gender, disability, being in care and socio-economic status.

Subject selection in school – transition from primary to secondary

There is very little robust research evidence on the factors that influence children and young people's choice of subject at school, especially with respect to STEM subjects:

"Student choice is a significantly under-investigated area. Even where research exists, the lack of resources and expertise severely limits the extent to which the findings can be relied upon to provide a robust evidence base for action...Building capacity in this area is essential as robust research evidence is important not only to ensure that the right skills are available to support the future economic wellbeing of the country but also to better advise the young people themselves."

(Tripney et al. 2010)

There is also increasing recognition that young people begin to make choices

about careers early in their education.

However, this may be an issue for Sunderland and similar areas where there are outstanding primary schools but a drop in performance and ratings at secondary levels:

"The Sunderland position is a primary schools versus secondary school story. Sunderland even outshines the geographical neighbours. 97% of primary schools are good or outstanding, 13th best in the country. A third of primary schools are academies, the majority are local authority led."

"There is a gap in the transition between primary and secondary education. It could be useful to speak to the children earlier about the opportunities, stop them from disengaging early on, by showing them at an early age what they can work towards."

Some respondents thought that the transition points across the educational system from secondary school up to higher education were significant:

"The main issues are the transition points between the systems- schools, types of school, school into HE/FE, then HE/FE into employment. More support is needed at each transition point. The focus should be on those pupils slipping through the net, because the transition

point is really tough for them."

Progress 8 attainment measures are also thought to be misaligned with the skills needed for employment choices:

"When speaking to students, the career options are skills based but the curriculum doesn't reflect this. The accountability measures of Progress 8 aren't aligned to the needs/wants of year 10/year 11 students and career choices."

This is particularly linked to the relatively fewer multiple academy trusts in Sunderland:

"How do you improve the schools if you don't have the resources? The majority are single academy trusts so don't have the resources or power that multiple academies have."

"Individual schools don't have the capacity to implement their own curriculum."

Some respondents thought that the Head of school was the most significant influence on choices about curriculum:

"It depends where a school is situated and how the Head sees the issues and what needs to be done."

But, respondents also thought that the local authority could do more to support

individual schools with these problems:

"Schools make their own decisions about the curriculum, but by the local authority supporting them more it might encourage them to feel more confident to take on some challenges through the curriculum."

Respondents thought that this was especially important with respect to increasing the focus on employment skills:

"The traditional complaint of industry is that young people leave school without the skills needed for work, but this is a problem because the schools can't fit this training in with the curriculum."

In addition to an increasingly restrictive curriculum and narrower focus on attainment in particular subjects, respondents also thought that schools had fewer resources to address these issues and were being driven to find financial and funding alternatives at the expense of improving teaching and learning outcomes:

"Schools are marketing services more to parents and businesses to generate additional income, for example renting out sports facilities. But really they should be focusing on how you can generate additional revenue to create the best outcomes for the students."

Educational progress and attainment in Sunderland

Progress 8 is a score, which shows how much progress pupils made between the end of key stage 2 (age 11) and the end of key stage 4 (age 16), compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2. The starting point, known as prior attainment, is calculated using pupil assessments from the end of primary school (that is, the end of key stage 2, when children are between 7 and 11). The higher a pupil's Progress 8 score, the more progress they have made in comparison with the national average for pupils with similar starting points.

Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores are based on results in up to eight qualifications, which include English, maths, three English Baccalaureate qualifications including sciences, computer science, history, geography and languages, and three other additional approved qualifications. The scores for English and maths are doubled weighted, meaning they are given twice the importance of other subjects. Of the remaining six subjects:

- three must come from qualifications that go towards the English

Baccalaureate (EBacc); and

- three can be either EBacc subjects, GCSE subjects, or technical qualifications from a list approved by DfE.

Attainment 8 scores are based on how well pupils have performed in the eight qualifications.

The introduction of Progress 8 and Attainment 8 measures was not without criticism. Some respondents thought that the focus on Progress 8 was in fact detracting from the ability of schools to develop more vocational options and to attend to the needs of pupils with more complex learning needs. Despite these reservations Progress 8 results do provide a robust means of assessing the performance of pupils and schools at Key Stage 4 and beyond. These are also the performance measures by which local authorities are judged and therefore provide a useful comparator.

The following charts show the Progress 8 scores for the schools and academies in Sunderland.

Progress 8 scores: Comparison between 2016 and 2018

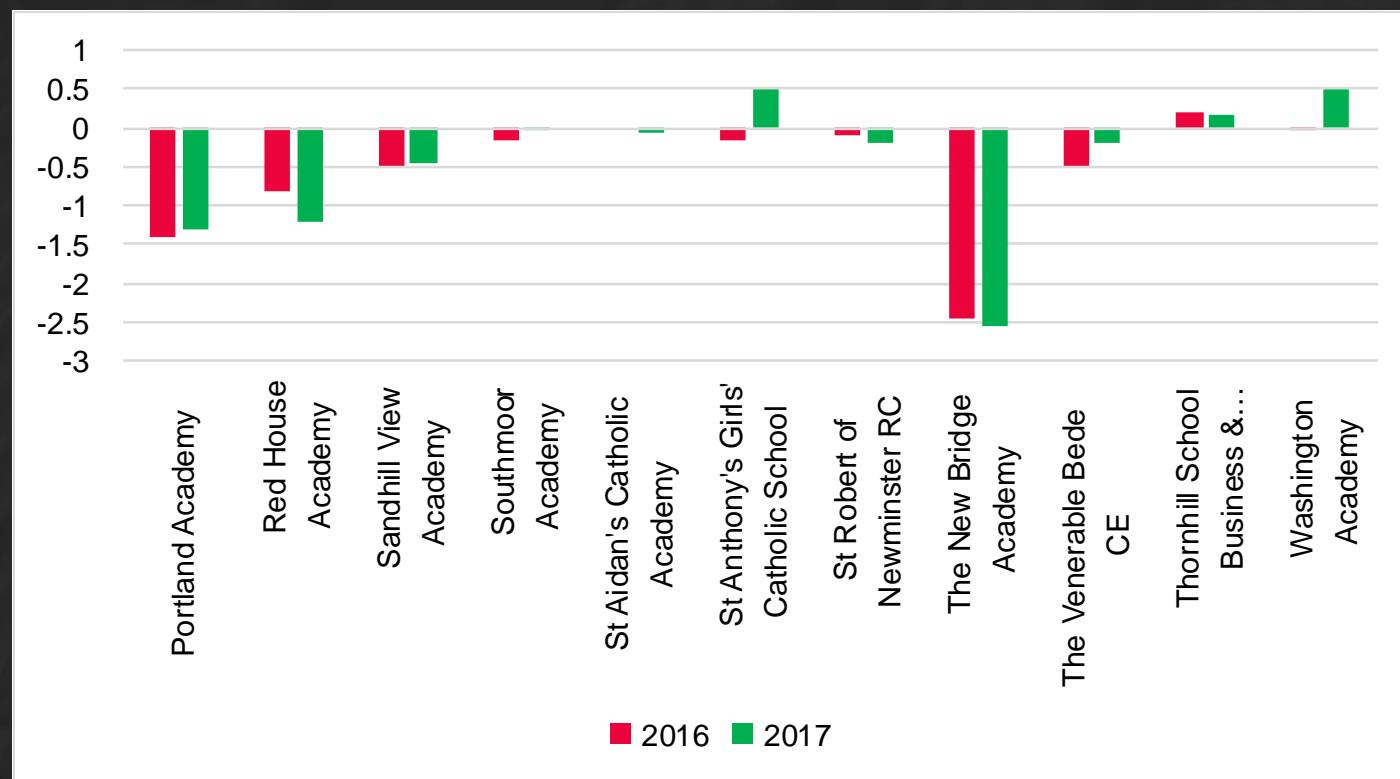
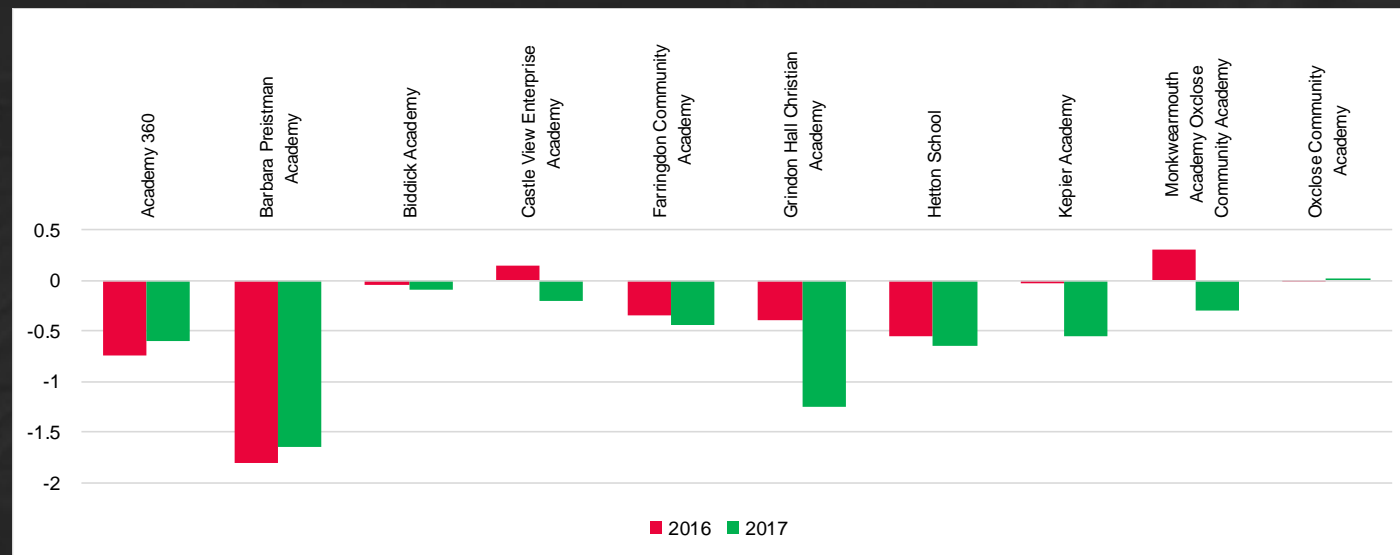


Figure 7 Progress 8 scores for Sunderland Secondary Schools and Academies 2016 and 2017

3 Grindon Hall LOWCOV (less than 50% of pupils included in calculation of the measure) and Portland Academy NE (did not enter any pupils or students for the qualifications covered by the measure) – therefore not included in the local authority overall score.

The average score for Sunderland as a whole is -0.31^3 compared to -0.21 for the North East and -0.03 for all state funded schools.

The schools and academies can be grouped by their Progress 8 scores, into those that are above average, average and well below average.

The schools and academies in Sunderland scoring well below the average (WBA⁴) in 2017 are:

- The New Bridge Academy (-2.64)
- Barbara Priestman Academy (-1.74)
- Portland Academy (-1.30)⁵
- Red House Academy (-1.24)
- Hetton School (-0.72)
- Academy 360 (-0.59)
- Kepier Academy (-0.57)

Comparison of average Progress 8

The following chart shows a comparison of average Progress 8 scores if different combinations of schools are included or excluded:

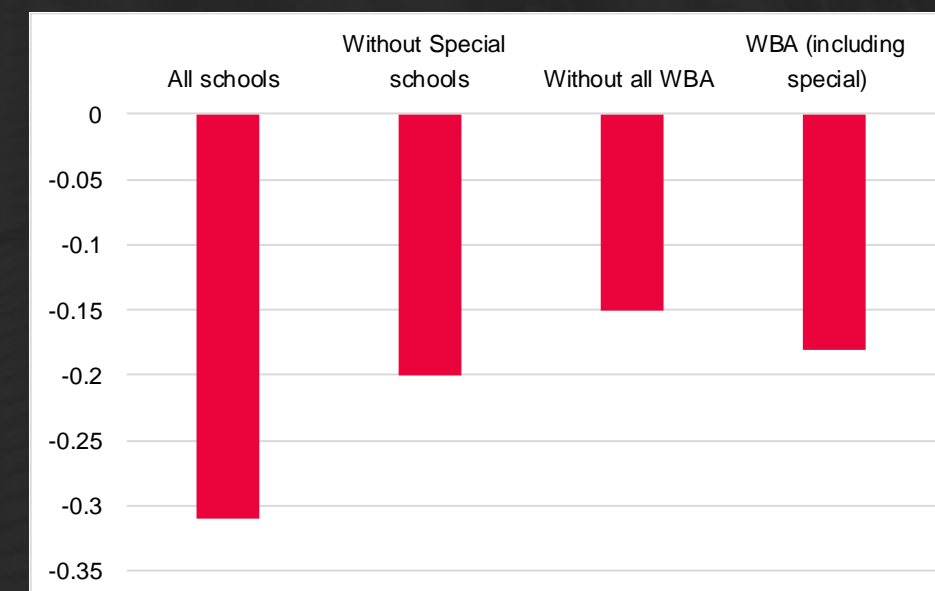


Figure 8 (WBA = Well Below Average i.e. Academy 360, Barbara Priestman Academy, Hetton School, Kepier Academy, Red House Academy, St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy, The New bridge Academy and Washington Academy)

4 A school is marked as well below average because its score is lower than -0.5 and its upper confidence interval is lower than 0 .

5 The New Bridge Academy, Barbara Priestman Academy, and Portland Academy are all schools that cater for students with a variety of special educational needs and as such these schools' score are not comparable to mainstream schools' statistics

While the exclusion of those schools that are well below average brings the overall Sunderland average Progress 8 score to being similar to the regional average, it does not have a significant impact in terms of reaching the national average for state schools.

The following chart shows the percentage of pupils across schools and academies that are average and above, below average and well below average:

Percentage of pupils by average Progress 8 scores

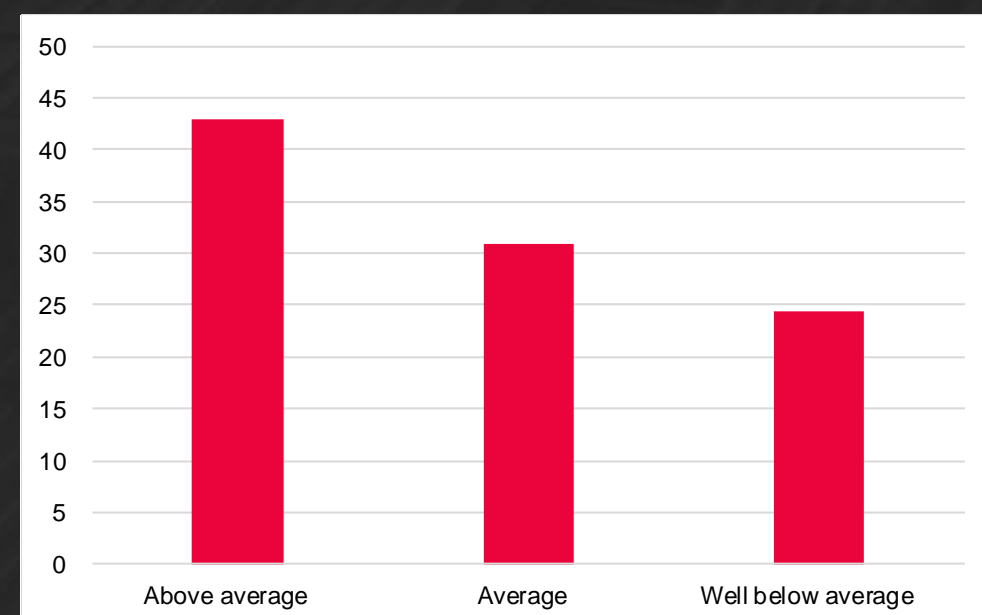


Figure 9 the percentage of pupils across schools and academies that are average and above, below average and well below average

If the schools and academies with a score of below average were brought to within the average range, the overall Sunderland score would be -0.15. The impact would be the same if the entire well below average schools were brought up to average.

Gender and attainment: Level 4+ English and maths (2016/2017)

There has been a small improvement in the overall gap between girls and boys at level 4 English and maths:

Gender gap Level 4+ English and maths 2016 to 2017

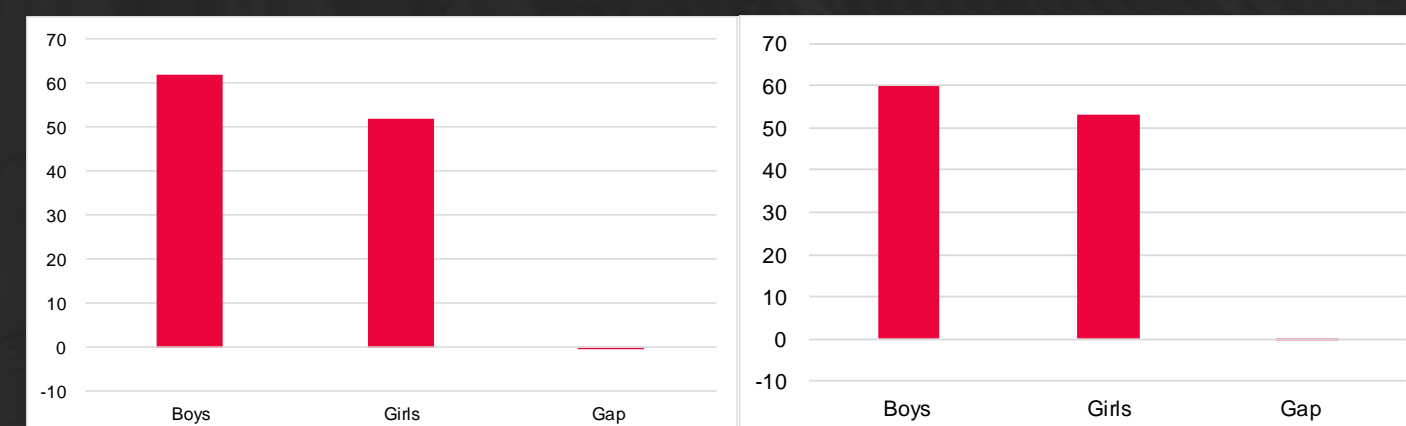


Figure 10 overall gap between girls and boys at level 4 English and maths 2016 and 2017

However, there are larger differences in the attainment gap between girls and boys for those schools and academies that are performing at average and well below the average for Progress 8:

Gender gap by average progress 8 scores 2016 to 2017

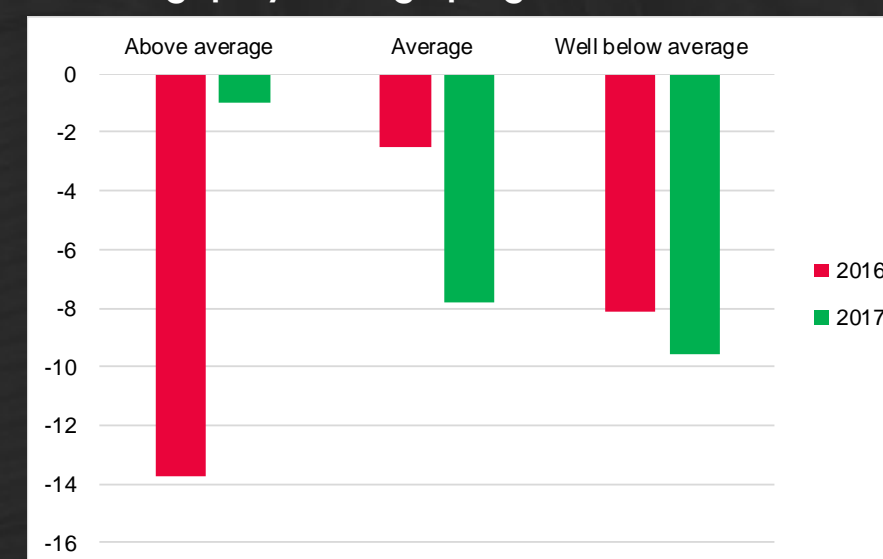


Figure 11 differences in attainment for those schools and academies that are performing at average and well below the average for Progress 8 2016 and 2017

For those schools that perform above average at Progress 8 there has been a very large decline in the attainment gap for Level 4 English and maths, while for those schools performing average or well below average at Progress 8, the gap has increased. The difference is particularly marked for those schools and academies that are preforming average for Progress 8 (from -2.8% in 2016 to -7.9% in 2017).

Differences in attainment by gender for English and maths (2016/2017)

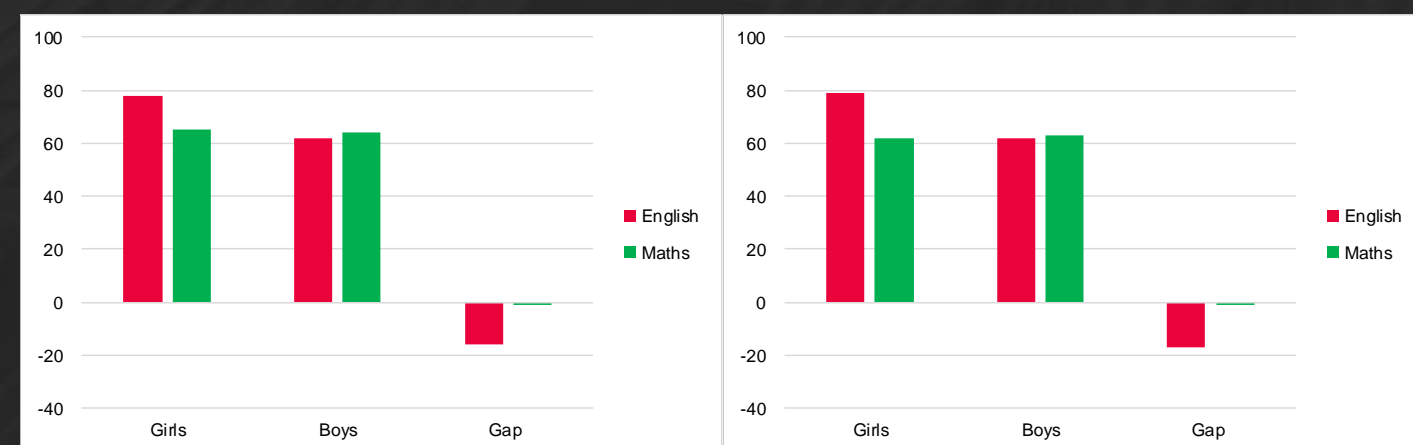


Figure 12 Differences in gender attainment English and maths 2016 and 2017

The above graph shows that the attainment gap for maths has almost disappeared from 2016 to 2017 (-3.2 in 2016 to -0.4 in 2017), while the gap in attainment for English has increased (from -13.4 in 2016 to -14.7 in 2017). There are also differences in the attainment gap for English between schools that are above average, average and well below average in Progress 8 scores:

Attainment gap for English 2016 to 2017

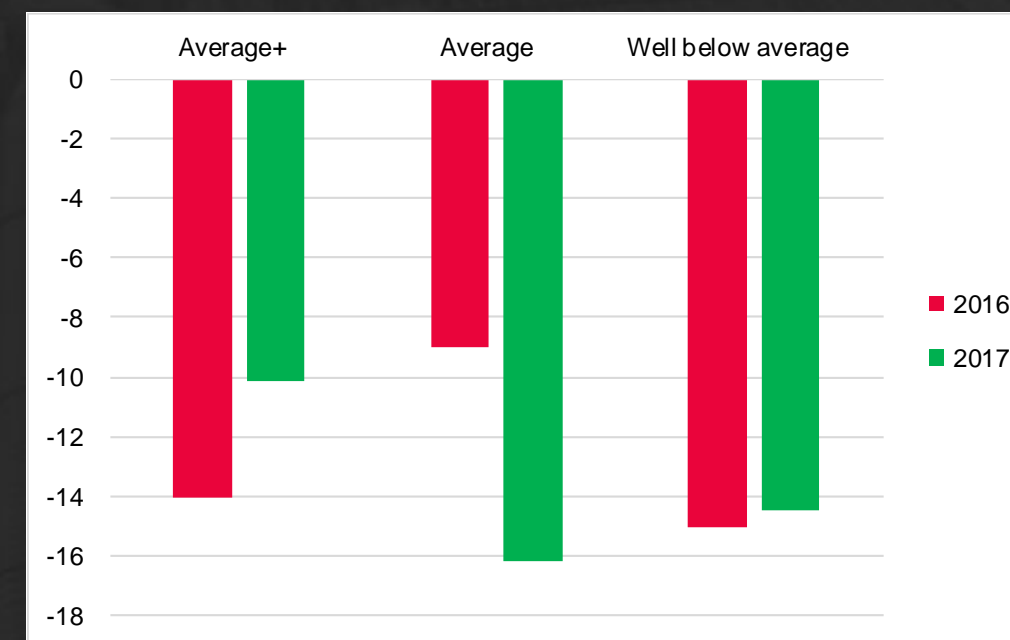


Figure 13 attainment gap for English between schools that are above average, average and well below average in Progress 8 scores 2016 and 2017

As before, the largest decline in the attainment gap is in those schools and academies with an average Progress 8 score (from -9.4 in 2016 to -16.2 in 2017).

Gender and average Progress 8

A complex picture emerges when average Progress 8 scores are compared by gender between 2016 and 2017. In the above average group girls have continued to improve (from 0.06 in 2016 to 0.13 in 2017) and boys have also improved in this group (from -0.19 in 2016 to -0.12 in 2017). However, in addition to a further decline amongst boys in the average group (from -0.14 in 2016 to -0.27 in 2017) girls have declined in attainment for Progress 8 (from 0.04, which was above average in 2016 to -0.16 in 2017).

In the well below average group of schools and academies girls have declined (from -0.66 in 2016 to -0.75 in 2017) and boys have seen an even sharper decline (from -0.42 in 2016 to -0.99 in 2017).

Gender gap by school and Academy groups 2016 to 2017

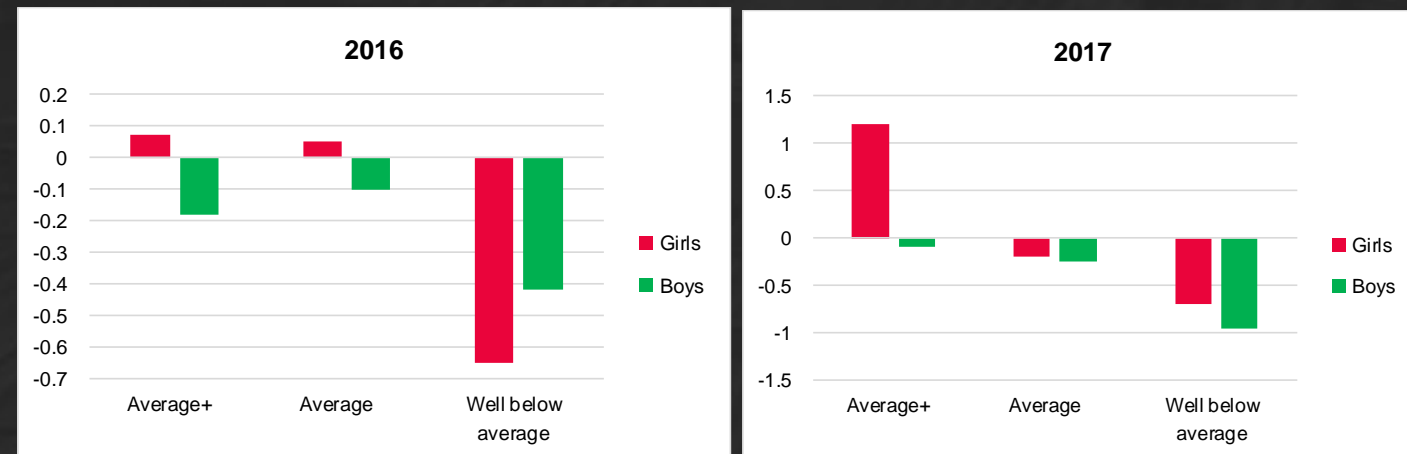


Figure 14 Progress 8 gap by gender for all schools and academies 2017

The Progress 8 gap by gender for all schools and academies shows how much the gap has increased between boys and girls:

Gender gap all schools and Academies 2016 to 2017

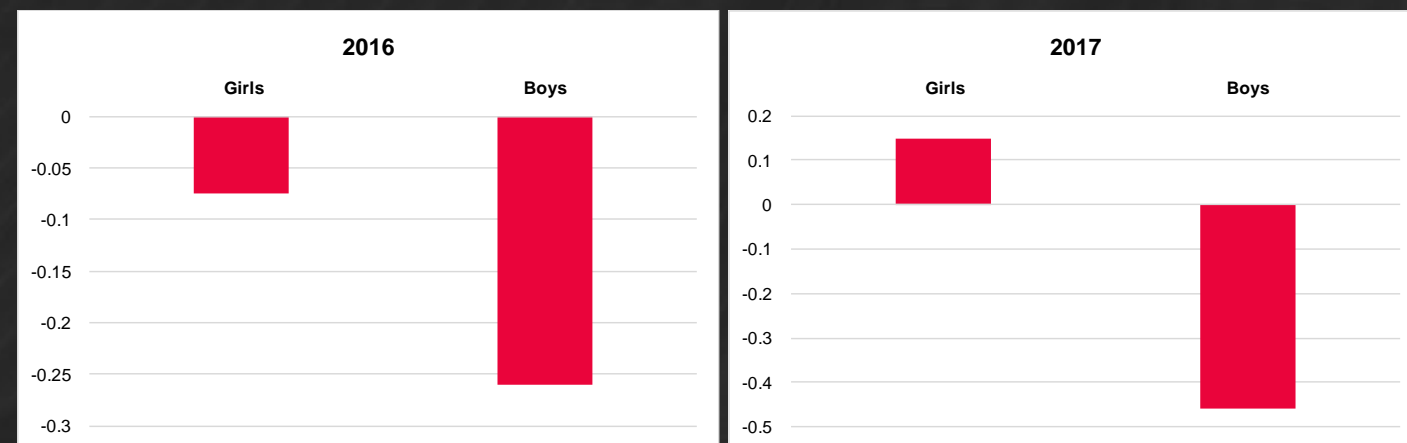


Figure 15 Progress 8 gap by gender for all schools and academies 2016 and 2017

Progress 8 and disadvantage

There are various ways in which disadvantage is measured in Progress 8 data including pupils on free school meals (FSM), numbers receiving Pupil Premium and those residing in areas affected by disadvantage, for example the lowest 20% of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD20) and those regarded as being in the lowest 20% under Income Deprivation Affecting Children measures (IDAC20).

In all schools and academies in 2017 pupils on FSM perform less well on Progress 8 than those not on FSM and the gap is much larger for those schools that have an above average score for Progress 8.

Comparison of Progress 8 for pupils on Free School Meals (FSM) 2017



Figure 16 Comparison of Progress 8 for pupils on Free School Meals 2017

Comparison of attainment for all pupils on FSM English and maths 2016/2017

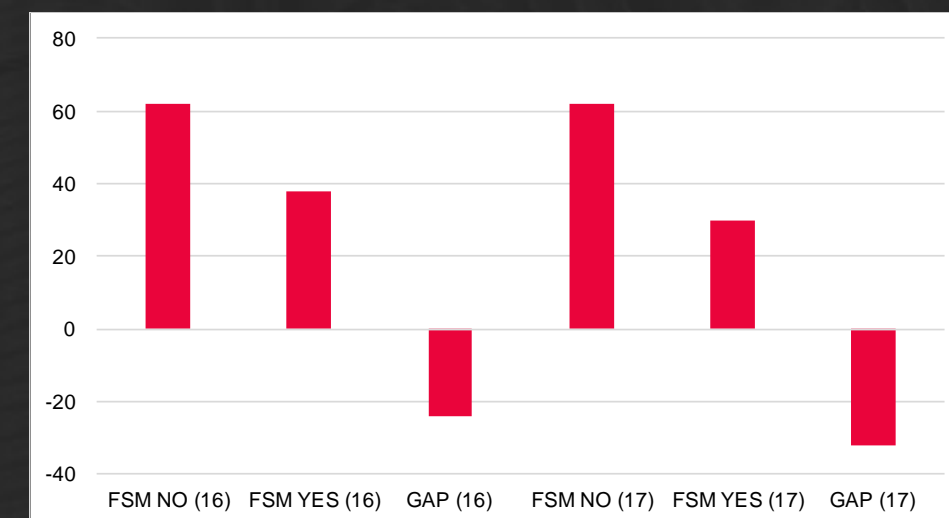


Figure 17 Comparison of attainment for all pupils on FSM English and maths 2016 and 2017

Comparison amongst schools and academies with above average, average and well below average scores for Level 4 English and maths shows that the schools and academies that have performed above average have a declining performance for pupils on FSM between 2016 and 2017 (from -24.5 to -33.5):

FSM attainment gap Level 4 English and maths 2016 to 2017

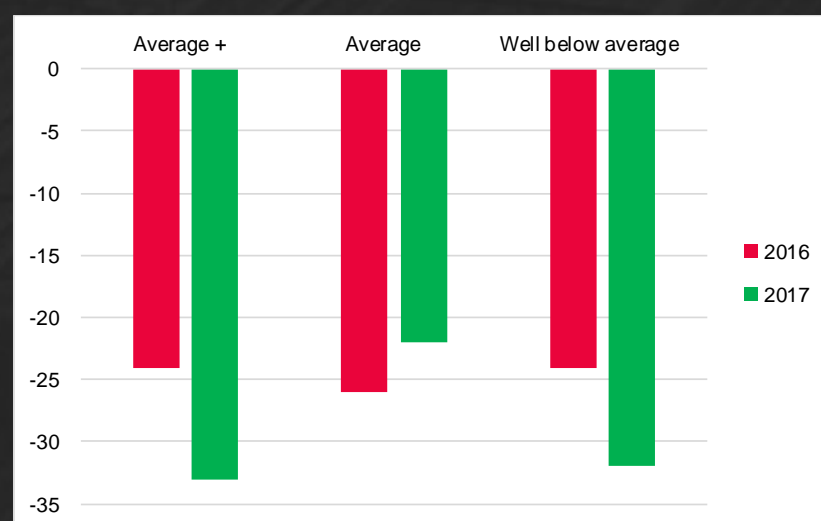


Figure 18 Comparison amongst schools and academies with above average, average and well below average scores Level 4 English and maths 2016 and 2017

The schools and academies that have performed average for Progress 8 show an improvement for pupils on FSM (from -26.3 to -21.8). Those that performed well below average have seen a decline in performance amongst pupils on FSM (from -24.3 to -31.9).

Comparison by lowest 20% indices of deprivation 2017

Between 2013 and 2017 there has been a slight decline in the numbers of pupils from the lowest 20% Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD20), from 40.93% of all pupils in 2013 to 40.05% of all pupils in 2017:

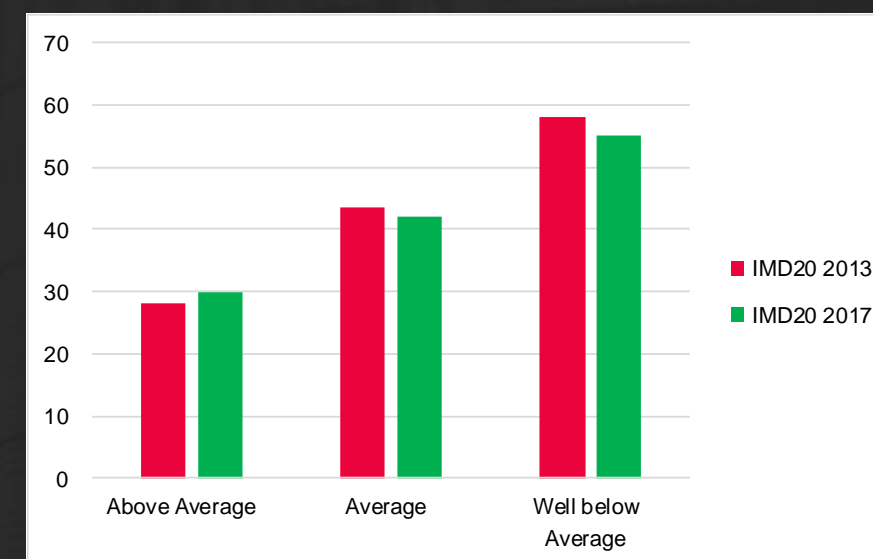


Figure 19 Indices of Multiple Deprivation in all schools 2013 and 2017

In actual numbers the decline amongst all students from IMD20 from 2013 to 2017 was 215 (16%). For those schools and academies that performed above average for Progress 8 there has been a slight increase in pupils from IMD20 (from 27.7% in 2013 to 30.07% in 2017).

There has been a small improvement in the attainment gap for pupils from IMD20 between 2016 and 2017.

Comparison of attainment for all pupils from IMD20 English and maths 2016/2017

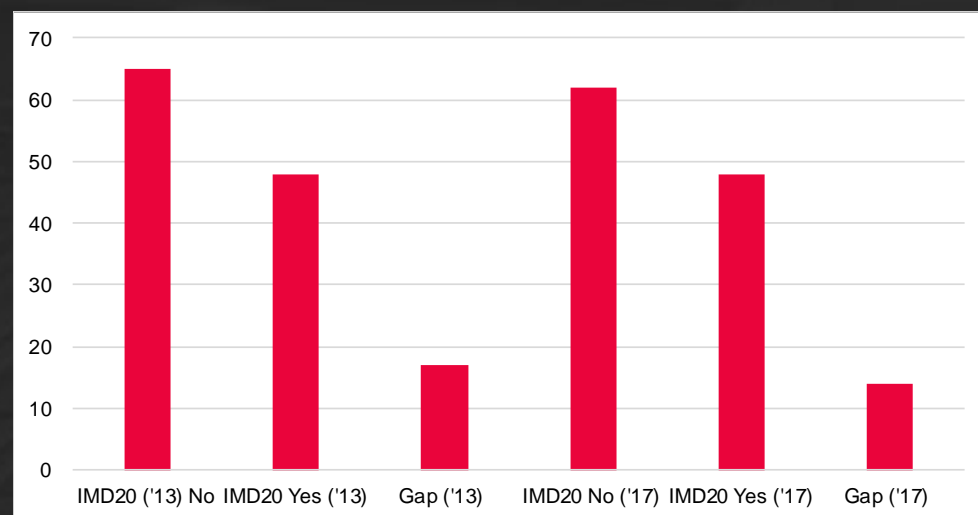


Figure 20 Comparison of attainment for all pupils from IMD20 English and maths 2016 and 2017

Comparison amongst schools and academies with above average, average and well below average scores Level 4 English and maths for pupils from IMD20:

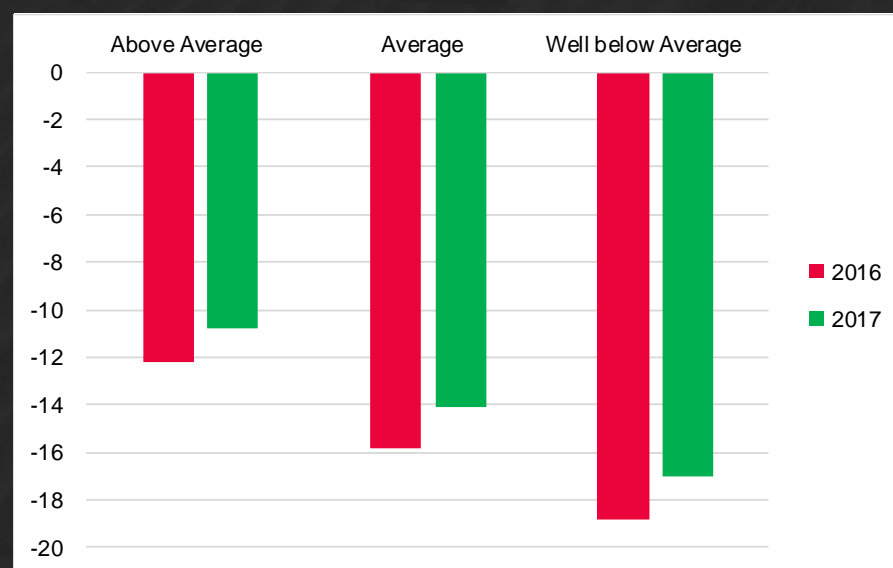


Figure 21 Comparison amongst schools and academies with above average, average and well below average scores Level 4 English and maths for pupils from IMD20 2016 and 2017

The above graph shows that although pupils from IMD20 perform less well compared to those that are not from IMD20, there has been a small improvement in the attainment gap at Level 4 English and maths between 2016 and 2017 across all schools and academies.

Comparison on Level 4+ English and maths by those from IMD20 and those not from IMD20

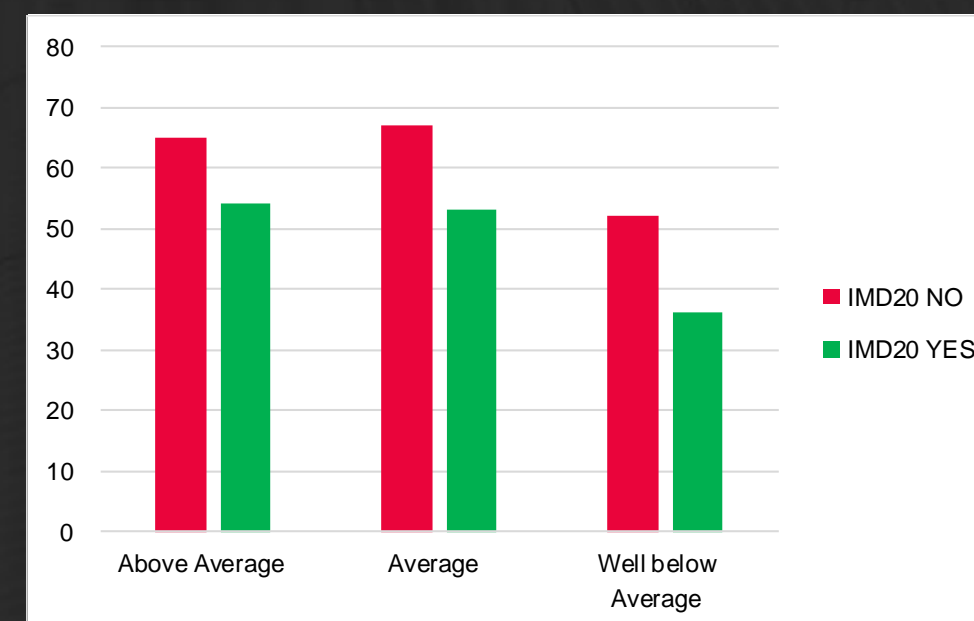


Figure 22 Comparison on Level 4+ English and maths by those from IMD20 and those not from IMD20

The above graph also shows a consistent pattern, whereby those pupils from IMD20 perform less well than those not from IMD20 for all schools and academies. However, comparisons of pupils from IMD20 against Progress 8 do not show a consistent pattern.

The following chart shows a comparison of schools and academies in the Progress 8 scoring groups by the Progress 8 scores for pupils from IMD20.

Progress 8 comparison IMD20

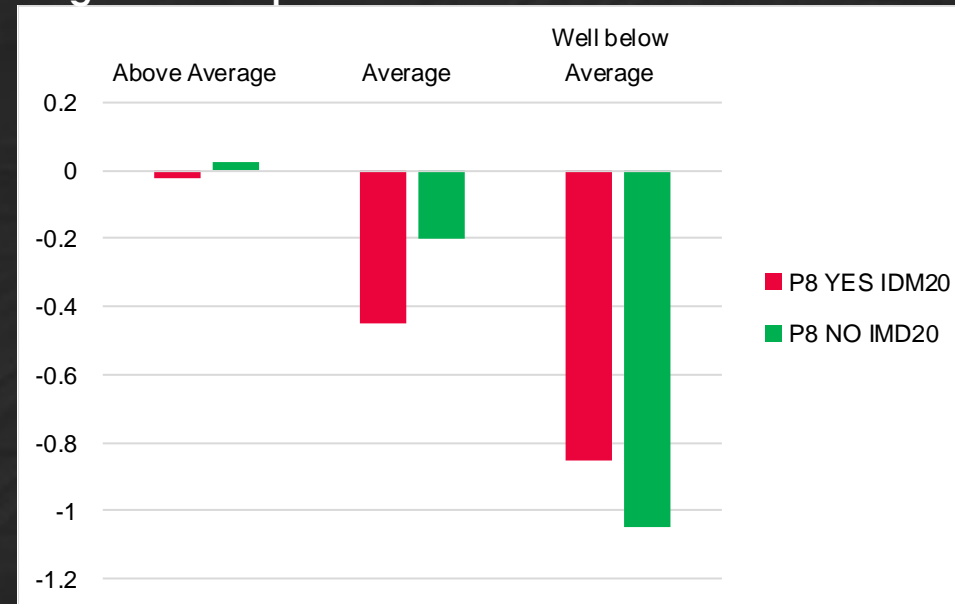


Figure 23 Comparison of all schools and academies in Progress 8 scoring groups by scores for pupils in IMD20

What the above graph indicates is that pupils from IMD20 in schools and academies that score above average or average for Progress 8 have less progress than those not from IMD20, the opposite is true for pupils in the group that score well below average.

In the latter group pupils that do not come from IMD20 have a Progress 8 measure of -1.07, while those that do come from IMD20 have a score of -0.89. This may indicate that pupils in these schools and academies with higher needs (as suggested by their relative deprivation) receive more attention at Key Stage 2 but that, as indicated by the previous graphs, this effect falls off at Key Stage 4. This effect is masked by the Progress 8 scores for all schools and academies:

Attainment gap IMD20 across school and Academy groups

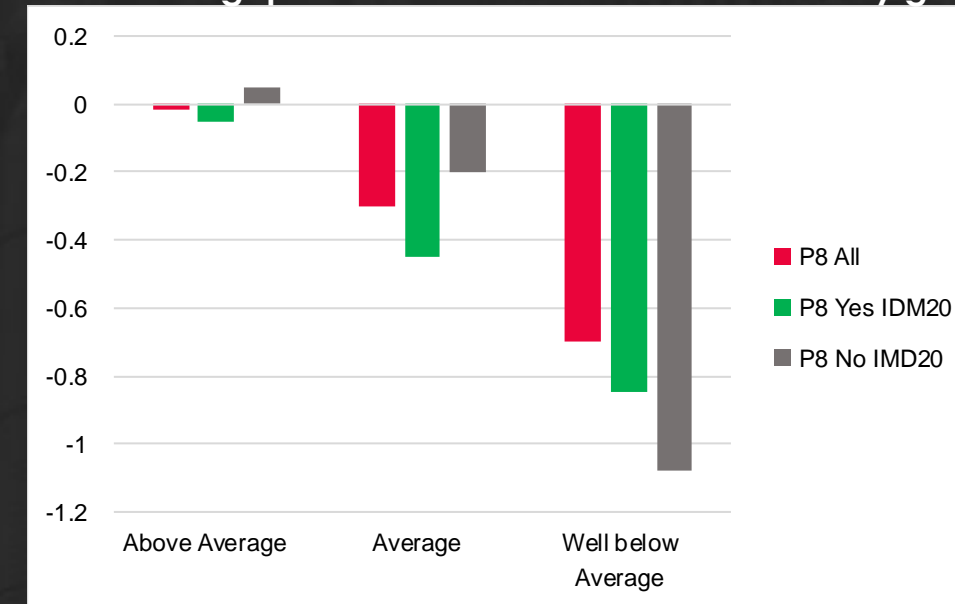


Figure 24 all schools P8 attainment in relation to the number of students IDM20

As previously stated the above analysis of Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores is preliminary. It has been included in the report to indicate that there are important trends and differences in educational attainment that lie below average Progress 8 scores, for example, the findings on gender and disadvantage.

In so far as educational progress and attainment if a factor that influences the employment chances and choices that young people make, it is important that there is a nuanced and sensitive approach to the data that can better inform strategy and local skills plans.

Perceptions and misconceptions about the labour market

Respondents thought that many children and young people are influenced in their career choices by perceptions about potential financial rewards, but that these can be unrealistic:

"Money, earning potential is an incentive, the link to their desire for particular lifestyles, but they need real world expectations, they can't all be footballers or pop stars."

The Sunderland Youth Parliament also spoke about the importance of financial incentives for young people:

"In Sunderland there is a gravitation towards getting employed and earning money, immediate gratification, before they think about furthering their education."

Respondents also spoke about the mind set and family culture for some young people and how negative or unrealistic attitudes about employment can affect young people's chances of finding work:

"Some of it is about the mind-set and culture of the young people, there is an expectation that you'll still get given things even if you don't work."

"Where there is a lack of career progression

and higher ranking jobs, there is evidence to suggest that aspiration is weaker too."

Some respondents thought it was important to note that not all young people have negative attitudes nor severe personal problems and that their aspirations should be recognised more:

"There are a significant number of young people who are attracted to the opportunities from the college and are keen to develop their skills and use the opportunities."

"The danger is that we assume all children are suffering from these issues, but it's not the case. There are a relatively small number of young people who are caught in the wider issues, which are becoming health issues that affect their ability for planning and making career decisions."

"We shouldn't just focus on the NEET population, we need to think about the aspirations of all children, Sunderland may have a higher percentage of NEET young people but it still a relatively small number."

This may be a significant point as other research has highlighted the dangers in grouping young people into the category of being NEET:

"The term NEET is itself unhelpful, partly

because it encourages policy-makers to focus on the symptoms rather than the causes of disengagement. By branding young people NEETs, official statistics identify them as a problem to be addressed by public policy but fail to focus on why they became disengaged in the first place." (Gracey and Kelly, 2010)

Influence of parents

Parental experiences and attitudes to work are viewed as significant influence on young people:

"We have had young children saying "I don't need to work; mummy and daddy don't"."

"Every child we speak to has ambitions and dreams but there is a parent role that happens behind closed doors that is very hard to engage with, a cycle of disadvantage that perpetuates itself."

"What limits these young people is the lack of parental support, for example we had a young woman who didn't speak, avoided eye contact for first few months then one day she said that every time she goes home her dad says she is 'shit'. It dashes her hopes and expectations, her parent feeling that she is not doing well. Maybe its jealousy, maybe the father did not do well and doesn't want to see the child do better."

"The biggest barrier are parents, they are also

the biggest influencer in making choices about their child's career."

"We had someone join a team on work experience; they were 18 and had been NEET. I know she helped to care for two younger siblings who had special education needs and a lot going on at home. One day she just sent a text to say she wasn't coming in to the office anymore. I'm not sure whether anyone followed up with her to see whether there were things that could be done to help her remain in the workplace and also help her family."

Respondents thought that young people were very influenced by what their parents know when it came to understanding about the employment market:

"Young people tend to know what their parents know, they are not really aware of the reality about where the job market is going, how wide it is."

Home schooling

Respondents thought that it was important for the local authority to consider the potential impact of home schooling on preparing children and young people for work:

"Lack of attendance at school is a barrier to a

lot of this, because it causes wider issues, such as reliability, perseverance, punctuality etc. This results in young people who are unable to stick to routines."

"We need to look closer at why the young people don't attend school. To solve this attendance issue, the role models in the home make a difference."

A recent report by the BBC claimed that home schooling had increased across the country by 40% in the last three years:

"Across the UK 48,000 children were being home-educated in 2016-17, up from about 34,000 in 2014-15. Mental health issues and avoiding exclusion are two reasons parents gave for removing children from classrooms."

(BBC Online News, 2018).

The number of children Electively Home Educated at the time of writing the report is 131 (academic year 2016-2017).

The Department for Education are currently consulting on home education and have called for evidence on greater oversight of children whose parents elect to educate them at home (Department for Education, 2018a).

Accompanying draft guidance for local authorities states that parents may have a

variety of reasons for electing to home school their children, some of which may be positive but some may be negative:

"...these various reasons are not mutually exclusive and for some children at least several of them may apply. When local authorities engage with home-educating families they should bear in mind this diversity."

(Page 6)

Some respondents thought that increasing pressures placed on pupils as a result of the drive in schools for better Progress 8 and Attainment 8 scores could be driving some parents to elect for home schooling, because they would not be subject to the same pressures on subjects and the national curriculum.

Some respondents also reported that more pupils were being home schooled and they questioned if this was a way of avoiding exclusions:

"Schools are increasingly putting pupils onto home schooling, it is often associated with problems in the school environment, possibly as a means of avoiding a formal exclusion which looks bad for the school."

"Those students that are being home schooled are from the more deprived families, they are

the least able to actually provide a good home schooling environment."

Home schooled children are not classed as vulnerable by virtue of being home schooled, however, the draft guidance states that local authorities should keep home educators and home education support organisations informed about Ofsted inspections. Also, if children who are being home educated are deemed to be vulnerable then the draft guidance states that:

"Ofsted will look at the way each local authority deals with this issue, in particular the ways in which it identifies children who are not receiving suitable education and what steps the local authority takes to deal with that."

(Page 8)

Parental engagement

Parental engagement is widely perceived by respondents as a priority area for development that can bring significant benefits in terms of raising young people's aspirations and addressing the cycle of disadvantage and poor educational attainment:

"There is a role in terms of up skilling the parents, and giving them information so they're also educated. It's also about helping them to know where to explore the information and who to ask. Teachers could also be up skilled so that they can explain the relevance of what students are learning to the real world. For example practical uses of trigonometry or algebra."

There is a perception that parental engagement falls off at secondary school:

"The rule seems to be the younger the children, the better the engagement. Nursery schools are very good at engagement, but the older the children are the parents seem less engaged. This may be because the parents aren't involved as much anymore, such as in taking the children to school."

Children and young people themselves may also be creating barriers by not informing their parents about things they are doing in school:

"Children themselves seem to keep their parents separate. Some parents are shocked by the work their children do as they don't get to see it often, and are then impressed by their work when they do see it."

Parental engagement is also viewed as essential for ensuring that children and young people are aware of employment opportunities:

"Parents are really important to engage with, they aren't aware about the opportunities for young people, unless parents know people from different industries, it's hard for them to keep in touch with what is happening."

"There is a nub of an older parental population who hark back to the previous industrial past, they don't really understand what is there today for children. Younger parents are more likely to adapt and be up to date with this."

"We are not making enough from the parental network, particularly in schools."

"We don't want every parent to be a qualified careers counsellor, so we need balance in what we want parents to know and how to help them help young people navigate the education and employment routes."

Most respondents thought that more could be done to use technology and digital innovations:

"There is a lack of understanding about the impact of technology and social media."

One respondent spoke about using text messages to parents to help reduce

truancy and improve attendance levels in a school:

"There were huge attendance issues, now for any student that misses a lesson, the parent is sent 7 texts: one to say the child is off, the other 6 detailing exactly what lessons they've missed."

Parental engagement is something that industry needs to be doing, not just schools. The benefit of parental engagement is vastly increased beyond a strict educational context if parents are increasingly engaged with industry and have a comprehensive understand of the evolving labour market:

"If doing an employment programme, it is wise to engage parents at the start so you have them on board and they don't undermine the kids, these programmes work best when parents are broadly supportive and involved."

"Industry needs to work more with the whole family unit, Nissan are good at doing this, we could learn more from their programmes, replicate this with other employers."

"Industry could do more work with parents, it does work but it is quite intensive and we need to direct messages for parents better as these are not penetrating through the schools. It is important to explain to parents what the local

employment market is doing, for example, number of digital jobs required next few years."

"We should open up the city's Work Discovery Programme to parents and ensure those young people who are more likely to become NEET are given targeted IAG support and most definitely access the opportunities available through Work Discovery."

"It would be a real test for the partners across the city to put collective efforts into targeting support to those young people who show the signs of becoming NEET, but are supported to remain engaged in EET."

If parents themselves are engaged in re-education this is thought to be particularly helpful for young people:

"Parental influence can be positive or negative, if parents understand the opportunities that are there they can be a very positive influence. As parents learn more, that in turn influences their own career decision for example re-entering education, up-skilling and re-skilling which in turn influences young people's decision making about education and careers."

"Adult learning skills for parents are also needed, to support them to act as role models and encourage the children to follow in their footsteps."

Research also suggests that families from disadvantaged backgrounds have high aspirations but they need the information and understanding on how to mobilise these effectively to achieve better outcomes for children (House of Commons, 2014).

However, the evidence also suggests that many practitioners do not have appropriate skills, knowledge and confidence to work with parents, particularly those from deprived communities. (The Scottish Government, 2016). This was also a concern expressed by respondents:

"Parents do not have a good understanding about career options and education at all, schools are missing a trick by not engaging with them more on this. Parents put themselves in the hands of schools and expect to be guided by the school, but I'm not sure the schools have that knowledge or are willing to do it."

There are examples where co-education of parents and young people known as family learning programmes, has had a positive impact on aspirations and promoting socio-economic resilience:

"Family learning is a powerful method of engagement and learning which can foster positive attitudes towards life-long learning, promote socio-economic resilience and challenge educational disadvantage." (Scottish Family Learning Network, 2016)

Evidence from 2013 showed significant progress in children's attainment levels when they were educated alongside their parents:

"Engaging the most disadvantaged parents in their children's education, while simultaneously offering them the chance to learn themselves, can improve pupils' attainment by 15 percentage points and improve a child's reading age by six months." (National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), 2013)

It can have positive impacts on aspiration and addressing disadvantage:

"Educational interventions involving the whole family make a significant difference not only to the aspirations and attainment of children, but also to the skills, confidence and ambition of their parents. Family learning has long-term

benefits as it affects behaviours and attitudes to learning across the whole family." (van Steensel et al, 2011).

There is also evidence that family learning approaches have a positive impact on closing the attainment gap for disadvantaged pupils:

"Embedding family learning across education, health and socio-economic policies is crucial to closing the poverty-related attainment gap."

(The Scottish Government, 2016)

Influence of siblings and peers

Siblings are viewed as having influence, particularly if there are no older siblings that have progressed to higher education routes:

"If a young person has never had anyone in their family who has been to university, how do they cope with the idea they'll have £30,000 worth of debt after?"

"There are some significant attitudes around sending children to university. In those families where they have never previously been to university, certain courses would be helpful, for instance financial management guidance to understand the implications of these courses, also careers guidance to understand the best ways into getting into different careers."

Some respondents thought that the influence of peers could have a bigger impact on aspirations and breaking the cycle of disadvantage:

"Peers are a bigger influence than parents, they cannot break the cycle if they're around low aspirational peers."

Peers were also seen as a potential source of role models to create positive change:

"Peers are closer to people's lived experience, they can be ambassadors and positive models."

"What about young people aged 19 to 23 who have successfully passed through and have a stable lifestyle, are these better role models for the younger kids?"

Many respondents viewed development and wider use of role models from outside the family as a way to raise aspirations:

"Using national role models, sport and entertainment figures, has been problematic but they can be used well to raise aspirations. The difficulty is in knowing who at a more local level can fulfil these roles?"

"We need role models to talk to young people, explaining that you're not tied to one route and can move and change."

"Teenagers are less responsive to parents and may be more responsive to other role models such as youth works, teachers."

One respondent highlighted the good work being done by the North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) on providing volunteer mentors from the business community:

"Good work is being done, the LEP has set up a volunteer mentors programme for middle-achieving young people, the mentors are people from business or an employer who have time to spend with students or groups of students."

However, some respondents questioned the degree to which this programme was being realised in Sunderland:

"I am doubtful that the LEP mentoring programme is having much effect in Sunderland yet."

"The North East is getting a good reputation for this work, but it is not being realised in Sunderland as it should be, the main beneficiaries are young people in Newcastle."

Respondents thought that it was necessary for role models to come from a similar background to those children and young people they are seeking to influence:

"There are fewer positive role models for the kids from a background of cycles of deprivation and disadvantage."

"Sunderland do have 80 city ambassadors but these are too removed from the poor, deprived base."

Opportunities for vocational education and training

The focus on Progress 8 attainment and the restricted options for curriculum development were thought by respondents to be restricting the amount of vocational courses available for students:

"There are young people who are not enjoying school or college and would rather do vocational skills to make them more employable."

"Some can't get English and maths qualifications, we need to value other achievements more than we do; this is a national problem."

This is also thought to be a problem with incentives between schools, further education colleges and universities:

"We need to get the incentives between schools, colleges and universities right for more vocational training routes."

"The pipeline is not right for what jobs are there, we are generating a lot of young people at HE who will be disappointed and even at FE the pathways are not right, for example computer games development attracts students but at the end of it there is no volume of jobs."

"Certain courses attract the students in, but then there aren't jobs in that sector available. There's a huge problem in terms of incentives between schools, colleges and university. Too many people going to university for the amount of jobs there are. We can't have 50% of people walking into graduate jobs."

Lack of knowledge and awareness about vocational training opportunities were thought to be a factor influencing young people's choices:

"The quality of schools is a big thing, but not the only thing. Some young people don't know about the opportunities on offer. There are vocational course they can embrace but they don't know about these."

Respondents thought that vocational options needed to be made available at an earlier point, for example at 14 years old and that the focus should not only be on those students staying in education:

"We should be looking at starting more vocational courses at 14 years old and bringing children out of school and into a different form of education."

"There are more sixth forms where children can stay on in the same school until 18, however this doesn't help those who are not going to stay on, just the ones who would have stayed on anyway."

There is also thought to be a mismatch between the type of skills that were being taught or made available and the changes that have taken place in the local labour market, for example the move towards to a service economy:

"The kind of jobs that are being created now are service orientated, there is a mismatch between the old skills and the need for modern skills that fit the local labour market."

4

Communication and the relevance of the local education to employment offer

Ensuring that there is effective communication of the local education to employment offer and that this is relevant to children, young people and their parents and/or carers is not the sole responsibility of the local authority. In fact, the statutory requirement to provide information, advice, and guidance (IAG) is in the hands of the schools. Together for Children Early Help historically offered to provide second language acquisition (SLA), but this was refused. The schools can still choose to buy this provision from whomever else they wish. Together for Children's statutory requirement does extend however to providing IAG to SEN children and looked after children. Beyond the statutory requirement, to get the most out of all available provisions, this is something that needs to be done by all partners working collaboratively including schools and academies, local industry, further and higher education and social and independent sector agencies that work in supporting children and young people through education and into employment.

Work experience

Respondents thought that there are barriers for young people and parents in navigating routes to employment post 16:

"People only know the job market at a certain point in time, however they don't necessarily know what it's like today. It depends on how wide your support network is, and what information you're being fed by who and when. When I speak to young people not many know what they want to do. They don't have a clear idea, and there are just spikes of interest."

"There seems to be little proactive searching from young people about the career options they may have."

Work experience is viewed as a good way to promote understanding about different employment options. However, respondents identified some barriers to this including employer selectivity:

"Businesses and employers would rather have students they're familiar with to offer work experience placements, so that they can get a good use out of it, but also so they know that the young person wants to be there."

"It's still an old boys network in terms of getting work experience, industry needs to be clearer about roles and nature of the relationship, tapping into the broader networks. For example, can parents trade in work opportunities with other parents where they work in an area? But it needs to be individually matched for the business to get something out of it."

Work experience programmes are viewed as working well for the local automotive industries, but this does not suit all children and young people:

"There are lots of sector based work academies with other companies; Barclays, contact centres etc. Students can get work experience with Nissan, they get a guaranteed interview, and if not successful with Nissan, the NAC group will try and get the young people into their supply chain, but not every young person wants to be engaged in the car industry."

Sunderland Work Discovery Programme

One particularly successful and innovative programme in Sunderland that demonstrates this collaboration is the Sunderland Work Discovery Programme. Sunderland's Work Discovery Programme has gained national recognition for engaging young people with business, and how to encourage them to gain the skills to improve their employability.

Each year more than 1000 young people and more than 40 local businesses take part in the programme. Young people are involved in a wide range of challenges and activities including participation in workshops, inspirational lectures and exciting demonstrations from industry. The programme is very prominently communicated and marketed and has high profile events at the Stadium of Light and at business locations across the city.

Some of the activities and challenges that young people have been able to do have included taking part in brick laying and welding demonstrations to constructing a racing car and learning how to build and control an 8ft high robot. The activities are designed to be fun and engaging while having a serious message that showcases

the diversity of jobs that are available locally across a wide range of sectors.

Respondents to this inquiry clearly recognised the value and collaboration involved in the programme:

"Work Discovery is a brilliant programme, which has thousands of children attending, and sees the employers engaging with young people."

"Work Discovery is a really good tool, it kicked off about 5 years ago and at first the schools proved to be barriers, but it has changed dramatically now, we are constantly in touch with schools & pupils."

This also now includes participation at primary school level:

"Primary schools have been involved with the Work Discovery programme for about a year."

Although the programme was initially called Work Discovery Week, it now involves activities throughout the year, but this was not fully appreciated by all respondents:

"The Work Discovery Week is excellent and helps large numbers of young people, energising the young people and employers, but it is one week, a big show business event, the disadvantaged groups need longer term support, something more intensive."

"In Sunderland there is the Work Discovery Week but apart from that, there isn't anything that is really coordinated."

This may simply be a branding issue, but as one of the city's flagship programmes it could be worth exploring how to better communicate the other ways in which the programme involves young people and businesses throughout the year.

Some respondents, while appreciating the value of the programme, questioned the degree to which it impacts on disadvantaged children and young people including those how are NEET:

"The youngsters who engage with the Work Discovery Programme are the ones who are going to do well anyway."

Careers guidance

Connexions are the statutory body set up to provide advice, information and guidance and much of their work is done in coordination with Sunderland City Council and/or Together for Children. In general, Connexions provide the following:

- Work experience placement (via Connexions Hub)
- Continuing professional development

- Management information services
- Careers information service
- Marketing services

More specifically:

- Connexions IT provisions⁶; outline job searches and CV support
- Qualification pathways from academic (A-Level) support to vocational
- Advertise and direct young people to 6th forms, universities and post 18 opportunities

Connexions also have a Parent Pathway programme that includes ensuring parents have access to Personal Advisers in schools, colleges, Connexions centres, and others. In addition Connexions seeks to ensure that parents have access to their online resources and hard copy materials and they will inform parents of where these can be found. They also seek to engage parents in feedback.

Respondents expressed some concerns about the decline in availability of the local Connexions service:

"Connexions as an agency, have had a number of cut backs."

"The sign posts for careers advice are not as strong as they used to be, Connexions has been decimated, nine gone and only one left, it's a real problem, schools are being asked to pick this up but it's not working, it doesn't support the right people."

"In terms of careers guidance, it is really important in secondary curriculum but it has been diminished. We use what is left of the Connexions service but that has virtually disappeared."

Sunderland Careers' Centre provides confidential advice and support on a group and one-to-one basis They are also involved in assessments for EHCs and have independent SEND support.

Talent Match is led by the 'Wise Group' and delivered by Remploy. It engages with 18-24 year olds to help them find work off the back of their own enterprise and specifically targets those furthest away from the job market facing service boundaries to work.

The North East LEP is recognised for its positive work on developing careers advice in schools (Social Mobility Commission, 2017). Respondents did recognise that some schools were improving their approach to career

⁶ Previously, there was a certified IT zone but this is no longer in operation.

guidance and the provision of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG).

"Having a Director of Careers in the school responsible for IAG, basically the same as Gatsby benchmarks⁷, has been a very good move and should be recommended to other schools."

"Young people are not navigating routes to employment well, due to decline in support for children at key stages of their lives, there is a recent push to re-introduce careers advisers into schools, they have to be good though."

However, as a national programme, respondents had concerns about the consistency and quality of IAG in schools:

"The national offer for careers advice is patchy, the government could improve this a lot."

This was thought to be a particular problem when industry were not directly involved in IAG:

"Everybody still complains about career advice. It's still a case of being lucky to get the chance to speak to someone, and they're not getting the opportunity to connect with different employers from different backgrounds so they get a narrow view."

"We need more tailored advice on employment options and more knowledge in

schools about what employers want. This should be tied in with Progress 8 and looking more at apprenticeships."

Understanding the NEET population

When talking about the NEET population in Sunderland respondents highlighted the complex range of needs amongst this population, including mental health problems, drug and/or alcohol use and problematic family backgrounds:

"A lot of the NEET population have complex needs, not just English and maths, they have complex mental health needs, low self-esteem and a lack of confidence."

"Many have problems with drugs, mental health, multiple disadvantage..."

Respondents also thought it was important to recognise the numbers of NEET young people that have particular high levels of need, for example care leavers, those in the criminal justice system and as a result of being pregnant at a young age:

"There are more in care and not in typical family settings."⁸

"There are a number of NEET young people who are pregnant and also in justice system."

⁷ In 2013 Gatsby commissioned Sir John Holman to research what pragmatic actions could improve career guidance in England and subsequently he developed the Good Career Guidance Benchmarks.

"Care leavers (looked after by the local authority via fostering) and young offenders are NEET."

The total number of children in Sunderland who started to be looked after in the year ending March 2017 was 335; this was a 39% increase on the previous year.

Children who started to be looked after during the year ending 31 March

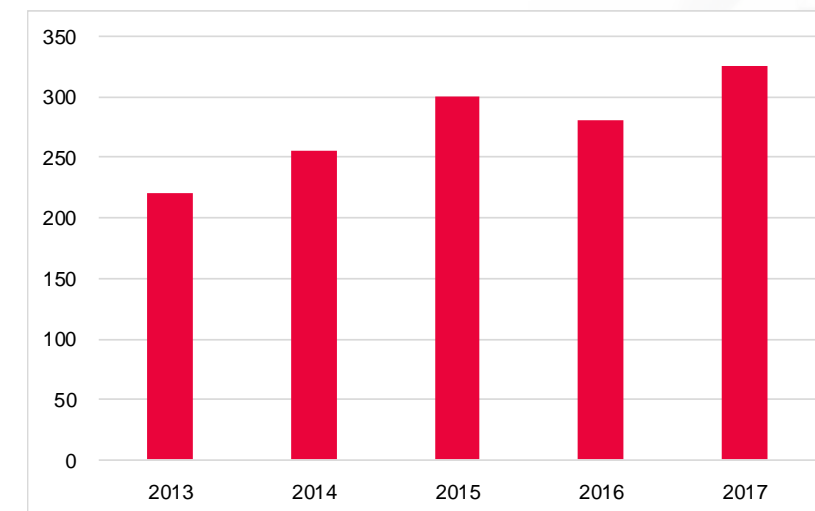


Figure 25 Children who started to be looked after by Local Authority during the year ending 31 March

The number of care leavers aged 17 and 18 at the end of March 2017 for Sunderland was 65. Amongst these, 43% were NEET.

% Care Leavers in education, training or employment

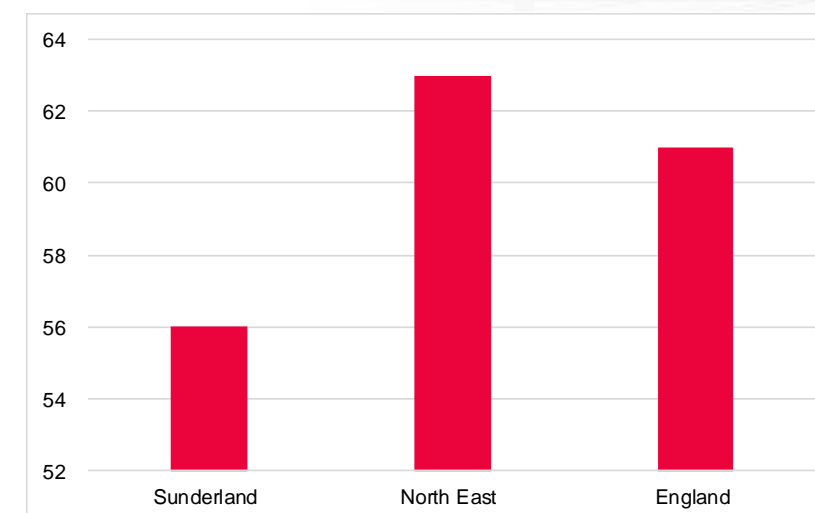


Figure 26 Percentage in education, training, or employment in Sunderland, the North East, and England

⁸ OFSTED identified that NEET figures for CLA 16-18 years group was better than national average. The 18-21 years care leavers group however have much higher NEET figures

The percentage of NEET who were pregnant or parenting was 9% compared to 4% for the North East and 3% for England (Department for Education, 2017):

NEET - % Pregnant or Parenting

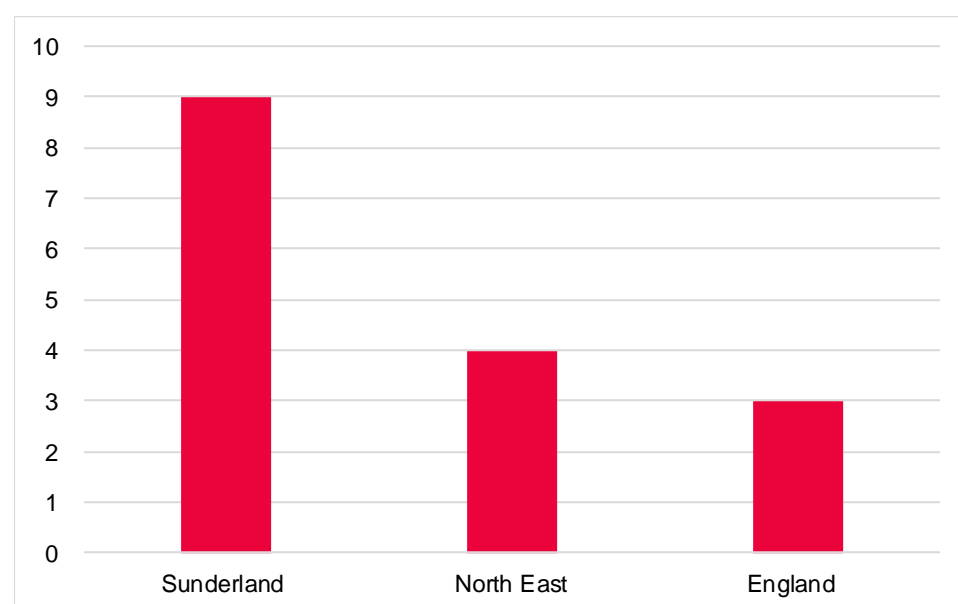


Figure 27 Percentage who are pregnant or parenting in Sunderland, the North East, and England

Some respondents thought that the problems were exacerbated by cuts in services, particularly access to mental health services for care leavers and children and young people in school:

"Care leavers often suffer from mental health problems, but the services are being taken away from schools."

"There is an absence of provision to support young people with mental health problems because there isn't the funding, the needs are rising and the funding is falling."

Respondents thought that working effectively with the NEET population of young people required more intensive, one-to-one work:

"They should be receiving one-to-one, additional support but the resources are not there for this."

"Support and funding are being taken away by schools and the young people are disengaging because they don't have access to these services."

Respondents also thought that there was a lack of knowledge and understanding about how to work effectively with NEET young people:

"Knowing what constitutes effective practice in this area is hard."

"We continue to gaze at a problem that has been here for a long time, the move to action is the hardest thing."

Recognising the needs of different demographic groups

Respondents were asked if they thought that there were different issues and needs regarding support for employment for different demographic groups, many thought that the needs were the same:

"Nothing really that stands out, most of the work being done is in line with the national picture for different demographic groups."

"The needs of different groups are very similar, they want the same things. There could be some systemic issues but there isn't anything inherent. It depends on the different schools they went to."

"All of the young people have such individual needs that it's hard to put them all together in to one group."

Gender

Some respondents did recognise issues with respect to gender and education:

"In the North East there has been increasing disengagement amongst white working class males."

"The obvious problem is with girls in STEM subjects."

Respondents thought that these differences were not played out once a young person was on an employment route:

"The success rates between boys and girls are similar."

"We have similar numbers of males and females with similar success rates, generally no real difference."

"We have good representation of girls and boys, there's not a huge problem with gender difference."

Although respondents recognised that there are issues with attracting more female young people to some industries such as construction or engineering:

"We need more girls in engineering but they are a difficult target group, girls' perceptions about the nature of the work stop them seeing this as an opportunity."

"Almost all of the recent employment applications were male. Obviously it is open to girls too, we offered a contract to one girl for a year but it didn't work. The girls simply aren't interested in this type of employment."

"I've not witnessed differences between girls and boys but have been told that it is hard to recruit women engineers. But we do need diversity in the work force, not just for Sunderland but nationally."

However, one respondent cited the example of Rolls Royce and how having apprenticeships for young women could act as positive role models for others:

"The local primary school has Rolls Royce on the doorstep, they have female apprenticeships coming in and these can be a powerful role model, changing perceptions for young girls."

In 2016, 19 female 6th form students from St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy went to the Johnson Space Centre in Houston, Texas as part of NASA's Girls in STEM programme to attract more girls into science careers. The Sunderland 6th formers were intended to act as science ambassadors on their return, including presenting an account of their week to the rest of the academy. This is the type of

high profile experience that could be used to inspire girls and young women from other schools into science careers.

Ethnicity

Sunderland has a relatively low percentage of Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) populations (4.3%), however the percentage of BAME children and young people aged 0 to 24 years is higher (6.8%)⁹. Respondents did recognise the need to engage more with these communities on education and employment:

"BAME population is low and we are not good at engaging with them, and we don't have specialist support for these as do with disability."

"There are low population numbers of BAME populations in North East, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't engage more with them."

Based on the Work Discovery model, the council recently organised an event with key business sectors for the local BAME communities to explain career opportunities. Respondents thought that the event was very informative as there were many misconceptions amongst community members about local careers and the employment market:

"We need to do more to educate the minority ethnic communities on the size of the labour market. The council recently organised a careers event for the BME community. The low levels of knowledge about the local labour market surprised people, but they were able to inform them and let them know what the commutable options are from Sunderland. Some thought Asda/Sainsbury's/retail was the largest sector but actually this is reducing in size."

Disability

Respondents thought that the council could do more with employers to support the employment opportunities for disabled children and young people:

"The council needs to do more work with employers on disability, it is not a priority for a lot of firms and smaller firms lack the resources to support this adequately. There is poor co-ordination on this area."

"With regards to disabilities we are not clued up enough on it, a little bit scared. There is a need to work more with schools on this."

For example, one respondent spoke about the NHS England disability advisor role and how this could be used to more effect in Sunderland:

"NHS England have someone who is employed to promote employment by disabled people but no one in Sunderland has taken this up. We are missing a golden opportunity but it is hard to know who the right person is to engage with."

Another respondent spoke about the need to provide a realistic level of expectation and skills matching for disabled young people:

"Access to work placements and engaging with the world of work is limited for SEND pupils...we need to provide a very honest account of what the young people are able to do, trying to break down the embarrassment factor, especially those who have autism and how they can engage in the work place."

Some respondents were also concerned that employers may say they are disabled friendly but were not in reality:

"A number of organisations say they are disability friendly, but in reality they really aren't – this is usually because they simply don't know how."

"We have no disabled young people, the working environment doesn't accommodate to them, and it's heavy engineering, very hard to accommodate for disabled people."

Disadvantage

The demographic factor that respondents' thought was most relevant for the NEET population was disadvantage:

"Working Class, middle ability boys is where the problems are."

"The gap in Sunderland is around deprivation. In order to target some of the challenges for young people, the deprivation within these groups needs to be addressed."

"The differences in opportunities are more about where people live."

Respondents thought that the local authority inclusion strategy needed to be more aligned with the strategies for education, skills and employment:

"The strategy around inclusion was targeted on those who don't access the employment market but it did struggle with the people side of things as it wasn't written by the correct people. It wasn't integrated with the rest of the employment strategy."

"The economic development strategy was written by economic advisors, it wasn't strong on the people side, the inclusion strategy was a bolt on and not integrated into other core strategies, so we have struggled more with the inclusion agenda, but we are doing it in bite size chunks."

5 Engaging industry in the skills agenda

Employer strategies

As noted above respondents expressed concerns that young people at risk of being NEET or who were already NEET were not work ready:

"The mental health issues of young people need to be addressed before the route to employment."

"They lack low level skills in maths, English and IT, but also the soft skills, being able to get to work on time, knowing how to present themselves, a lot struggle with this."

"The main problem is awareness that they are not work ready – turning up on time, appropriate behaviour, dress, knowing how or when to turn in sick, conforming with the 'soft skills' as well as the hard skills. We can't expect them to have the hard skills before they've started, that comes with training, but the soft skills should be there."

There becomes a more acute issue when there is a cost attached to these expectations. For example, even for part

time work the financial cost of a uniform can be burdensome for someone on low wages. Not having the correct dress is therefore not always a choice and can have adverse effects on a wider range of 'soft skills'.

Capacity to work with NEET applicants and understanding about their needs as employees are thought to be lacking:

"One of biggest gripes of employers is that young people don't turn up on time, they are not work ready, have poor work attitudes and how they present themselves in the workplace can be poor but employers don't know how to work with these young people."

"Businesses need to remember that these are just young people- they need mentoring in both soft and hard skills, it is a perfect example of badly managed transition points. The expectations are rarely aligned. It is very important that business and education providers make clear what is required."

Some respondents thought that local employers lacked medium and long-term

strategies for addressing these problems:

"Employers' expectations are high but it isn't a simple case of supply and demand for skills. Employers lack medium and long term recruitment strategies for skills that match the local population."

Respondents saw this as being linked to business imperatives or the 'bottom line', something that can be particularly difficult for SMEs:

"It is difficult for commercial companies to work in this area."

"These strategies from large organisations do eventually trickle down to the SMEs. It is the difference between altruism and social motivations versus the bottom business line. SMEs view things as the bottom line."

"NEETs can be harder to work with and require patience. It is difficult with a SME who may not have the expertise and resources to specifically focus on the needs and problems."

For larger employers, the focus is viewed as being on the existing workforce and lifelong learning, rather than creating new entry points:

"Employers aren't doing enough to offer entry level roles, they still want graduates."

"Larger corporations can provide long-term careers, they are recognising the challenges, for example creating touch points along someone's career where you are entitled to some sort of audit and analysis of skills and direction. Virgin Money, Sage, Northumbrian Water, NHS, have started to create a career strategy of life long careers."

Engagement between industry and education

Sunderland does have various programmes for increasing engagement between industry and education, in particular with schools.

Some respondents thought that strategies for increasing engagement between industry and education needed to start at an earlier point in the education cycle, for example at primary school level:

"Why aren't these employer programmes hitting hard enough? Maybe it's the cure rather than prevention method, they are not engaging early enough."

"We need to plant the seed early, at primary school level. More children taking part in careers led events with industry involvement."

"There should be more integration of roles between industry and schools, especially

influence in primary school – get it earlier rather than later.”

Other respondents recognised that more was being done to engage employers at primary school level:

“Nissan are particularly good, they do significant work with primary schools.”

Respondents thought that local industry could make more use of the networks that surround schools including parents and communities:

“Industry is not making enough use of the parental network around schools, work to get communities more engaged in schools could help, sponsoring, giving time, tapping in to business employment networks via parents.”

Many respondents however, thought that there should be greater co-ordination between the regional and local authority level strategies for skills, education and employment and individual industry strategies:

“Sunderland is disjointed and particularly disadvantaged, there is not as much coordinated activity with employers in Sunderland as in surrounding authorities, for example there is much more coordination in North Tyneside.”

Apprenticeships

In April 2017, Government funding of apprenticeships changed in England with the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and a public sector target on apprenticeships. The latter, although welcome, has placed an added strain on local authorities are now expected to become providers of adequate apprenticeships.

The apprenticeship levy applies to companies with more 250 employees with the aim that 2.3% of a company's staff would be enrolled on an apprenticeship. Companies are then charged at a rate of 0.5% of their annual pay bill, if this exceeds £3 million.

The government have recently announced that from April 2019 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) who previously didn't qualify for the levy will now join the scheme. The aim is to make the market more demand led and give employers more say. It is a particularly salient reform for Sunderland, which as a high proportion of SMEs. The Council also have responsibility to act on behalf of any other body under their remit e.g. Fire & Rescue and Schools. However, local authorities have their apprenticeship fund topped up

by government by 10% per month.

Government views the apprenticeship levy as an opportunity for schools to improve their skills base. The local authority is responsible for informing the school whether they need to take into account the levy. For MATs, it is the responsibility of the sponsor, or the main employer.

At the end of 2017, apprenticeships were down 61% on figures at the end of 2016. Data from the government's progress report in May 2018 (Department for Education, 2018c) shows:

- Improvement from May 2017: 37% are now 'new starts' rather than existing employers. This compares to 3% in 2016 and represents a total of 494,900.
- The standard measurement of a successful apprenticeship has shifted away from a qualification basis to a skills and knowledge basis.

The Government has not published data surrounding disadvantaged young people and apprenticeships, and is still considering the approach it will take on how they collect these data.

The Department for Education's evaluation from learners on apprenticeships (Department for Education, 2017b) shows:

- 86% of learners recognise their scheme has benefit to their future career;
- 2% were unemployed immediately after their apprenticeship finished, but this rose to 9% after one year;
- 70% were very satisfied with their opportunity, 5% were dissatisfied;
- 56% joined immediately from school or college, 33% joined from a previous employer, and 12.5% were NEET before starting;
- 60% reported improvements in English, Maths, and IT; and
- 72% said apprenticeships exceeded expectations, 21% said their expectation had been met.

There are problems regarding general awareness about apprenticeships, for example in the learners feedback report cited above 30% didn't realise they were on an apprenticeship programme and nearly half (46%) said an apprenticeship wasn't their first option. There has also been criticism from industry and learners that education providers aren't informing young people sufficiently about vocational opportunities.

Some respondents gave examples of individual industries where apprenticeships are working well:

"... 10-15% of employees are apprentices. They can't always offer employment after, but in the 10 years they've ran it, none of the apprentices has gone on to be unemployed immediately after."

"There are more focused discussions with industry about apprenticeships."

"The public sector are putting in systems, but it takes a long time to put procurement arrangements in place and to get more apprenticeships built in to this."

However, on the whole respondents thought that apprenticeships were not being targeted in the right ways, for example focusing the apprenticeship levy on existing employees rather than attracting new entrants:

"Most employers are only using the levy for their existing employees, it is very short term, there is a finite amount you can do on this and in the mean time they are missing the opportunity to bring on more new people."

"The apprenticeship levy could be used more creatively, as it was intended to develop new employment roles and meet the skills deficits."

"The apprenticeship levy is an unmitigated disaster for government, might as well give them the money back. Those who pay are doing well for their own groups of employees, for example they can up skill current staff but the Levy is not being used well to bring on new staff. In time it will be a bigger problem because we are not creating the right career choices and it restricts opportunities for the target groups of young people who need help."

There is a perception amongst respondents that the apprenticeship system is too complex, especially for smaller employers:

"Employers are not engaging with apprenticeships because they seem too complex and yet this is the area that is needed, especially with SMEs."

Also, there is a view that apprenticeships are not being targeted at the right groups and skills base:

"Lower skilled apprenticeships are available, they are a route forward, but at the national level, they are usually picked up by the lower skilled, older workers, whereas the national marketing is pitching them more at younger people."

"Only 3% of all apprenticeships are in digital,

it's not enough, there are still gaps but when we talk about skills and competencies, it is about more than just trading a certificate for a job but that is seen as the path of least resistance."

Apprenticeships were thought to be failing NEET populations in particular, especially those from more deprived backgrounds:

"The numbers taking apprenticeships is falling, at the top end there are more options and choices, this end is holding up but the drop off is at the disadvantaged end, the kids with more problems."

However, the Youth Parliament thought that there was a lack of university level apprenticeships:

"There is less of a focus on degree level apprenticeships."

6

Conclusions and Next Steps

Achieving a radical improvement in the aspirations and opportunities for young people, particularly those who are NEET is not something that can be realised in the short term. The strategic context for skills and employment, nationally and locally is challenging and a number of important developments such as the Industrial Strategy and vocational skills plans are still being worked through. For cities such as Sunderland there are additional challenges related to the makeup and mix of the local employment base and historical trends of generational disengagement and low aspirations.

For NEET populations there are some acute difficulties including the level of personal needs such as mental health problems, being in care, young parents and coming from a background of deprivation. It is also important that the NEET population and disadvantaged children and young people more broadly are understood, for example they do not constitute a homogenous group.

As system leaders for skills, economic growth and inclusion local authorities need to have effective strategies and mechanisms for collaboration by which they can address the complex and inter related issues for children and young people but also their parents and families and with system partners. The city's strategic partnerships (Education and Economic Leadership Boards, and the Children's Strategic Partnership) provide this foundation, and should work together to develop effective strategies with wider stakeholders, including local employers.

The findings in the report highlight a number of issues and point towards some areas that are deserving of further attention. For example:

- there is a need for more nuanced and sensitive analysis of educational progress and attainment data, so that skills issues relating to specific groups can more readily understood and responded to;

- respondents have also made calls for greater collaboration across partners/partnerships with clear leadership to ensure that skills and employment strategies are co-ordinated effectively;
- parental engagement is widely viewed as one of the most significant factors that can influence decisions made by young people about career and employment choices and there is scope to improve and strengthen parental involvement in education and skills, and IAG;
- there are some strong foundations to build on for communicating the local education to employment offer, such as the Work Discovery Programme, but there is a need to consider ways in which this and similar programmes can be more targeted and relevant for those who are disadvantaged and/or NEET.

At a national and regional level there is a need to ensure that policy and related government funding benefits cities like Sunderland, and is not solely concentrated in larger urban areas with bigger and more prosperous populations. Smaller supply chain businesses and SMEs also need to be more fully involved in local development of

the education to employment offer including additional support to enable them to provide work experience and apprenticeships.

7 Bibliography

BBC Online News, 2018 26th April 2018, accessed 9th May 2018 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-42624220>)

CIPD (2018) *Health and wellbeing at work*. London: CIPD

Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and Department for Education (2016) Post 16 Skills Plan. Cm9280. London: UK Government

Department for Education (2017) *Children looked after in England including adoption: 2016 to 2017*. SFR 50/2017. London: Department for Education.

Department for Education (2017b) Apprenticeships evaluation 2017: learners Research report November 2017 IFF Research. London: Department for Education.

Department for Education (2018a) Implementation of T Level programmes. Government consultation response. London: Department for Education.

Department for Education (2018b) Elective home education: call for evidence Government consultation. London: Department for Education.

Department for Education (2018c) Elective home education Departmental guidance for local authorities: draft for consultation. London: Department for Education.

Department for Education (2018d) Progress report on the Apprenticeships Reform Programme May 2018. London: Department for Education.

Gorard, S; See, Huat B and Davies P (2012) *The impact of attitudes and aspirations on educational attainment and participation* York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Gracey, S and Kelly, S (2010) Changing the NEET mindset: Achieving more effective transitions between education and work. London: Centre for Innovation in Learning

HM Government (2017) *Industrial Strategy Building a Britain fit for the future*. Cm 9528. London: HM Government.

House of Commons (2014), Underachievement in education by white working class children: first report of session 2014-15. London. The Stationery Office.

Key Cities Group (2017) United and Industrious. Working together to build the UK's industrial strategy. Wakefield: Key Cities Group.

Key Cities Group (2018) Key Cities Unlocking Potential. Wakefield: Key Cities Group.

Kintrea, K; St Clair, R and Houston, M (2011) The influence of parents, places and poverty on educational attitudes and aspirations. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation

OECD (2018) *United Kingdom - Economic forecast summary* IN OECD Economic Outlook, Volume 2018 issue 1 – preliminary version 2018.

National Audit Office (2018) Delivering STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) skills for the economy. HC 716 SESSION 2017–2019 17 JANUARY 2018. London: NAO

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) (2013), Family Learning Works. The Inquiry into Family Learning in England and Wales. Leicester. NIACE.

Parsonage, M and Saini, G (2017) Mental Health at Work The Business Costs 10 Years On. London: Centre for Mental Health

Sunderland Children's Strategic Partnership (2017) *Sunderland Children and Young People's Plan 2017-2022*. Sunderland: Sunderland City Council.

Sunderland City Council (2016) *Corporate Plan 2016 – 2020*. Sunderland: Sunderland City Council.

Sunderland City Council (2017) *Report of the Director of Strategy, Transformation and Partnerships, 31st October 2017* Sunderland: Sunderland City Council.

The Scottish Government, (2016) Review of family learning supporting excellence and equity. Edinburgh: Scottish Government

The Social Mobility Commission (2017) *State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain*
London: Her Majesty's Stationary Office.

Tripney, J; Newman, Dr M; Bangpan, M; Niza, C; MacKintosh, M and Sinclair, J (2010) Factors
Influencing Young People (Aged 14-19) in Education about STEM Subject Choices: A systematic
review of the UK literature. London: EPPI-Centre Social Science Research Unit (SSRU)

van Steensel, R., McElvany, N., Kurvers, J. and Herppich S. (2011), How effective are Family
Literacy Programs?: Results of a Meta-Analysis. Review of Educational research. Vol. 81, No. 1,
p69-96.