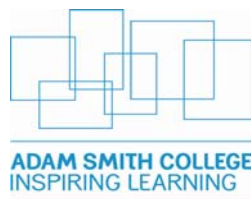




## **Full Report**

# **The Underachieving Young People Project: an investigation into young people in Fife who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)**

A Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum research  
project undertaken by the Research Unit of The  
Adam Smith College, Fife



**July 2007**

Published by: Research Unit, The Adam Smith College, Fife; Priory Campus, Victoria  
Road, Kirkcaldy, Fife, KY1 2QT



## **Section 1 Introduction**

The Underachieving Young People Project was an investigation into young people in Fife who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET). The project was sponsored by Fife and Tayside Wider Access Forum, and was undertaken by the Research Unit of The Adam Smith College, Fife.

The Underachieving Young People Project consisted of two phases. The first phase of the project was an investigation into the factors affecting progression to NEET status amongst 16 to 19 year olds in Fife and the measures being taken to prevent such progression. Phase one involved desk research into policies and practices relating to NEET and also some qualitative primary research with young people in Fife to gain an insight into their perspectives on education, employment and training. The majority of the young people who took part in the research were male, as the remit for the project was to focus on males; however, it was decided that a small number of females would also be included in the study after it was discovered that a significant proportion of the NEET group is female. Phase one of the project is covered in Section 2 and Section 3 of the report.

The second phase of the project was action research involving the pilot of an intervention to prevent NEET. The remit for the project was to implement and evaluate a schools-parent intervention with the parents of potentially NEET secondary school pupils. Again, the remit for the project was to focus on the parents of potentially NEET boys, but it was decided that it would not be fair to restrict the intervention to the parents of boys only and therefore some parents of potentially NEET girls were also included in the intervention. Phase two of the project is covered in Section 4 of the report.

## **Section 2 NEET policies and practices**

Section 2 is a literature review examining NEET- related policies and practices. There were twelve research questions set out for the project literature review and these were as follows.

- What national and local government policies are currently in place to drive the effort to reduce the number of NEET young people?
- What are the key agencies involved in the implementation of these policies in Fife?
- How are they taking forward the implementation of these policies?
- Is there evidence of inter-agency partnership working in the measures being taken by these agencies?
- What facts are known about the NEET population in Fife in terms of numbers, gender, school-leaving profile, socio-economic background, and current activity?
- Is the perception that females are less likely to be NEET borne out by any evidence?
- What is the reality of employment opportunities for young people in Fife in areas where traditional industries have declined?
- What programmes currently exist in schools aimed at combating progression to NEET?
- What linkages exist between schools and other key influencers?
- What are the post-school progression routes for people who have become NEET?
- Are measures in any way gender differentiated?
- How effective are these measures?

To assist the answering of these research questions, Section 2 has been split into five subsections. Section 2.1 examines NEET in Fife to establish a picture of the local situation. Section 2.2 examines national and local NEET policy through the analysis of recent policy documentation. Section 2.3 outlines measures that are currently being used to prevent and reduce NEET, and Section 2.4 examines the effectiveness of these measures. Finally, Section 2.5 provides a conclusion in relation to the literature review research questions.

## 2.1 The Fife picture

Section 2.1 undertakes to provide a picture of the reality of the NEET situation in Fife in terms of the scale and characteristics of the NEET group, along with the economic situation and potential career paths available to NEET young people. Section 2.1 is split into two subsections: Section 2.1.1 examines the features of the NEET 16-19 year old population in Fife and how this compares to Scotland as a whole; and Section 2.1.2 identifies Fife industries and the potential career paths available to young people in Fife.

### 2.1.1 The NEET group in Fife

Section 2.1.1 examines the scale and characteristics of the 16-19 year old NEET population in Fife. At present, the 16-19 year old NEET population is not tracked and therefore intelligence relating to the group has to be pulled from a range of sources. At a national level, the Labour Force Survey provides a good comprehensive source of information; however, at a local level the sample size is too small to generalise Fife's 16-19 year old population. Datasets that provide insight at a local level are primarily the School Leaver Destination Survey (SLDS) and data recorded by the Department for Welfare and Pensions (DWP). Other datasets that provide insight are Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics (SNS), Scottish Executive Education Department Statistics, Scottish Executive Looked After Children Statistics, and Scottish Executive Prison Statistics. These sources of data are referred to during this section.

#### Scale

The approximate figure in 2005 for the NEET group in Fife stands at 1,896. This is approximately 9.8% of the 16-19 years Fife population and is slightly above the national 16-19 year old NEET population for Scotland as a whole. See Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1: 16-19 year old NEET population level for Fife and Scotland expressed in absolute terms and as a percentage of the 16-19 year old population, 2005

	Total	
	Number	% 16-19 year old Population
<b>Fife</b>	1,896	9.8%
<b>Scotland</b>	25,312	9.6%

(Source: SLDS and DWP)

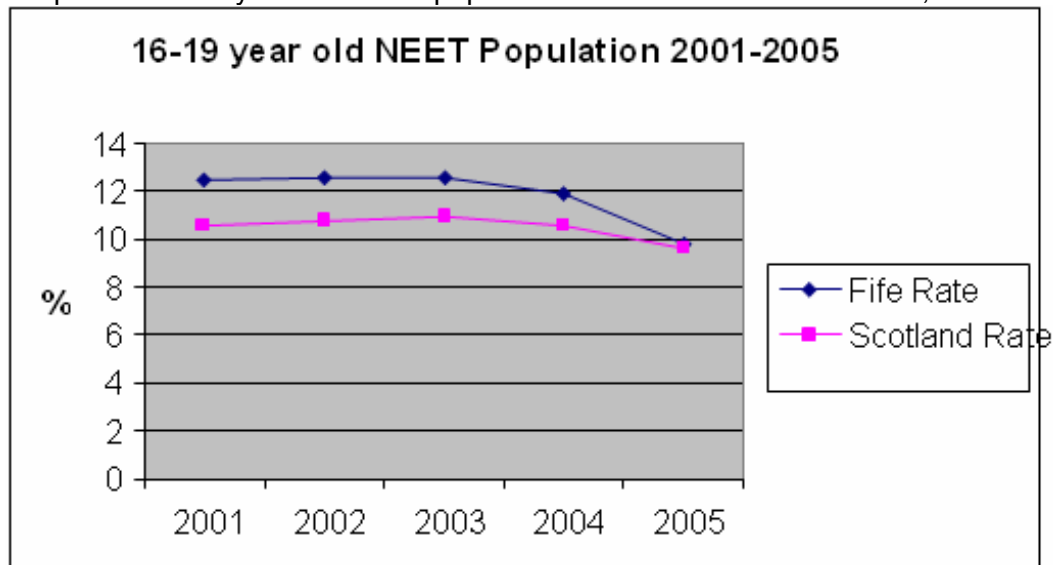
*Note: 2005 data is presented because at time of writing the full 2006 DWP dataset was not available. 2004/05 SLDS data has been used for consistency purposes*

The Fife figure is derived from a combination of SLDS data, that is school leavers who are unemployed or destination is unknown, and DWP data, that is 18-19 year old income-related benefit claimants. It should be emphasised that this figure is an estimate and is likely to be an underestimate of the true NEET figure for Fife. SLDS and DWP data sources were recommended by the University of Glasgow's Training and Employment Research Unit (TERU) as the most accurate source for measuring change in the NEET group over time at a local level; however, TERU acknowledge the following accuracy issues that make for a 'net' underestimate of the true figure:

- People in custody, refugees, some 17 year olds (not captured in the SLDS or DWP), and NEET leavers from special and non-state schools are not counted
- Benefits data will not capture 18-19 year olds who are NEET but are not claiming benefits
- Gap year students will be counted as NEET
- Risk of double counting

Using the TERU methodology, Graph 1.1 below shows that the NEET 16-19 year old population in Fife had fallen since 2002, and the gap between the NEET population in Fife and the NEET population in Scotland has closed between 2001 and 2005.

Graph 1.1: 16-19 year old NEET population rates for Fife and Scotland, 2001-2005



(Source: SLDS and DWP)

Table 1.2 below provides details of the NEET population in absolute terms and as a percentage of the wider 16-19 year old population for Fife and Scotland from 2001 to 2005.

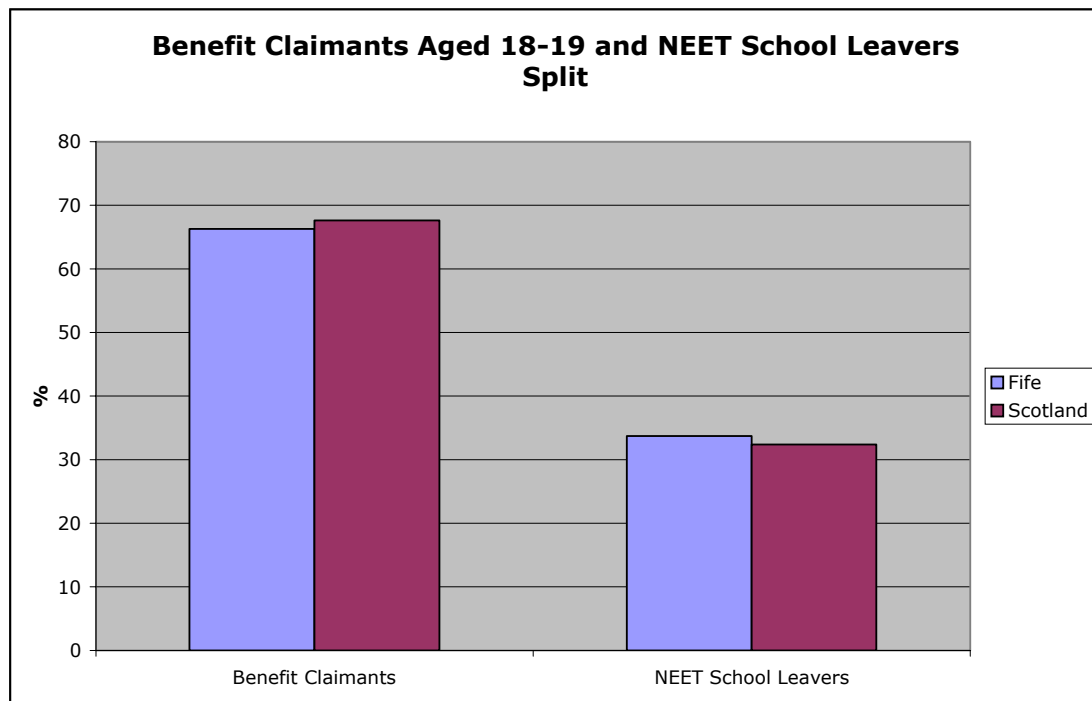
Table 1.2:16-19 year old NEET population for Fife and Scotland expressed in absolute terms and as a percentage of the 16-19 year old population, 2001-2005

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
<b>Fife</b>	2,204 (12.5%)	2,282 (12.6%)	2,273 (12.6%)	2,237 (11.9%)	1,896 (9.8%)
<b>Scotland</b>	26,703 (10.6%)	27,517 (10.8%)	28,416 (11%)	27,996 (10.6%)	25,312 (9.6%)

(Source: SLDS and DWP)

As stated above, NEET statistics are based on a combination of the SLDS data and DWP data. Using the latest August 2006 DWP data and the latest 2005/06 SLDS data, Graph 1.2 below show the split between NEET that is counted through the SLDS data and NEET that is counted through DWP data. The majority of the Fife NEET statistic is made up of 18-19 year old benefit claimants, comparable to Scotland as a whole. The figures show that approximately 66.3% of the Fife group is made up of 18-19 year old benefit claimants and, slightly more than Fife, 67.6% of the Scotland group is made up of 18-19 year old benefit claimants. Conversely, 33.7% of the Fife group is made up of school leavers and, slightly less than Fife, 32.4% of the Scotland group is made up of school leavers.

Graph 1.2: Percentage split between NEET counted through benefit claimants aged 18-19 (August 2006) and school leavers unemployed/unknown (2005/06) in Fife and Scotland



(Source: SLDS and DWP)

Table 1.3 below shows the split between NEET, counted through DWP data and the SLDS in absolute terms, as well as a percentage of the 16-19 NEET group in Fife and Scotland.

Table 1.3: Benefit claimants aged 18-19 (August 2006) and school leavers unemployed/unknown (2005/06) in Fife and Scotland expressed in absolute terms and as a percentage of the 16-19 year old NEET population

Type of NEET	Fife		Scotland	
	Total	% split	Total	% split
<b>Benefit Claimants aged 18-19</b>	1,340	66.3%	17,690	67.6%
<b>School leavers unemployed/unknown</b>	681	33.7%	8,492	32.4%
<b>TOTAL NEET</b>	2,021	100%	26,182	100%

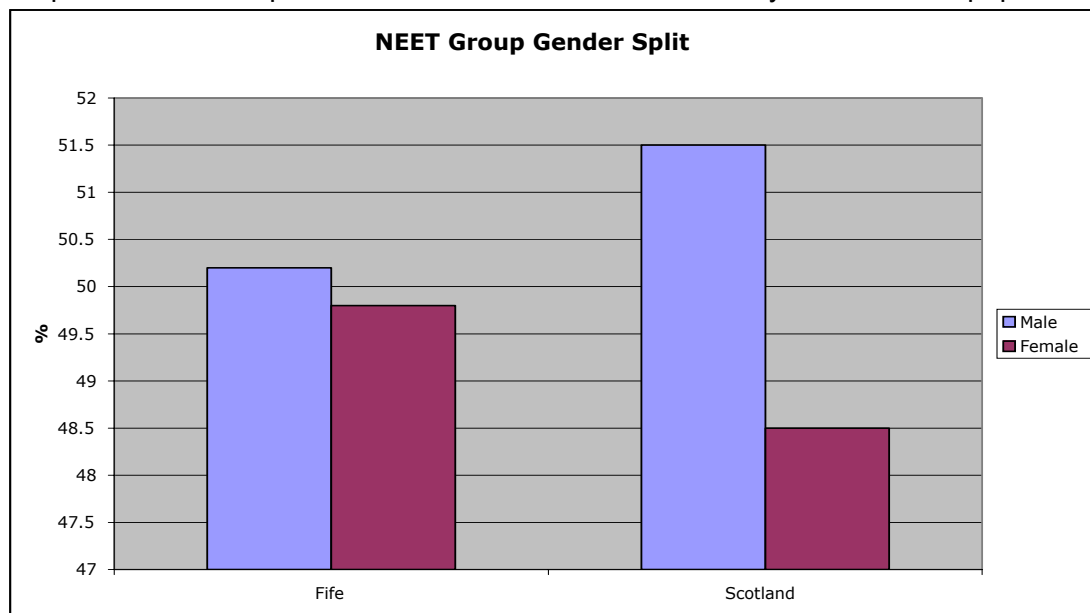
(Source: SLDS and DWP)

*Note: 2005/06 SLDS data and August 2006 DWP data is used from this point forward*

### Gender

Using the TERU methodology, there is almost an even gender split in Fife and Scotland as a whole of the NEET 16-19 year old population. In Fife, 50.2% of the NEET group is made up of males and 49.8% of the NEET group is made up of females, and, slightly less evenly, in Scotland as a whole 51.5% of the NEET group is made up of males and 48.5% of the NEET group is made up of females. See Graph 1.3 below.

Graph 1.3: Gender split for Fife and Scotland for the 16-19 year old NEET population



(Source: SLDS and DWP)

Table 1.4 below shows the gender split in absolute terms and as a percentage of the whole 16-19 year old NEET population in Fife and Scotland.

Table 1.4: Fife and Scotland NEET 16-19 year old gender balance

	<b>Males</b>	<b>Females</b>	<b>Total NEET</b>
<b>Fife</b>	1,012 (50.2%)	999 (49.8%)	2,011 (100%)
<b>Scotland</b>	13,481 (51.5%)	12,711 (48.5%)	26,192 (100%)

(Source: SLDS and DWP)

Further analysis of the make-up of the NEET group shows that there is almost an even split between male and female benefit claimants with only slightly more female benefit claimants at 51.9% and 50.7% for Fife and Scotland respectively. There are slightly more NEET male school leavers at 54.6% and 56% in Fife and Scotland respectively. See Table 1.5 below for details.

Table 1.5: Gender split between NEET school leavers and 18-19 year old benefit claimants in Fife and Scotland, expressed in absolute terms and as a percentage of the whole 16-19 year old NEET population

	<b>NEET School Leavers</b>		<b>18-19 year old Benefit Claimants</b>	
	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>Female</b>
<b>Fife</b>	372 (54.6%)	309 (45.4%)	640 (48.1%)	690 (51.9%)
<b>Scotland</b>	4,751 (56%)	3,741 (44%)	8,730 (49.3%)	8,970 (50.7%)

(Source: SLDS and DWP)

Further analysis of the 1,340 18-19 year olds claiming benefit (see Table 1.3) reveals some gender differentiation within the NEET group in Fife. Income related-benefits include Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Disability Living Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and Carers Allowance. Job Seekers Allowance is the only benefit that is paid to people who are obliged to actively look for work. By taking the people who are claiming Job Seekers Allowance alone and discounting people claiming any other kind of benefit and adding them to the NEET school leaver figure, 59% of the NEET population is counted as male, a higher proportion than the TERU figure suggests. See Table 1.6 below for details.

Table 1.6: NEET 16-19 year old gender split for Fife for NEET school leavers and JSA claimants, expressed in absolute terms and as a proportion of the whole group

	Male	Female
<b>NEET School Leavers</b>	372 (54.6%)	309 (45.4%)
<b>Job Seekers Allowance Claimants</b>	460 (63%)	270 (37%)
<b>Total NEET</b>	832 (59%)	579 (41%)

(Source: SLDS and DWP)

### School leaving profile

More Choices, More Chances (Scottish Executive, June 2006a; see Section 2.2.1 on National NEET policy) states that people who are NEET are more likely to be educationally disaffected. This makes the school leaving profile of NEET students an important part of the picture. At present, the school leaving profile of the NEET population in Fife is not captured by any existing datasets; SLDS data does not capture the stage and educational attainment of school leavers who are unemployed, or whose destination is unknown. The Scottish Executive Education Department Statistics below on attainment, attendance and exclusion rates for Fife and Scotland provide some insight.

- In the school year 2005/06, Fife secondary schools had an attendance rate of 88.3%. The equivalent rate for Scottish local authority schools was 90.4%
- There were 107 exclusions per 1,000 pupils in Fife secondary schools, compared with 114 per 1,000 for Scottish local authority schools in 2005/06
- In the school year 2004/05 the average tariff score of S4 pupils in Fife secondary schools was 165, compared to the Scotland average score of 170

These statistics reveal that Fife has a slightly lower attendance rate and tariff score relative to Scotland as a whole, although there are slightly fewer exclusions in Fife than for Scotland as a whole. Although the statistics do not prove that disaffected students go on to become NEET, the figures indicate that there is slightly more educational disaffection in Fife, relative to Scotland as a whole, reflected in lower attendance and lower average tariff scores; this could be a contributing factor to the level of NEET in Fife.

## Socio-economic background

More Choices, More Chances states that people who are NEET are more likely to be disadvantaged in some way. SNS data provides an insight into the socio-economic background of the NEET group in Fife. Table 1.7 below shows the top ten areas with the highest level of 16-19 year olds claiming income related benefits. The socio-economic background of claimants can be attained by measuring these areas against the 2004 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) data zone ranking table. The SIMD table is compiled using six deprivation indicator types: current income, employment, health, education, skills and training, geographical access and telecommunications, and housing. All the areas, with the exception of Leven West that narrowly misses, contain areas that are among the 20% most deprived in Fife, and eight of the ten areas, with the exception of Leven West and Wemyss, contain areas that are among the 20% most deprived in Scotland.

Table 1.7: Top ten areas within Fife with the highest proportion of 16-19 year olds claiming workless benefits, 2005

Area	Number claiming	% of population aged 16 to 19
Kirkcaldy Linktown and Seafield	45	29.8
Dunfermline Abbeyview North	50	22.9
Methil Methilhill	55	21.2
Glenrothes Auchmuty	30	20.5
Leven West	25	20.2
Methil East	40	19.2
Kirkcaldy Templehall East	60	19
Glenrothes Macedonia and Tanshall	55	18.3
Methil West	20	17.9
Wemyss	20	17.2

(Source: SNS)

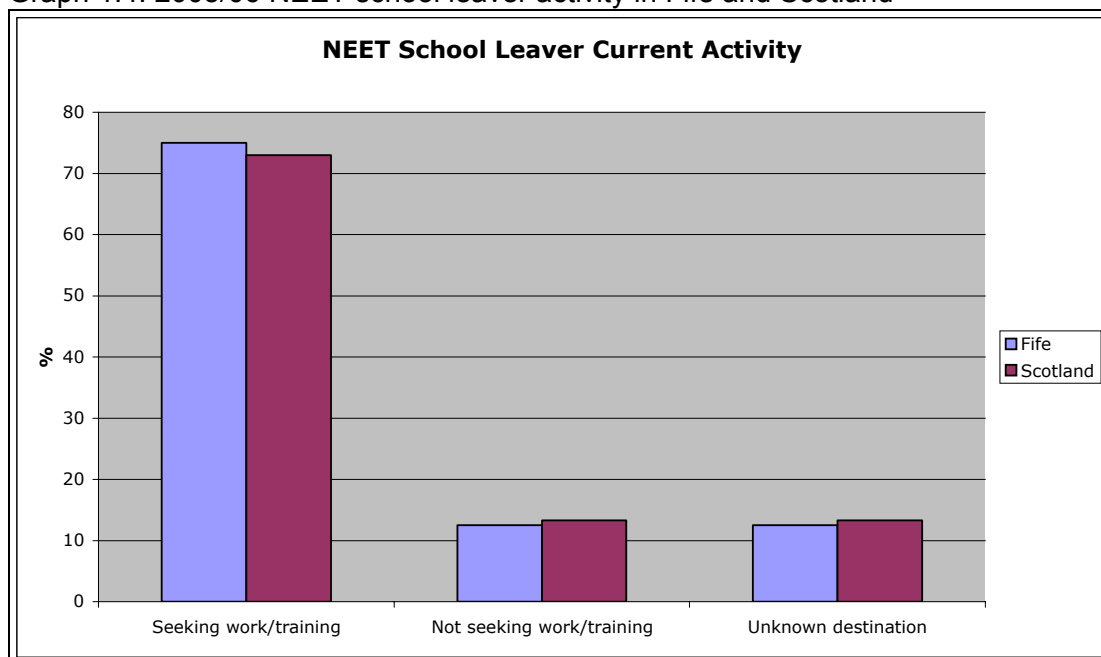
Two other significant socio-economic groups highlighted in More Choices, More Chances as being more likely to become NEET are care leavers and young offenders. Scottish Executive Looked After Children Statistics reveal that in 2005/06 207 young people left care in Fife. As with the school-leaving profile of young NEET people, no data set captures care leavers that have become NEET, and the figure provides only an indication of the scale of care leavers in Fife. Scottish Executive Prison Statistics reveal that in 2005/2006, 245 young offenders were released from custodial sentences in Fife. Again, no data set captures young NEET people who are ex-offenders and the figure provides only an indication of the scale of young offenders in Fife.

## Current activity

The 2005/06 school-leaver destination figures show that the majority of NEET school leavers are actively looking for work and training. The figures for Fife and Scotland are similar: 75% of Fife school leavers and 73% of Scottish

school leavers are actively looking for work and training; 12.5% of Fife school leavers and 13.3% of Scottish school leavers are not seeking work or training; and 12.5% of Fife school leavers and 13.3% of Scottish school leavers have an unknown school-leaving destination. See Graph 1.4 below for details.

Graph 1.4: 2005/06 NEET school leaver activity in Fife and Scotland



(Source: SLDS)

The majority, approximately 66.3%, of the Fife NEET 16-19 population (see Table 1.3 above) is made up of people claiming income-related benefits; further analysis of the statistical groups claiming benefits provides important insight into the NEET group's current activity. Table 1.8 below shows a breakdown of the statistical groups making up the wider benefit claimant NEET group in Fife.

Table 1.8: 18-19 year old benefit claimants in Fife and Scotland by benefit statistical group

Benefit Statistical Group	Fife	
	Number	% Split
<b>Job Seekers</b>	730	54.9%
<b>Incapacity Benefit</b>	230	17.3%
<b>Lone Parent</b>	190	14.3%
<b>Disabled</b>	100	7.5%
<b>Other</b>	60	4.5%
<b>Carer</b>	20	1.5%
<b>Total</b>	1,330	100%

(Source: DWP)

*Note: Caseload figures have been rounded to the nearest ten*

Over half of the claimants, 54.9%, are job seekers who are physically and mentally able to work. The remaining 55.1% of the group are eligible for benefits that provide clues to the various circumstances of young people within the NEET group.

A total of 330 or 24.8% of the claimant group is made up of disabled people or people on incapacity benefit, that is people who have physical disabilities or mental health problems. A total of 190 or 14.3% of the claimant group is made up of lone parents; all individuals within this subgroup are recorded as female. Finally, carers account for 20 or 1.5% of the claimant group.

### **2.1.2 The Fife economy**

Intrinsically linked to the NEET issue is employment and the opportunities available to young people. Subsection 2.1.2 examines the Fife economy at an aggregate and local area level and the potential progression routes for people who are NEET.

#### **Fife aggregate level**

Table 1.9 below shows a breakdown of industry in Fife and Scotland into the three industry sectors: primary industries (agriculture, forestry and fishing); secondary industries (production and construction); and tertiary industries (the services). The majority of Fife industry, 78%, is in the service sector; this is slightly below the service sector proportion for Scotland as a whole, which stands at 81%. Approximately 20% of industry in Fife is in the secondary sector, which is slightly above the national proportion of 17%. Further analysis shows that Fife is more dependent on manufacturing than Scotland as a whole, with 15% of Fife employees working in manufacturing compared to 10% of employees in Scotland as a whole. Primary industries make up 1% of the Fife economy; this is below the proportion for Scotland as a whole, which stands at 2%.

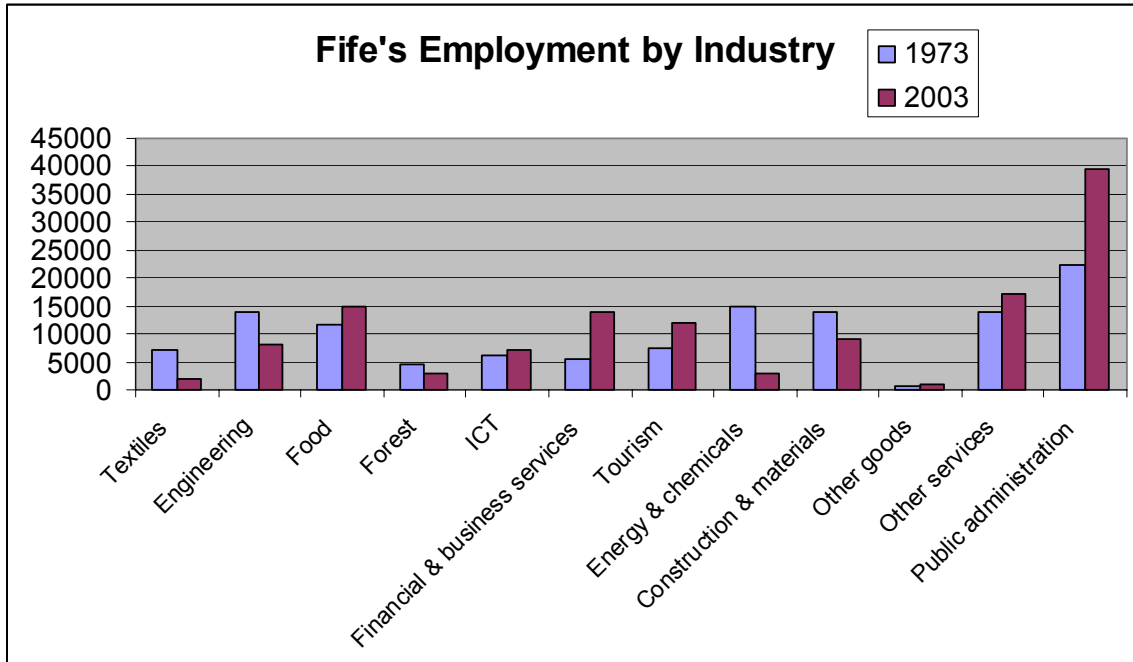
Table 1.9: Number and proportion of employee jobs by industry, 2004

Industrial group	Fife		Scotland	
	No. (000s)	Percentage	No. (000s)	Percentage
<b>All industries</b>	<b>137.3</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>2,331</b>	<b>100%</b>
Agriculture, forestry & fishing	2.0	1%	36	2%
<b>Production &amp; construction total</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>17%</b>
Energy & water	1.0	1%	37	2%
Manufacturing	20.8	15%	236	10%
Construction	5.7	4%	127	5%
<b>Services total</b>	<b>107.7</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>1,895</b>	<b>81%</b>
Retail & wholesale & hotels	30.8	22%	542	23%
Transport & communication	6.4	5%	127	5%
Finance and business	18.6	14%	419	18%
Other services	52.0	38%	806	35%

(Source: Annual Business Inquiry)

Graph 1.5 below provides a breakdown of industry in Fife in 1973 and 2003. The make-up of the Fife economy has changed over the last 30 years or so, with the emphasis shifting from production and manufacturing to service-type industries. Industries that have contracted considerably since 1973 are textiles, engineering, energy & chemicals, and construction & materials. Industries that have expanded considerably since 1973 are food, financial & business services, and tourism. Public sector administration in Fife has increased significantly and has experienced the largest expansion in absolute terms.

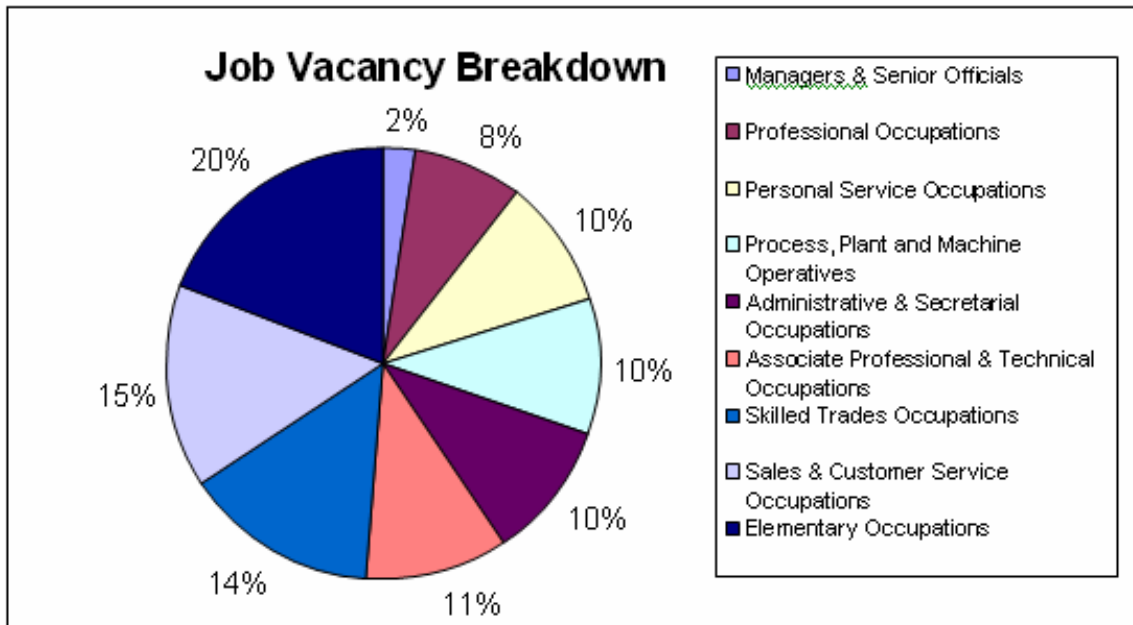
Graph 1.5: Breakdown of Fife's industry, 1973 and 2003



(Source: Scottish Enterprise Fife)

Job Centre vacancies provide further insight into the types of jobs available in Fife. Graph 1.6 below shows a breakdown of job vacancies advertised in Fife jobcentres in July 2006. It should be noted that not all jobs are advertised in jobcentres and some occupational classifications may be under-represented. Also, job vacancies fluctuate and the data provided in Graph 1.6 provides only a snapshot of the situation in July 2006.

Graph 1.6: Jobcentre vacancies broken down by occupational classification, July 2006



(Source: Jobcentre Vacancies dataset, NOMIS)

Jobcentre vacancies are broken down by occupational classification. Occupational classifications cut across industries and employment sectors and this limits how helpful the data is for providing an insight into specific industries where there are potential career opportunities. However, occupational classifications do provide an indication of the level of qualification and skill required to perform an occupation, and industries that are likely to relate to occupations can sometimes be inferred. Classifications are placed loosely in a hierarchical order, ranging from occupations that usually require no or low level qualifications to occupations that usually require high level qualifications. At the lower end of the scale, 'low' level qualification occupations are sales and customer service occupations; process, plant and machine operative occupations; and elementary occupations. Next are 'medium' level qualification occupations, these being administrative and secretarial occupations; skilled trade occupations; and personal service occupations. Occupations requiring 'high' level qualifications are managers and senior official, professional occupations, and associate professionals and technical occupations. Table 1.10 below lists the nine occupational classification types, their associated level of qualification, and examples of occupations for each classification type.

Table 1.10: Occupational classification system and associated level of qualification and example occupations

<b>Level of qualification</b>	<b>Classification</b>	<b>Example occupations</b>
High (Approx. SCQF Levels 9 and above)	Managers and senior officials	Directors, senior government officials, senior police officers, ICT managers, hospitality managers and proprietors
	Professional occupations	Scientists, accountants, teachers, solicitors, architects, librarians, social workers
	Associate professionals and technical occupations	Laboratory technicians, media professionals, nurses, train drivers
Medium (Approx. SCQF Levels 4 to 8)	Administrative and secretarial occupations	Local government clerical assistants, credit controllers, insurance clerks, receptionists
	Skilled trades occupations	Electricians, bricklayers, plumbers, chefs, weavers, butchers, florists
	Personal service occupations	Nursing auxiliaries, classroom assistants, hairdressers, travel agents, caretakers
Low: (Approx. SCQF Levels 3 and below)	Sales and customer service occupations	Till operators, telesales staff, call centre staff, market traders, window dressers
	Process, plant and machine operatives	Machine operators, drivers, assembly line workers, sewing machinist, scaffolder
	Elementary occupations	Labourers, cleaners, security guards, postal workers, bar staff, shelf stackers, waiters

(Source: 2000 Standard Occupational Classification system)

Vacancies advertised in Fife jobcentres in July 2006 were fairly evenly split between the nine occupational classifications. Six of the occupational classifications had between 10% and 15% of all vacancies. Outliers were elementary occupations, at 20%, and managers and senior officials, and professional occupations at 2% and 8% respectively.

The largest proportion of vacancies, at 45%, was for occupations that usually require no or low level qualifications. Within this grouping, the largest proportion was for elementary occupations, followed by sales and customer service occupations, and then process, plant and machine operatives. Sales and customer service vacancies suggest that there are entry level jobs within the retail and customer service sector; and process, plant and machine operative vacancies suggest that there is employment within the construction and manufacturing sector.

Approximately 34% of vacancies were for medium qualification type occupations, the highest proportion within this grouping was for skilled trade occupations, then personal service occupations, and then administrative and secretarial occupations. These occupational classifications span a number of industries; however, it can be inferred that there is employment for people with vocational qualifications.

The vacancies that require the highest level of qualification had the lowest proportion of overall vacancies at 21%; however, these vacancies represent occupations that are the least realistic to the majority of the NEET group.

### Local area level

The economic profile in Fife differs between regions. An indicator of the economic situation in an area is the number of people claiming unemployment benefit. Table 1.11 below shows the number of 18-24 year olds claiming benefit in the five Fife Scottish parliamentary constituencies. The table shows that Central Fife has the highest number of young people claiming benefit, followed by Dunfermline East, then Kirkcaldy, then Dunfermline West, and then North East Fife with the lowest number of claimants. Each area is looked at in more detail below.

Table 1.11: Fife regions, associated settlements and number of 18-24 years olds unemployed, July 2006

Region	Main settlements	No of 18-24 unemployed
Central Fife	Buckhaven, Methil, Leven, Kennoway, Windygates, Markinch, Glenrothes, Leslie	640
Dunfermline East	Dalgety Bay, Inverkeithing, Lochgelly, Cowdenbeath, Kelty	550
Kirkcaldy	Burntisland, Kinghorn, Kirkcaldy, Dysart, Thornton	550
Dunfermline West	Dunfermline, Limekilns, Oakley, Valleyfield, Cairneyhill, Crossgates/Halbeath, Rosyth, Kincardine	360
North East Fife	Lower Largo, St Monans, Anstruther, Crail, St Andrews, Newport, Cupar, Auchtermuchty	165

(Source: Claimant Count data set, NOMIS)

### Central Fife

The high number of 18-24 year old benefit claimants in Central Fife indicates that it is an area with economic problems. Analysis of the Central Fife

economy reveals that it is more dependent on manufacturing industries relative to the rest of Fife, and approximately 21.5% of industry in Central Fife is in manufacturing compared to 15% for Fife as a whole (see Table 1.9). Within Central Fife, there is a divide between the Levenmouth area, which takes in Buckhaven, Methil, Leven, Kennoway and Windyates; and the Glenrothes area, which takes in Glenrothes, Markinch and Leslie. The Levenmouth area and the Glenrothes area are looked at individually below.

The Levenmouth area was traditionally an area with coal mining, large-scale manufacturing and port-related industries; these industries have subsequently declined or have gone altogether. Levenmouth contains some of the most deprived areas in Fife and, according to the SIMD 2006 employment domain league table, five of the top ten most economically deprived areas in Fife are in Levenmouth.

Analysis of major employers in Levenmouth gives insight into the local economy. Of the 21 major commercial employers employing more than 100 people in Central Fife, four of them are in the Levenmouth area (Fife Council Development Services, July 2006). One of these, a customer call centre company, is a service sector employer. The remaining three major employers are manufacturing companies producing beverages, engineering-related products, and metallic coatings and pigments products.

The Glenrothes area was traditionally an area with paper-making and coal mining industries, which have declined or, in the case of coal mining, gone altogether. Analysis of major commercial employers in Central Fife shows that Glenrothes has fared better than Levenmouth and has 17 major commercial employers in the area (Fife Council Development Services, July 2006 snapshot). One of these, an online retail company, is from the service sector. Glenrothes also has the Kingdom Shopping Centre, which provides significant employment within the retail sector. Outwith the commercial sector, Fife Council has its main offices in Glenrothes and the Adam Smith College has its joint main campus in Glenrothes.

Most major commercial employers are construction- and manufacturing-related, with a significant proportion of manufacturing in the new area of electronics. Other goods produced in the area are paper, engineering/construction-related products, timber, roof windows, and industrial trucks and trolleys.

### West Fife

West Fife takes in the Dunfermline East, Dunfermline West and Kirkcaldy Scottish parliamentary constituencies. West Fife was once an area of manufacturing (particularly textiles), heavy manufacturing, and mining. Today, manufacturing has declined and mining no longer exists; the effects of mine closures in the area are still felt to this day and the ex-mining communities of Ballingry and Lochgelly remain two of top ten most economically deprived areas in Fife (SIMD 2006).

Today, the service sector in West Fife makes up 82.3% of all industry; this is above the service sector proportion for Fife as a whole, which stands at 78% (see Table 1.9). This is reflected in the make-up of major commercial employers employing more than 100 people in West Fife. Of the 40 major commercial employers (Fife Council Development Services, September 2006 snapshot), many of them are service sector employers, such as finance companies in the Dunfermline area, private nursing agencies in Kirkcaldy, and call centre companies in Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy. Other major employers are in printing and publishing, cleaning and environmental services and corporate hospitality. There is also a number of large distribution and packaging companies; Kirkcaldy is the main shopping destination in Fife and there are a significant number of people employed in retail and distribution in the area. Outwith the commercial sector, other major employers in West Fife are the Adam Smith College, Lauder College and the Jobcentre Plus.

Manufacturing is still important to the West Fife economy, albeit less so than in the past, and approximately 17.7% of industry in West Fife is in manufacturing and construction. Many of the 40 major commercial employers in West Fife are manufacturing and construction companies; goods produced by major employers in West Fife are ships/ship-related, windows, gas and oil, chemical products, food and drink, floor cloth, furniture, healthcare products, engineering/construction-related products, electronics, and telecommunication products. Utility providers of electricity and water are also major employers.

Another major source of employment in West Fife is the City of Edinburgh. West Fife is in close proximity to Edinburgh and a large number of people resident in West Fife out-commute to Edinburgh for employment in its finance and business, and other sectors.

### North East Fife

The lowest number of 18-24 year old unemployment benefit claimants is in North East Fife (see Table 1.11) and this indicates that the area has fewer economic problems relative to the rest of Fife. North East Fife is less industrial than Central and West Fife and is made up of numerous smaller population settlements, with St Andrews and Cupar being the largest settlements. Many people live in North East Fife out-commute, indicating that it is more residential than a place for employment. Traditional industries associated with the area are farming and fishing and, in the past, mining.

Approximately 83.3% of industry in North East Fife is in the service sector, a higher proportion than any other area of Fife. Of the ten major commercial employers employing over 100 people in North East Fife, four of these are service sector employers (Fife Council Development Services, September 2006 snapshot); three tourism/hospitality related-businesses; and one supplier of linen and bathroom hygiene equipment to hotels and offices. Other major service sector employers are St Andrews University, Elmwood College in Cupar and the RAF Leuchars Air Force Base. Fife Council also employs a number of people in the main North East Fife office in Cupar.

Tourism is important to the area and there are many small-tourism related businesses.

Out with the service sector, farming and fishing are important to the local economy, this is reflected in the fact that two of the major employers in North East Fife produce fruit and vegetables. The remaining four major commercial employers are manufacturing and construction employers; the goods they produce are oats, paper, and textiles.

## **2.2 NEET policy**

Section 2.2 turns to the policy literature and examines national and local policies and strategies for tackling NEET. Section 2.2 is split into two sub-sections. Section 2.2.1 examines national NEET policy and ways in which NEET policy links to other national policies. Section 2.2.2 examines local NEET strategy in Fife, and the steps being employed by local government to tackle NEET at a local level. It should be noted that the policies described in this section were implemented by the previous administration that changed in May 2007.

### **2.2.1 National NEET policy**

The Scottish Executive publication, *More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland* (June 2006a), highlights the problem of NEET in Scotland and promotes the eradication of NEET as a national priority.

*More Choices, More Chances* outlines a national strategic action plan for tackling the NEET problem in Scotland. Five areas for action are included in the plan, these being:

- Pre-16
- Post-16
- Financial incentives
- The right support
- Joint commitment and action

These five areas for action are summarised below (see Appendix 1 for full details).

The 'pre-16' area for action relates to interventions for potentially NEET young people during their compulsory secondary school years. The establishment of a curriculum, that is flexible to learner needs, motivates learners and develops the employability of learners, is highlighted. Strategies around the inclusion of learners with additional support and social needs, the promotion of guidance in schools, dissemination of good practice between schools, and the professional development of secondary school teachers is also outlined.

The 'post –16' area for action relates to interventions to prevent school leavers becoming NEET. The action plan outlines a strategy for guaranteeing options for all school leavers and supporting transition from school to employment, education and training.

The 'financial incentives' area for action outlines monetary-related strategies to reduce NEET. Strategies for providing financial incentives for 16 -17 year olds who are either NEET, or are in low-skilled employment, are set out. Also, action to evaluate the impact of Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs, see Section 2.3.1 below) for school pupils is outlined.

'The right support' area for action highlights the need for NEET people to be given the right help. The plan outlines a strategy of intensive one-to-one support from key workers. This area also looks at building the skills and employability focus of service providers that deal with people who are NEET, or potentially NEET.

The area of 'joint commitment and action' focuses on research, target-setting and partnership-working. The action plan highlights the need for further research into the NEET group to gain a better understanding of the group's characteristics and needs. National and local targets are set out, and the development of local action plans, devised locally and in partnership with stakeholder agencies, is outlined.

### Links to other policies

The eradication of NEET links to a number of national policies. A recent literature review commissioned by the Scottish Executive (York Consulting Limited, 2005) provides an overview of the over-arching policy context relating to the NEET group. The policy links highlighted in More Choices, More Chances and the Scottish Executive literature review are summarised below.

National school education policy is set out in A Curriculum for Excellence (Scottish Executive, 2004b) and Ambitious, Excellent Schools (Scottish Executive, 2004a). A Curriculum for Excellence sets out a curriculum that is flexible to learner needs, motivates learners and develops the employability of learners. Ambitious, Excellent Schools sets out an agenda to raise ambition among young people and provide young people with the knowledge, skills, and self-confidence to fulfil their potential.

Workforce Plus (Scottish Executive, June 2006b) provides an action plan to increase the number of people in sustained employment in Scotland by 30,000 by 2007, and by 66,000 by 2010. The action plan in Workforce Plus sets targets for more partnership-working between employability service providers.

The Framework for Economic Development in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2000 and September 2004) covers the economic development of Scotland and includes learning provision policy. In particular, it emphasises incentives

to learn, including financial incentives. It commits to the further development of the skills of people who are currently marginalised within the labour market. Policy interventions include EMAs and vocational intermediate Modern Apprenticeship (MAs, see Section 2.3.2 below) qualifications.

A Smart Successful Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2001) outlines Scotland's economic strategy, and emphasises the need for the Scottish workforce to be efficient and highly skilled. The strategy includes an aim to reduce the size of the NEET group and recognises the importance of including disabled, ethnic minority, older, disaffected and disadvantaged members of the community in the workforce; this links with statistics outlined in Section 2.1.1, which reveal that there are disabled and disadvantaged sub-groups within the NEET 16-19 year old population in Fife.

Life Through Learning, Learning Through Life (Scottish Executive, 2003) outlines Scotland's policy to encourage a culture of lifelong learning. The publication outlines commitments to funding learning, and the further development of MAs, as well as clarifying the role of learndirect Scotland and Careers Scotland. The reduction in the proportion of 16-19 year olds who are NEET is one of six 'high-level' indicators to assess the progress of the Lifelong Learning Strategy and is included in delivery priorities for Careers Scotland.

The Beattie Report: Implementing Inclusiveness Realising Potential (Scottish Executive, 1999) relates to creating better learning and work opportunities for young people. The main aim set out by the report is for all young people upon leaving school, whatever their circumstances, to have access to adequate and appropriate learning provision within an environment that matches their needs, abilities and aspirations. National policies included in the report are: the establishment of inclusiveness policies in all Local Enterprise Companies and Careers Scotland; the extension of disability statements to Further Education providers; and improved local strategic working and partnership between learner agencies in order to aid transition.

Closing the Opportunity Gap (Scottish Executive, May 2006) is an approach used to reduce inequality in opportunity. Key objectives were announced in July 2004 which included the piloting of EMAs, the creation of a Careers Scotland target for reducing NEET 16-19 year olds, increasing the number of students subject to fee waivers, and increased provision of childcare support for students. The approach is specifically targeted at those facing greatest financial hardship and disadvantage.

Social Justice ...a Scotland Where Everyone Matters (Scottish Executive, November 1999) is a strategy that set out 'social justice targets and milestones' for the implementation of social justice in Scotland. Key provisions include a commitment to ensure that every 16-19 year old leaves school with the maximum qualifications possible. The strategy is also committed to halving the number of 16-19 year olds who are NEET.

### 2.2.2 Local NEET policy

Following on from national strategy for all Local Authorities to take action on NEET, Fife Council set up the Fife NEET Action Plan Group and in December of 2006 produced a strategy for halving the number NEET young people in Fife. The Fife NEET Action Group is led by Fife Council Community Services and is made up of a consortium of stakeholder agencies; these agencies are Fife Council's Education Service, Social Work Service, Development Service and Housing Service; West Fife Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise Fife, Lauder College (they were representing all Fife colleges), Jobcentre Plus and Careers Scotland.

The group's Strategic Action Plan 2006-2008: Agenda for Action to Tackle NEET in Fife (14-19 years) describes five areas for action, these being:

- Audit of activity
- Mapping of service delivery
- Local entitlement
- Labour market
- Training development and capacity building

Each action within each area has been appointed a lead agency and deadline to take the strategy forward over the next two years. The five areas are summarised below (see Appendix 2 for full details of actions and lead agencies).

The 'audit of activity' area for action relates to improving the intelligence of the scale and characteristics of the Fife NEET 14-19 year old group, and its subgroups, through better tracking. The rationale for this is that tracking provides an accurate baseline to measure progress against, and provides intelligence for, the targeting of interventions and support for young NEET people.

The 'mapping of service delivery' area for action relates to comprehensively identifying the multiple agencies that are involved in NEET, and establishing the relationships between these agencies. The rationale for mapping service delivery is that it provides a better understanding of agency relationships, and enables the identification of overlap and gaps to inform the better targeting of resources.

The 'local entitlement' area for action looks at the actual measures that are in place to combat NEET, and what needs to be done to ensure that all young people can access suitable services. Also, in anticipation of the new Fife Energy Park in Levenmouth, the strategy includes the establishment of a partnership pilot initiative in the area to support young people in making the transition to employment in this new industry.

The 'labour market' area for action relates to gaining an improved understanding of the needs of the labour market in terms of what skill sets employers are looking for, and what opportunities exist. Action includes

building partnerships with employers to create more opportunities for young people, and to gain better intelligence for matching of clients to opportunity.

The 'training development and capacity building' area for action looks at improving service delivery through the promotion of partnership-working. The rationale for this is that by agencies working in partnership, there is more scope for improving knowledge of employability options and sharing good practice, and hence a more responsive service for users.

## **2.3 NEET measures**

Section 2.3 outlines measures that are in place to tackle NEET. Measures can be distilled into two categories: NEET prevention measures and NEET reduction measures. Section 2.3 is divided into two subsections. Section 2.3.1 outlines NEET prevention measures implemented in schools that aim to prevent pre-16 progression to NEET status; section 2.3.2 outlines NEET reduction measures that aim to provide progression routes to employment and training for post-16s who have progressed to NEET status.

### **2.3.1 Pre-16: NEET prevention**

A mapping exercise was carried out in five Fife schools to attain an overview of measures that are currently being implemented to prevent NEET. NEET prevention measures have been categorised into measures that are targeted directly at potentially NEET pupils, and indirect measures that are targeted at all pupils. The most common situation was for an activity to exist in one, or some, schools rather than in all five schools.

#### **Direct NEET prevention measures**

Table 1.12 below provides an overview of school practices and programmes that are targeted specifically at potentially NEET pupils. Each measure is described briefly in turn below for further clarity.

Table 1.12: Direct NEET prevention measures

Type of measure	Specific measure
Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information gathering</li> <li>• One-to-one support</li> <li>• Meetings</li> <li>• Parent liaison</li> </ul>
Programmes	<b>Alternative curriculum programmes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skills for Work courses</li> <li>• Prince's Trust xl</li> <li>• The Duke of Edinburgh Award</li> <li>• June Start Programme</li> <li>• Access courses</li> <li>• Non-mainstream units</li> </ul>
	<b>Non-accredited programmes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pathways programme</li> <li>• College Review programme</li> <li>• Careers Scotland programmes</li> <li>• In-house programmes</li> <li>• LIFT-OFF programmes</li> <li>• Extended work placements</li> </ul>

## Practices

### Information gathering

Guidance staff identify pupils who are potentially NEET. How systematically this is done varies between schools. Usually the lowest attaining percentage in a year group is identified, although some schools take a number of factors into account such as behaviour and home circumstances. Sometimes schools liaise with primary schools to identify potentially NEET pupils before they make the transition to secondary school. Guidance staff are then able to use the information to pinpoint pupils that require closer monitoring/intervention.

Guidance staff continue to identify pupils throughout secondary school to 'catch' pupils whose circumstances have changed and subsequently require closer monitoring/intervention. This is done partly through regular Care and Welfare in-service training days, which provide training on identifying pupils who have become potentially NEET, and on the procedure for referring pupils onto guidance staff.

### One to one support

Guidance staff provide one-to-one support to the most disaffected pupils. The aim of providing one-to-one support is to increase the chances of pupils achieving qualifications while in school. Support activities include mentoring pupils with coursework, providing them with pens and other stationery, and reminding them to go in to school on the morning of an exam.

Careers Scotland work closely with guidance staff in schools to provide support for potentially NEET pupils. Pupils receive individual case conferencing, which aims to: produce a career action plan; encourage and support pupils with taking goals forward after they have been set; and address any barriers that may arise.

Careers Scotland Key Workers also provide one-to-one support for pupils. Key workers work with pupils on an individual and personal basis, for example, escorting individual pupils on visits to college. Key workers liaise with learning support staff in colleges to ensure that pupils choosing to go to college have the necessary support in place when they arrive.

### Meetings

A series of 'plan and review' type meetings between pupils and guidance staff takes place on a regular basis. Meetings cover attainment target-setting and transition from school.

In terms of attainment, target-setting meetings initially entail setting targets with pupils by looking at current grades and potential for improvement. Subsequent meetings check progress and realign targets accordingly. The initial aim of target-setting is to get pupils to recognise where they can improve. Target-setting also aims to develop organisational skills; by looking at all subjects together, pupils recognise the need to timetable study and revision. Meetings highlight to pupils that they are being monitored, and this in itself can increase motivation; senior pupils may receive an EMA bonus (see below) for reaching targets, which can also be a motivating factor.

In terms of transition from school, guidance staff (in conjunction with Careers Scotland) have meetings with pupils and parents to discuss school-college options, such as the Skills for Work programme and the June Start Programme (see below). They also discuss when it would be appropriate for a pupil to leave school, and what options and support are available for making the transition from school. The aim of these meetings is to provide pupils with the most appropriate education while in school, and provide them with support for making a successful transition to employment or further education.

### Parent liaison

Schools use a number of strategies to build up and maintain relationships with parents. These are summarised below.

- Parents are invited to review meetings to discuss school-college options (see Skills for Work and June Start Programme below)
- Parents must attend case review meetings involving social workers for pupils with behavioural or other social problems
- Home visits through home-school link officers to engage parents who refuse to go into the school

## Programmes

There are a number of programmes in schools, specifically targeted at potentially NEET pupils.

### Alternative curriculum programmes

An alternative curriculum entails practical-based programmes that focus on developing skills. The aim of providing an alternative curriculum is to re-engage pupils in learning by meeting needs not met by mainstream programmes.

Pupils engaging in the alternative curriculum take a reduced number of Standard Grade subjects; this alone means that they are more likely to cope and continue attending school. In some schools, the choice of Standard Grade subjects is restricted; for example, French and certain technology subjects are restricted because these tend to be the subjects that potentially NEET pupils find the least engaging. The time that is freed up is used to deliver alternative programmes, as summarised below.

- Skills for Work courses

Currently under piloting are Skills for Work courses; these are vocational courses aimed at developing the technical skills required to work within a vocational area. College staff deliver Skills for Work courses in a number of areas, such as hairdressing and construction engineering. Careers Scotland play a liaison role in promoting the courses in schools as an option choice to pupils and their parents.

- The Prince's Trust xl Programme

The Prince's Trust xl Programme is a personal development programme that aims to motivate and re-engage pupils in education. The key areas covered in the programme are personal, interpersonal and teamwork skills, citizenship and community awareness, entrepreneurship and enterprise activities, and preparation for employment and training.

- The Duke of Edinburgh Award

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is a personal and social development programme. To achieve the award, participants take part in community work, a physical recreational activity, a practical skill activity, and organising an expedition.

- June Start Programme

The June Start Programme is targeted at Christmas Leavers and allows them to study part-time at college during their last few months in school. The programme aims to introduce pupils to college life and prepare them to go onto NQ or HN level study. The programme encompasses a range of

introductory courses for various subject areas, such as Art and Design, and Business Studies. Pupils are referred to the programme via school guidance staff.

- Access Courses

Access Courses entail mainstream subjects at an Access level. As well as meeting the needs of pupils, Access Courses aim to keep pupils engaged by keeping them in mainstream subjects. The rationale for this is that non-mainstream subjects, such as General Science as opposed to discrete science subjects, distinguish low-attaining pupils and this can lower self-esteem and thus motivation.

- Non-mainstream units

Non-mainstream units entail skill-based learning that can be taken in place of Intermediate 1 qualifications. The units provide pupils with recognised vocational qualifications; for example, the European Computer Driving Licence programme provides pupils with a recognised IT qualification. Other units include Foods of the World, PC Passport, and Practical Performance Coaching Awards.

### Non-accredited programmes

There are a number of informal programmes that exist in schools that also aim to motivate and re-engage pupils in education (in some cases these may be used towards accredited programmes, such as the Prince's Trust xl Programme, see above).

- Pathways Programme

The Pathways Programme is a local initiative delivered by Barnardo's Levenmouth Links charity and is joint funded by Barnardos and Fife Council. The programme aims to develop skills for making the transition from school to employment. The course entails mock telephone calls and interviews, CVs, covering letters, careers talks, visits to the local opportunity centre, looking at how much jobs pay, the cost of living, and so forth.

- College Review Programme

The College Review Programme entails a number of 'taster' courses where pupils try out a different college course each week for one afternoon. Taster courses run for a number of areas, such as Art & Design and Woodcraft. The aim of the programme is to introduce pupils to college life, give them an informed idea of what they would like to study at college, and encourage them to make the transition to college.

- Careers Scotland programmes

Careers Scotland run a range of activities in schools under the Activate programme with pupils in S3 and S4. Activities aim to develop job-searching skills (see Pathways Programme above) and develop the employability skills (e.g. teamwork, motivation, time keeping and so forth) desired by employers. Careers Scotland also advise pupils on college options as an alternative to returning to school for a non-compulsory year.

- In-house programmes

Guidance staff run a number programmes that they devise themselves through contacts in the local community. Programmes usually have some kind of theme, and involve talks and practical activities in conjunction with outside agencies. The aim of in-house programmes is to promote self-esteem, health and wellbeing; in turn, it is hoped that this motivates and therefore re-engages pupils in the mainstream curriculum. A number of outside agencies were mentioned by schools:

- Royal Air Force
- Various drug agencies
- Mental health agencies (Eating disorder, self-harm related)
- Vets/Guide Dogs for the Blind Association/Search and Rescue Dog association
- Nursery schools
- Police
- Fire Brigade
- Dance studios
- Beauty- and cookery-related college departments

- LIFT OFF programmes

LIFT OFF is the schools theme of the Fife and Tayside Forum and aims to raise pupil awareness and aspirations of progression to college or university. Activities include workshops in schools and a residential week during the summer holidays. LIFT OFF targets pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds who have the potential to go to college or university, but are lacking confidence and the 'social capital' to do so. LIFT OFF differs from other NEET activities in that it does not necessarily target the lowest attaining pupils and/or pupils with behavioral problems.

- Extended work placements

Extended work placements entail long-term part-time work experience while pupils are still in school. The aim of the extended placements is for pupils to experience working life and to get pupils in the habit of going to work. Pupils may be offered employment at the end of a placement, although this is not the

main aim. Work placements are arranged directly through school contacts, or through the Fife Council's AWARE Scheme.

Extended work placements are also arranged for senior pupils that are showing signs of becoming disaffected. Senior pupils are encouraged to use free periods in their timetables to take up a career-related long-term work placement. Extended placements for senior pupils aim to re-motivate and re-engage them in mainstream education and working towards qualification to pursue a certain career.

### Indirect NEET prevention measures

There are also measures that are targeted at all pupils, rather than specifically at potentially NEET pupils, that also make a contribution to preventing pupil progression to NEET status. Table 1.13 below provides an overview of indirect practices and programmes. Each measure is described briefly in turn below for further clarity.

Table 1.13: Indirect NEET prevention measures

Type of measure	Specific measure
Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parent liaison</li> <li>• Primary school liaison</li> <li>• Post school destination information gathering</li> <li>• College prospectus distribution</li> <li>• Study support classes</li> <li>• Non-academic school prize giving</li> <li>• Drama classes</li> <li>• Prefect system</li> <li>• Anti-bullying policy</li> <li>• Assembly</li> </ul>
Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Education programmes</li> <li>• Enterprise Activities</li> <li>• Work Experience Unit</li> <li>• Employer led programmes</li> <li>• Buddy system</li> </ul>

### Practices

#### Parent liaison

Schools use a number of strategies to build up and maintain relationships with parents. These are summarised below.

- Parent-staff associations
- Careers advisors being made available to speak to parents on Parents Night

- Careers conventions to give parents access to information on employment and college options

### Primary school liaison

Secondary schools maintain links with primary schools; the exact nature of these links varies between schools. Links entail:

- Talks by secondary school staff in primary schools to instil the idea of planning ahead at an early stage
- Visits by primary school pupils to secondary school. The aim of these visits is to prepare pupils for life at secondary school and allay any fears pupils may have about progression to secondary school

### Post-school destination information gathering

Information is gathered on post-school destinations for former pupils. This raises awareness among staff of where pupils from a particular school go after they leave. This knowledge allows staff to take a role on a day-to-day basis in encouraging pupils to think about life after school and planning ahead.

### College prospectus distribution

Pupils in 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> year are given their own personal copy of college prospectuses. The strategy aims to increase pupil awareness of college programmes and, because prospectuses are theirs to take home, this also raises parents' awareness of college programmes.

### Study support classes

Revision/study support classes are run during lunchtime and after school. Study support classes aim to support pupils who require additional help with study and raise attainment.

### Non-academic school prize giving

Non-academic achievements are celebrated annually in a separate school prize type awards ceremony. Awards relate to non-academic achievements; for example, supporting others in the classroom. Awards aim to increase self-esteem among lower academically attaining pupils.

### Drama classes

The School of Ambition programme provided one school with funds to deliver basic Drama. The use of drama aims to raise the confidence level of pupils and encourage an interest in creative industry related college programmes.

### Prefect system

Pupils are given the opportunity to become prefects in S5 and S6 and take on the related responsibilities associated with this. The prefect system aims to provide pupils with identity and a sense of importance.

### Anti-bullying policies

Pupils are made aware of what bullying is and the procedure for reporting bullying. Active anti-bullying policies relate to NEET in that pupils are less likely to become disaffected with school because of bullying.

### Assembly

School assemblies are used to instil and promote positive messages to pupils. Assembly themes cited in the research include goal-setting, being positive, and anti-bullying.

## **Programmes**

### Social Education programmes

Social Education programmes focus on personal and social development including career planning. Career Box and The learning Game materials are used by some schools on Social Education programmes.

- Career Box materials: a series of materials that aims to make pupils self-aware and supports pupils with making realistic career decisions
- The Learning Game materials: materials that aim to promote a number of 'soft' skills; for example, being motivated, being positive, focussing on goals, and team building

### Enterprise Activities

There are a number of Scottish Executive-endorsed Enterprise in Education initiatives in schools that aim to give pupils a wide range of experiences. The aim of activities is to increase self-confidence, to motivate, and to provide an understanding of work and work opportunities. Enterprise activities are woven throughout S1-S6 and are often delivered as part of the social education programme (see above). Initiatives include:

- Food and Drink Challenge
- Make it in Scotland
- APODO motivation courses
- Young Enterprise Scotland
- Making it in Scotland

## Work Experience Unit

The Work Experience Unit entails pupils spending one to two weeks on a work placement. The unit aims to provide pupils with experience of working life and material for a CV. Pupils are encouraged and supported in setting up potential career-related work experience. Potential career-related placements aim to give pupils an informed idea of what career they would like to pursue and re-motivate pupils who require certain school qualifications to set out on a career path.

### Employer led programmes

One school delivers a programme with senior pupils in conjunction with local employer, James Donaldson Timber LTD. Donaldson's provide practice in job- searching skills such as CV writing, interview skills and so forth.

### Buddy System

The Buddy System is a certificated programme where S6 pupils support and mentor younger pupils. Participants receive training and their progress is monitored. The system aims to develop mentoring skills and give pupils a sense of importance.

## **2.3.2 Post-16: NEET reduction**

NEET reduction measures aim to provide post-16s, who are not in employment, education or training with progression routes. Table 1.14 below provides a summary of the measures that are in place for post-16s. Each measure is summarised in turn below for further clarity. For the post-16 group, Fife Council takes a leading role both strategically and as a provider/funder of various programmes. However, it should be noted that there are a number of agencies involved in referring people onto programmes and/or providing support to young NEET people, such as Fife Council's Youth Work Services, Fife Council Sensory Impairment Service, Criminal Justice Services, Social Work – day centres, Homelessness team, Working for Families, and Careers Scotland.

Table 1.14: NEET reduction programme providers and associated programmes

Provider	Example programmes
<b>National training contract training providers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get Ready for Work</li> <li>• Skillseekers</li> <li>• Modern Apprenticeships</li> </ul>
<b>Community Education</b>	Various core skills and personal development type programmes
<b>Voluntary sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The West Fife Enterprise programme</li> <li>• The FEAT programme</li> <li>• Project Scotland voluntary placements</li> <li>• The FILM programme</li> </ul>
<b>Jobcentre Plus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Deal</li> <li>• Progress 2 Work</li> </ul>

### National training contracts

National training contracts provide opportunities for young people to engage in vocational training whilst being paid to do so. There are three national training contracts: Get Ready for Work (GRFW), Skillseekers, and Modern Apprenticeships (MAs), which are summarised in turn below.

#### Get Ready for Work

The main NEET reduction initiative is the six-month GRFW programme. The main aim of the programme is to provide an access route to employment, education, or further training programmes (see Skillseekers and Modern Apprenticeships below) for young people between the ages of 16 to 18 years. There are four types or 'strands' of GRFW programme and participants are placed on the strand that is most appropriate to their needs. The four stands are 'vocational skills', 'core skills', 'personal skills' and 'life skills'. The vocational skills strand aims to develop the technical skills necessary to perform a job across a range of vocational areas. The core skills strand aims to develop basic communication, numeracy, computer, problem-solving and team-working skills. The personal skills strand aims to build participant confidence and self-esteem. Finally, the life skills strand is aimed at young people with severe personal problems who require intense guidance and support to progress to employment, education, or further training.

#### Skillseekers programmes

The Skillseekers programme takes an average of one to two years to complete and is targeted at 16 to 24 year olds. Trainees receive vocational and core skills training up to SVQ level 2 whilst in employment. Employers who have 'Skillseeker' employees are paid a subsidy in return for releasing employees for training.

## Modern Apprenticeships

Leading on from Skillseekers are MAs, which take on average two to four years to complete and are aimed primarily at 16 to 24 year olds. Trainees receive vocational and core skills training at SVQ level three and above whilst in employment. Employers who have 'MA' employees are paid a subsidy in return for releasing employees for training. Table 1.15 below shows the top ten MAs in Fife in June 2006. In June 2006 there were 1,602 16-24 year olds on MAs in Fife. Of this number, 826 of them were aged 16-18 years old.

Table 1.15: Top Ten MA Frameworks in Fife 16-24 year olds, June 2006

Framework	Number on programme
1. Construction	458
2. Engineering	208
3. Motor Vehicles	135
4. Business Administration	103
5. Electrotechnical	95
6. Hospitality	94
7. Plumbing	91
8. Hairdressing	72
9. Customer Service	46
10. Health and Social Care	42

(Source: Scottish Enterprise)

## **Community education programmes**

Community education centres provide tuition in core skills; that is basic communication, numeracy, computer, problem-solving and so forth. Community education centres also often run personal development type programmes; for example, local history classes. Although community education does not specifically aim to get people into employment or training, it can be the first step towards this.

## **Voluntary sector programmes**

There is a range of initiatives that is carried out by charitable organisations that aim to help people to progress to employment. Most initiatives are aimed at all age groups rather than at young people specifically. A selection of voluntary activities is outlined below.

### Fife Intermediate Labour Market (FILM) project

The FILM initiative is aimed at young care leavers in Fife. It is a work placement-based programme offering SVQ qualification and job specific certificates in labour market demand areas such as construction, plant, site safety and on-site services. The aim of the initiative is for participants to progress to a MA (see above).

### West Fife Enterprise

West Fife Enterprise is a community-based organisation that delivers qualifications such as the European Computer Driving Licence, and National Units in administration and performing engineering operations. The organisation also provides work experience and job-seeking skills training.

### Fife Employability Access Trust (FEAT)

FEAT is a charitable organisation that helps people with severe or long-term mental health issues into employment, education and training.

### Project Scotland

Project Scotland organise voluntary work placements that provide experience and develop skills necessary for employment.

## **Jobcentre Plus**

As well as providing an advisory service, Jobcentre Plus fund New Deal and Progress 2 Work programmes that aim to get people into employment.

### New Deal

The New Deal programme provides help and support for long-term unemployed people with finding and keeping a job. Programme participants receive individual support and guidance from a New Deal Personal Advisor.

### Progress 2 Work

The Progress 2 Work programme is an individually designed programme to support ex-drug users. The aim of the programme is for participants to gain the skills and confidence they require to access employment and/or government funded employment or training opportunities.

## **2.4 Effectiveness of NEET measures**

Section 2.4 examines the effectiveness of measures to prevent and reduce NEET. As discussed previously in Section 2.2.2, there is currently a local strategy in place for tackling NEET, which ultimately aims to improve the effectiveness of NEET measures through action within five areas (also see Appendix 2 for full strategy details); Section 2.4 moves away from strategy and examines how well specific measures are working 'on the ground'. Sources of information for Section 2.4 are findings from: a Fife NEET Action Plan Group investigation exercise (Eddy Adams Consultants Ltd with Smart Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd, November 2006), which was used to inform the Fife NEET strategy; the Scottish Enterprise Get Ready for Work National

Evaluation report (Smart Consultancy and Eddy Adams Consultants, June 2006); and primary data collected in a focus group with careers advisors from a Fife Opportunity Centre. The Action Plan Group investigation exercise mapped current provision and agencies involved in NEET and also carried out focus groups with stakeholders, these being depute head teachers, behavioural support staff, staff in Careers Scotland, training providers, Scottish Enterprise staff, young people engaged in a training programme, and a group of young care leavers. To aid analysis, measures have been split into pre-16 and post-16 measures:

### **Pre-16 measures**

In 2005/06 there was a slightly higher proportion of NEET school leavers in Fife than in Scotland as a whole (see Section 2.1.1, Graph 1.2). This suggests that NEET prevention measures in Fife are not as effective as measures implemented in the rest of Scotland. The effectiveness of individual pre-16 measures is difficult to assess as pupils often receive a 'package' of interventions and support, making it difficult to separate out the effectiveness of each component. Pre-16 measures that have been evaluated to some extent in the literature are work experience in school, the Skills for Work programme, careers and guidance support in schools (see Section 2.3.1 above for explanation of these measures), and also thematic gaps in measures have been identified. Recommendations have been listed and examined below.

- Better targeted, more relevant work experience
- Better targeted Skills for Work programmes
- Better careers advice and guidance
- Successful measures planned and consistent across schools
- More measures to target 'sleepy' potentially NEET pupils
- More measures to target the parents of potentially NEET pupils

A specific measure identified as requiring improvement is work experience in school. Research (Eddy Adams Consultants Ltd with Smart Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd, November 2006) reveals that potentially NEET pupils are less likely to engage in work experience at school and for those who do take up work experience, including mainstream pupils, the experience is thought to have little value. It has been suggested that work experience should be better targeted at potentially NEET pupils and placements should be more meaningful and relevant to a potential career path. The mapping exercise featured in Section 2.3.1 found that this is already being done in some schools, but not all.

The targeting of the Skills for Work programme has also been identified as an area for improvement. Sometimes places are taken up by 6<sup>th</sup> form pupils who engage in the programme purely for recreational purposes, having already secured a place at college or university (Eddy Adams Consultants Ltd with Smart Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd, November 2006). This could mean that

they are taking the place of potentially NEET pupils, and therefore it is recommended that a mechanism is put in place to ensure that places taken by mainstream pupils are not taken at the expense of potentially NEET pupils.

In terms of careers guidance and support in school, research carried out with young NEET people (Eddy Adams Consultants Ltd with Smart Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd, November 2006) found that respondents are often disparaging of the careers guidance they received while at school. This finding suggests that there is need for more investment in high quality careers guidance and support in schools and more one-to-one support for pupils.

There are some thematic gaps that are identified in the literature; that is measures that target a particular NEET subgroup. An overarching gap is that schools can opt out of implementing measures to reduce NEET, which has led to a situation where NEET prevention measures are random. It is recommended that successful measures should be planned and used consistently across all schools so that every pupil has the opportunity to benefit. Again, this was exemplified by the mapping exercise featured in Section 2.3.1 where there was great variation between schools in terms of what and how much they are doing to combat potential progression to NEET.

It has been recommended that there should be measures that address the so-called 'sleepy' potentially NEET pupils. There are many interventions that target 'needy' potentially NEET pupils, that is pupils who have behavioural, personal and learning difficulties; however, there are also 'sleepy' potentially NEET pupils who are not as demanding as their 'needy' counterparts, but are still at risk of becoming NEET. Again, this was exemplified by the mapping exercise featured in Section 2.3.1 where there was only one example in one school of a measure that specifically targets 'sleepy' NEET pupils.

Another thematic gap is measures that involve the parents of potentially NEET pupils. Research suggests that parents are a key influencer and pupils with disaffected parents are more likely to become NEET (see Section 4 below). Again, the mapping exercise featured in Section 2.3.1 revealed that there are very few measures, apart from meetings with parents, that target the parents of potentially NEET pupils in any of the schools surveyed.

## **Post-16 measures**

A bottom line indicator of the effectiveness of NEET measures is the number of NEET young people in Fife. Fife has a problem with NEET in that there are approximately 2,000 NEET 16-19 year olds. However, the number of NEET young people has fallen since 2003 (see Section 2.1.1, Graph 1.1) and this could be because NEET measures have made a positive impact on NEET, and potentially NEET, people. The main post-16 measure to reduce NEET is the GRFW programme. Indicators of the programme's success are the number of people participating in the programme and the rate of positive outcomes from the programme.

## Programme participants

The Scottish Enterprise national evaluation of the programme revealed that the number of 16-18 year olds participating in the programme has net increased in Fife over the last four years, from 515 starts in 2002/03 to 667 starts in 2005/06. However, the Fife proportion of all Scotland's starts has net fallen from 8.1% in 2002/03 to 7.9% in 2005/06. See Table 1.16 below for details.

Table 1.16: Total GRFW programme starts in Fife and Scotland as a whole, 2002/03-2005/06

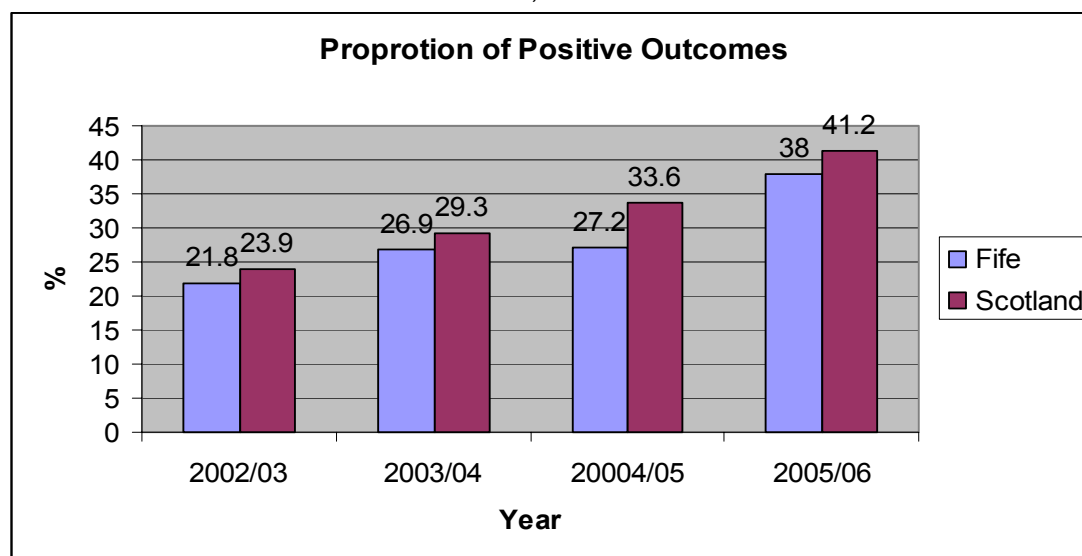
	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
<b>Fife</b>	515	8.1%	539	7.8%	733	9.2%	667	7.9%
<b>Scotland</b>	6365	100%	6916	100%	7951	100%	8425	100%

(Source: Scottish Enterprise)

## Positive outcomes

An important indicator of the programme's effectiveness is the rate of 'positive outcomes'. Positive outcomes denote participants that have gone onto FE, (a mainstream college programme of study), employment, or further training (a Skillseekers or MA programme, see Section 2.3.2 for details) upon completion of the programme. The positive outcome rate in Fife has increased steadily over the past four years from 21.8% of participants having positive outcomes in 2002/03 to 38% of participants having positive outcomes in 2005/06. However, Fife is behind Scotland as a whole, where positive outcome rates increased from 23.9% in 2002/03 to 41.2% in 2005/06. See Graph 1.7 below for details.

Graph 1.7: Proportion of GRFW programme participants that go onto a positive outcome in Fife and Scotland as a whole, 2002/03 to 2005/06



(Source: Scottish Enterprise)

Further analysis of positive outcome rates reveal that most participants go onto employment and this proportion has steadily increased over the last four years; see Table 1.17 below for details. The average positive outcome split for the last four years has been 63.9% of positive outcomes relating to employment, 19.6% of positive outcomes relating to FE, and 16.5% of positive outcomes relating to a Skillseekers programme.

Table 1.17: Positive outcome split for GRFW participants, 2002/03-2005/06

Outcome	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FE	19	17%	31	21.4%	41	20.6%	49	19.4%
Employment	66	58.9%	94	64.8%	129	64.8%	170	67.2%
Skillseekers	27	24.1%	20	13.8%	29	14.6%	34	13.4%
Total	112	100%	145	100%	199	100%	253	100%

(Source: Scottish Enterprise)

### Programme issues

There are a number of issues with the GRFW programme that has been highlighted in the literature and by primary data collected from Careers Scotland advisors. Many issues are covered in detail in the Scottish Enterprise Get ready for Work National Evaluation report. The evaluation produced 34 recommendations for improving the GRFW programme within eight areas, these being: improved targeting and clearer programme objectives; improved programme design operation and delivery; increased partnership and strategic linkages; better recording of programme impact; measures to increase positive outcomes for participants; improved quality, more efficient funding and resource allocation; and improved promotion of the programme. Details of recommendations for each area are provided in Appendix 3. While the findings from the evaluation are comprehensive, findings derived from qualitative research in the literature and primary data collected from careers advisors highlights the issues that are likely to be most pressing to service providers. Recommendations are listed and examined below.

- Changes to programme target-setting system
- Implementation of pre-GRFW programmes
- Better aftercare for programme participants
- Shorter waiting times to start programme
- Better 'fall back' options for participants
- More programme flexibility
- More innovation/longer duration for core skills type programmes
- Better guidance and advice for vocational type programme participants
- More skillseeker/MA programmes for participant progression
- Better links with employers

GRFW training providers are set targets for successfully getting individuals through the programme and there is a system of incentives and penalties linked to success or otherwise. This has resulted in instances where training providers cherry-pick individuals who are more likely to have successful outcomes, therefore meaning that young people who are less likely to have a positive outcome, for example people with learning disabilities, have more difficulties accessing the programme. It has been recommended that incentives to cherry-pick programme participants should be removed from the target-setting system.

Some participants start the GRFW programme and then withdraw because they are not able to cope with college. This indicates that there is a gap in service provision for such people. It has been recommended that the implementation of a pre-GRFW programme is required to prepare people who need support with making the transition to the GRFW programme. Equally, at the other side of the GRFW programme, there is a lack of aftercare provision for people, who have been through the programme but need further support with making the transition to employment, FE or training.

Sometimes participants have to wait a significant length of time before they can start the GRFW programme and this can mean that they get in the habit of being unemployed and subsequently face more barriers to going back into education. It has been recommended that there should be shorter waiting times to start the programme. Another similar responsiveness related issue is a lack of fallback options for participants who have started a vocational GRFW programme and, having found that it is not for them, have withdrawn and had no other option than to return to unemployment. It has been recommended that there should be 'fallback' options so people do not get in the habit of being unemployed, and also so that they do not lose confidence.

In terms of general programme content, it was thought that the GRFW programme is not flexible enough to be tailored to the individual needs of participants. It has been recommended that content should be flexible to ensure that participant needs are met. The content of core skill type GRFW programmes specifically has been criticised. The programme delivers core skills in a traditional classroom setting, a method that had failed for participants while they were at school, and therefore thought to be unlikely to be successful on the programme. Also, it was thought that six months of core skill training is unlikely to get participants to the level expected for their level of schooling. It has been recommended that core skill-type GRFW programmes should be more innovative in approach to delivering training and have a longer duration.

It was thought that sometimes participants had unrealistic ideas about the employment opportunities available to them post-programme; for example, construction-type vocational GRFW programme are popular, but participants do not always realise what construction work involves and/or the high level of qualifications required to work in the industry. It was recommended that participants should receive better advice before embarking on a vocational GRFW programme. In relation to this, apprenticeship places are scarce,

exacerbating limitations to employment opportunities further. It was recommended that there should be more Skillseekers and MA places available.

It was thought that there should be better links to employers. At present, work placements are not always with an employer; for example, sometimes customer service type GRFW programme work placements are in charity shops where there is no chance of a job at the end of the placement. It was recommended that the programme should link work placements with employers. Also, it was recommended that there should be more 'synergy' with employers, in that, where appropriate, an individual should use the same employer for work experience in school, GRFW, and mainstream college programme. This would enable young people to build up a relationship with an employer and therefore have more chance of being offered a job.

## **2.5 Conclusion**

Section 2.5 provides a conclusion in relation to the research questions set out at the start of Section 2.

- *What national and local government policies are currently in place to drive the effort to reduce the number of NEET young people?*

NEET is a hot political issue, highlighted as a top priority area by national government in the 2006 Scottish Executive publication *More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland*. *More Choices More Chances* outlines five separate NEET-related areas that require action, these being: pre-16 measures, post-16 measures, financial incentives, support services, and partnership working. *More Choices More Chances* links with a number of other economic, educational and social policies, such as *A Smart Successful Scotland*, the *Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland*, and *Closing the Opportunity Gap*.

Part of the national action plan to reduce NEET is for Local Authorities to devise their own NEET strategy in relation to their own local circumstances. In response to this, Fife Council devised an action plan that is to be rolled out over the next two years. The plan includes five areas for action, these being: tracking the NEET group in Fife; mapping service delivery in Fife; mapping measures that are in place to prevent/reduce NEET in Fife; gaining a better understanding of employers/the labour market in Fife; and promoting partnership-working in Fife.

- *What are the key agencies involved in the implementation of these policies in Fife?*

- *How are they taking forward the implementation of these policies?*
- *Is there evidence of inter-agency partnership working in the measures being taken by these agencies?*

A number of agencies are working together to implement the Fife action plan. Partner agencies are: Fife Council's Education Service, Social Work Service, Development Service, and Housing Service; West Fife Enterprise, Scottish Enterprise Fife, Lauder College, Jobcentre Plus and Careers Scotland. The action plan has a number of tasks relating to each of the five areas for action and each partner has been assigned their own task/s to take forward.

- *What facts are known about the NEET population in Fife in terms of numbers, gender, school-leaving profile, socio-economic background, and current activity?*

Using the TERU methodology, the latest statistics indicate that there were approximately 2,000 young people in Fife in 2005 who are NEET. The Fife NEET proportion is in line with the national average indicating that Fife has a problem with NEET but is not a NEET 'black spot'. Hard facts, backed up by quantitative data, reflect that the NEET group is a disparate group. There is almost an equal number of males and females within the NEET group; NEET young people are more likely to come from lower socio-economic backgrounds; and significant NEET subgroups are lone parents, people with disabilities, people with mental health problems, and carers. However, intelligence relating to the NEET group is sketchy as there is no single comprehensive data set. Current sources are likely to underestimate the true number of young NEET people and provide only a limited insight into the group's subgroups. Research suggests that significant NEET subgroups are young offenders, care leavers, people with drug and alcohol problems, and people with low educational attainment. While this appears to be the case, it is not backed up by quantitative data.

- *Is the perception that females are less likely to be NEET borne out by any evidence?*

The TERU methodology suggests that there is an almost even gender split within the NEET group. However, the TERU methodology could be perceived as misleading because it includes all 18-19 year olds claiming income-related benefits and many of these people are not obliged to look for work. A significant proportion of the non-Job Seekers Allowance benefit claimants are female; this is largely because the vast majority of lone parents claiming Income Support benefits are female and therefore their inclusion skews the TERU figure towards an almost even gender split. If all benefit claimants, apart from those claiming Job Seekers Allowance, are taken out of the TERU methodology, then there is approximately a 60:40 gender split between NEET males and females respectively.

- *What is the reality of employment opportunities for young people in Fife in areas where traditional industries have declined?*

Employment opportunities that exist in Fife are mainly in the service sector and industries that have expanded in recent years are the financial and business sectors, while tourism, food, and the public sector also employ a large number of people. Although the highest proportion of jobs are in the service sector, Fife has a significant construction and manufacturing sector and has a higher proportion of jobs in secondary industries relative to Scotland as a whole. Analysis of job centre vacancies indicates that the highest proportion of vacancies is in elementary occupations, then sales and customer service occupations and then skilled trade occupations.

Employment opportunities differ between geographical areas in Fife. Central Fife has the greatest economic problems and this is reflected in it having the highest number of unemployed 18-24 year olds. This is largely because traditional industries have gone into decline and new industries have not come along to the same extent to replace them as they have in other areas in Fife that have also experienced a decline in traditional industries.

- *What programmes currently exist in schools aimed at combating progression to NEET?*
- *What linkages exist between schools and other key influencers?*
- *Are measures in any way gender-differentiated?*

In terms of measures to prevent NEET, there are a number of practices and programmes in schools that aim to combat pupil progression to NEET. Measures that are specifically aimed at potentially NEET pupils are: practices such as gathering information to identify potentially NEET pupils to target; meetings with potentially NEET pupils and their parents to discuss transition from school; and one-to-one support for pupils with the greatest needs. In terms of programmes, there are a number of accredited alternative curriculum programmes that can be taken in place of a Standard Grade that aim to engage potentially NEET pupils in education. There are also non-accredited programmes that have a range of aims including increasing pupil confidence and wellbeing, increasing pupil awareness of college, and job-searching skills. There is also a number of indirect NEET prevention practices and programmes in schools that are aimed at all pupils. Practices range from non-academic school prize giving to anti-bullying policies and programmes including enterprise activities and work experience.

NEET prevention measures in schools are sometimes in partnership with other agencies. A major agency is Careers Scotland who provide careers advice and run programmes with potentially NEET pupils. Other agencies that are involved in delivering programmes are colleges, LIFT OFF,

employers, and charities. None of these measures is gender-differentiated in that they are available to both sexes.

- *What are the post-school progression routes for people who have become NEET?*
- *Are measures in any way gender-differentiated?*

The main national NEET reduction programme is GRFW. Participants receive either core skills, vocational, or personal/life skills training with the aim of progression onto employment, FE or further training, such as a Skillseekers programme or a MA programme. There are other programmes that contribute to reducing NEET, such as the FILM project and, for all age groups, various voluntary sector and Job Centre programmes. Again, none of these measures are gender-differentiated in that they are available to both sexes.

- *How effective are these measures?*

The fact that there are approximately 2,000 young people in Fife who are NEET suggests that measures could be more effective. The Fife NEET Action Plan Group based local NEET strategy on findings from an investigation exercise. They found that there is a lack of knowledge about the NEET group and for a better understanding and targeting of measures more research needs to be done with the group. They found that there are many service providers that are linked to the NEET group and there is a need to map service delivery to ensure that there is no overlap or gaps in support, or the availability of programmes. This is linked to promoting partnership-working between stakeholder agencies. Action is also required in relation to the labour market to ensure that there are more opportunities for young people by building up relationships with employers and gaining a better understanding of the skills that employers are looking for.

Moving away from strategy, evaluations of the actual NEET prevention and reduction programmes also give some insight into the effectiveness of measures. NEET prevention programmes tend to be ad hoc in schools and have not been evaluated to any great extent in the literature. Programmes that have been evaluated are work experience in schools, which is thought to have little impact, and careers guidance and support, which has been criticised by young people in the literature. There are also thematic gaps in that there are very few measures that target 'sleepy' NEET pupils, or the parents of potentially NEET pupils.

In terms of NEET reduction programmes, the GRFW programme has been subject to extensive evaluation. Over the last four years, positive outcomes for the programme have increased steadily in Fife, but not to the same extent as in Scotland as a whole. Primary research carried out with careers advisors and during the investigation by the Fife NEET Action Plan Group revealed a number of recommendations that stakeholders have for the programme.

These are: changes to programme target-setting system to prevent cherry-picking; the implementation of pre-GRFW programmes; better aftercare for programme participants; shorter programme waiting times; fallback options for programme withdrawers; more flexibility and innovation for core skills type programmes; better guidance and advice for potential participants; more skillseekers/MAs places for participants to progress to; and better links with employers.

## **Section 3 Young people's voices**

Primary research was carried out to gain an insight into the perspectives of young people themselves on employment, education and training. Section 3 is split into four subsections. Section 3.1 provides details of the methodology used to collect the data. Sections 3.2 and 3.3 provide details of the findings; Section 3.2 examines the perspectives of young people who are not in employment, education and training; and Section 3.3 examines the perspectives of young people who are in education and training. In Section 3.4, the findings are discussed, comparisons between the two respondent sets are made and conclusions are drawn.

The research questions were as follows.

### NEET respondents

- What are the perceptions of NEET young people with regard to their likely future prospects?
- What barriers to employment, education, or training are perceived by NEET young people?
- What changes do they perceive are likely to help them to overcome these barriers and move into employment, education or training?
- Who/what are the key influencers for NEET young people?

### Non-NEET respondents

- Do the perceptions of non-NEET young people differ from those of their NEET counterparts?
- What factors influence non-NEET young people of similar background to take up employment, education or training?
- Who/what are the key influencers for non-NEET young people?

## **3.1 Methodology**

Section 3.1 outlines the methods employed to collect the data and the theoretical perspective used when collecting the data. Classification type details relating to the respondents, the data sources used to reach the respondents, ethical considerations, and the research strength and limitations are also outlined.

## **Method**

It was decided that qualitative methods would be employed to collect the data. Firstly, this was because the research is concerned with the perspectives of young people and it was thought that to achieve a good understanding of perspectives the researcher would have to engage in dialogue with the respondents. Secondly, the NEET group in particular is difficult to make contact with because they are not part of the 'system', that is they cannot be contacted through an employer or a training provider, therefore a quantitative method would not be appropriate as there is no sampling frame.

Individual semi-structured interviews were carried out with NEET 16-19 year olds (see Appendix 4 for interview schedule) and semi-structured focus group interviews were carried out with non-NEET 16-19 years olds (see Appendix 5 for focus group schedule). It was decided that a different data collection method was appropriate for NEET and non-NEET respondents.

Individual interviews were thought to be the most appropriate method for the NEET respondent set. As stated above, the NEET group is difficult to make contact with and therefore it was thought that it would be harder still to organise focus groups, making individual interviews the most expedient option. Also, on the advice of the project steering group, it was thought that group interviews could be experienced as intimidating by the respondents, which could affect the data adversely.

Focus groups were thought to be most appropriate method for the non-NEET respondents. This was because the non-NEET respondents knew each other and were therefore more likely to speak openly in front of each other. Also, it was a time-efficient method for collecting data from a large number of people.

## **Theoretical perspective**

The research was carried out from a constructivist theoretical perspective, and it was accepted that respondent perspectives and motives were shaped by their unique understanding of the social world. Constructivism advocates that research cannot 'measure' responses in a scientific way, but can provide a valuable understanding of the issues affecting people from their own personal perspective.

## **Respondents and data sources**

A total of twenty NEET respondents took part in the research. All of the respondents were aged between 16 and 19 (see Appendix 6, Graph 1). The majority, 17 respondents, were male (see Appendix 6, Graph 2). The majority, 15 respondents, were from low/low-medium socio-economic backgrounds, and five were from more affluent backgrounds. (See Appendix 6, Graph 3 and note on classification system). Also, the majority, 17 respondents, had either no or 'low' level school qualifications and three

respondents had 'good' school qualifications. (See Appendix 6, Graph 4 and note on classification system). The data sources for the NEET respondents were a Fife Opportunity Centre, two Get Ready for Work programmes (GRFW, see Section 2.4.2), and two homeless hostels. (See Appendix 6, Graph 5). Respondents were living in West and Central Fife (see Appendix 6, Graph 6), and most of the respondents, 14 in total, were living in the family home. The remaining six respondents were living in homeless hostels or council accommodation. (See Appendix 6, Graph 7).

A total of five focus groups was carried out with 31 young people that are currently engaged in education and training. The data sources for the respondents were five mainstream programmes within a Fife college within the areas of sport and fitness, construction, hospitality, computing, and care. (See Appendix 6, Table 1 for programme names). The respondents were similar to the NEET respondents in age and, like the NEET respondents, the vast majority of them were male; one focus group contained a female respondent. Also, the respondents had not been high achievers at school; their programmes of study had low-level entry requirements, ranging from no formal entry requirements to requiring Standard Grades at Credit and General level. (See Appendix 6, Table 1 for programme SCQF Level and minimum entry requirements).

### **Ethical considerations**

Respondent participation was voluntary and, upon interview, respondents were given the opportunity to decline participation altogether, or decline to answer a particular question. Respondents were also given a 'blurb', explaining what the research was for, who the research was for, and the name and organisation of the researcher. Respondents were assured that their contribution was confidential and any identifying features would be removed. Respondents were asked if they had any questions at the start and at the end of the data collection process. Finally, the researcher was respectful and sensitive towards the respondents.

### **Research strengths and limitations**

#### Strengths

A major strength of the research was the high number of respondents that took part, despite the difficulty of making contact with NEET young people in particular.

Although data was collected from a constructivist theoretical perspective, objectivity was strived for where possible. Semi-structured question schedules were used, with the respondents ensuring that there was consistency in each individual interview/focus group. Also, the researcher had not previously known of any of the respondents or had any contact with

the NEET group, limiting the likelihood of pre-conceptions influencing the data collection and analysis.

Some female respondents were included in the research. This was a strength because it gave the findings balance as a large minority of the NEET group are female (see Section 2.1.1, Gender). Also, for the NEET respondents in particular, it was difficult to recruit respondents and therefore the inclusion of available females increased the number of respondents overall.

### Limitations

The NEET research project was a small-scale qualitative project. While the project sought to illuminate the perspectives of young people the findings may not be generalised to the entire 16-19 year old population.

As mentioned previously, NEET young people are difficult to contact and it was therefore decided that GRFW programmes, where potential respondents could be accessed more easily through college, would be used as one of the data sources. Although these respondents were engaged in training, they were on a NEET reduction programme and could therefore be classified as NEET.

There were often problems that prevented pre-arranged interviews taking place and this affected the overall number of respondents. For example, five interviews had been arranged in a homeless hostel, but only one interview went ahead because respondents had either moved on, or had forgotten the arrangement. Because of the difficulties associated with contacting NEET young people, there was a lack of control over ensuring an even age and geographical spread of respondents. Difficulty contacting NEET young people also meant that certain subgroups were not represented, such as carers, care leavers, single parents, and people with disabilities.

There are implications for comparing data between the NEET and the non-NEET respondent sets. Data was collected from the two respondent sets using different methods and the interview method tended to produce richer and more intimate data than the focus groups. Also, for the non-NEET respondents, data was not collected in relation to socio-economic background. This was because it was thought that it would not be appropriate to ask for potentially sensitive information in a focus group situation.

With both the respondent sets, the researcher may have been associated with the data source organisation and this could have affected the data. Despite being assured of confidentiality, respondents may not have spoken completely openly for fear of 'getting into trouble' with the data source organisation or some other kind of authority.

It was difficult to get data from some of the respondents. In the focus groups, some respondents did not contribute to the discussion and it was therefore difficult to assess if they agreed with the responses being given by the rest of

the group. For the individual interviews, some respondents were reticent and it was difficult to get data from them.

### **3.2 Findings: young people not in education, employment or training**

Interviews were carried out to establish the perspectives and motivations of young 'NEET' people. Section 3.2 is divided into three areas: 'future prospects', 'barriers', and 'influencers'. In the area of 'future prospects', the research sought to determine what young people thought about employment, education and training, and how this related to their perceptions of their own future prospects. In the area of 'barriers', the research investigated the barriers that young people perceived as preventing them from finding work or going to college, and what changes they perceived as necessary for them to move into work or college. Finally, in the area of 'influencers', outside influences were looked at to determine what, if any, impact these might have on young people. Please note that all names in this section have been changed to protect the anonymity of respondents.

#### **Future prospects**

All of the respondents stated that they would like to work and/or be in education or training. None of the respondents said that they wanted to be unemployed, or for those claiming benefits, 'on the dole'. Why young people, who were apparently keen to work and/or go to college but were not doing so, became the main focus of the investigation.

The respondents were asked what employment prospects exist in Fife for them. It was common for respondents to state that there are no or very few jobs. Although this was a common reaction, upon further probing most respondents were able to name industries in Fife. Employment that was mentioned was in the retail sector, call centre sector, hospitality sector, construction sector, agricultural sector, factory sector, and the care sector.

Most of the respondents had a clear idea about what employment they would like to engage in. Occupations that respondents stated that they would like to be doing in the future were mainly skilled trade type jobs, such as plumber, joiner, mechanic, electrician, painter and decorator, and construction worker. Other occupations that were mentioned were soldier, greenkeeper, fitness instructor and, for two of the three female respondents, social worker and office worker. A number of respondents stated that they planned to go to college, had applied to college, or stated that they had been accepted onto a college course starting at a future date.

Some of the respondents that planned to go to college perceived their NEET status as temporary as opposed to being caused by some kind of barrier. Similarly, a number of the respondents who had worked previously attributed their NEET status to circumstances beyond their control, such as their

employer had to make redundancies or, in a number of cases, that they were co-erced into leaving work because of harassment from managers or co-workers. In one case, the respondent was recovering from an operation and could not work.

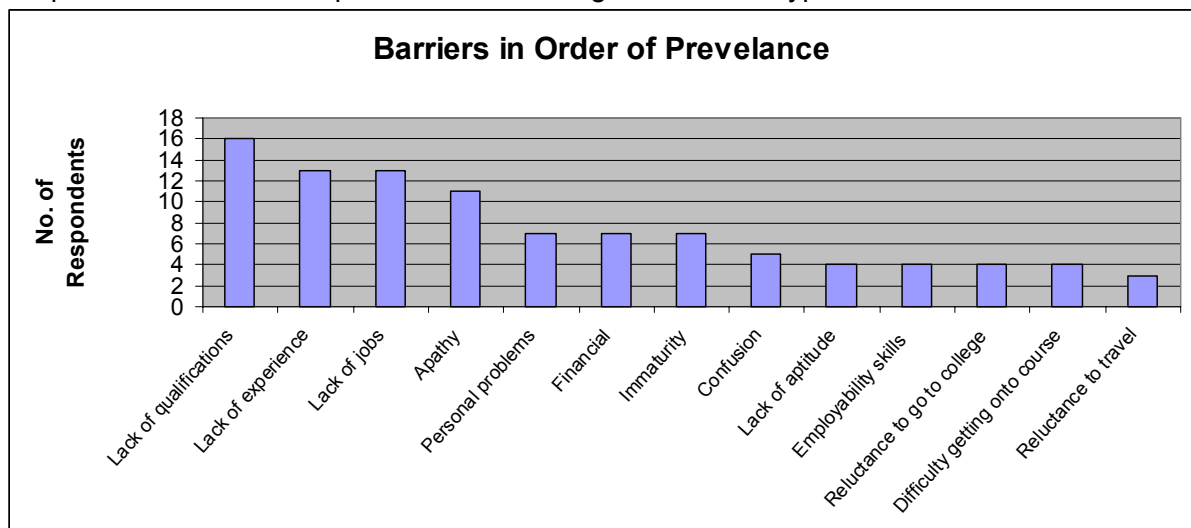
## Barriers

Most respondents stated that they were or had actively looked for work or thought about going to college. Their experiences of looking for work and at college courses gave an insight into the barriers that they faced. Barriers are listed below in order of prevalence starting with the most commonly mentioned barrier, and each barrier is examined in turn below.

- Lack of qualifications
- Lack of experience
- Lack of jobs
- Apathy
- Personal problems
- Financial problems
- Immaturity
- Confusion
- Lack of aptitude
- Employability skills
- Reluctance to go to college
- Difficulty getting onto a desired college course
- Reluctance to travel

Graph 3.1 below shows the number of respondents who mentioned each barrier type.

Graph 3.1: Number of respondents mentioning each barrier type



## Lack of qualifications

A lack of qualifications was the most commonly mentioned barrier to employment. Most of the respondents wanted to work in an area that required vocational qualifications and because they did not have these qualifications they could not get work in this area. For example, Liam had looked for engineering related vacancies in his local job centre:

“When I was still in school the teacher took us to the job centre for a week straight, Monday to Friday, to try and get a job. There was nothing. Looked in the papers, nothing. Looked on the Internet, nothing. I couldn’t find any job. Unless you’ve got the training for it or real high grades for it you can’t get a job.”

(Liam, 16)

Respondents were asked if they had looked for ‘low qualification’ type work. Most of the respondents said they had actively looked for this kind of work, but some stated that they were unable to get it because they were under-qualified for even low qualification type work. For example, Susan stated that she had tried to get a job in the retail sector, but no employer had been willing to take her on:

“I need to get my grades up to get in anywhere. I handed my CV into every shop I walked past but I never got any interviews out of doing this. A lot of shops and companies want someone with more than two Standard Grades so they can see that person has got brains.”

(Susan, 16)

Many of the respondents saw going to college to gain vocational qualifications and, for some respondents, qualifications in core skills (see below), as a route to eventual employment. A significant number of the respondents were on, or had applied for, a vocation-specific Get Ready for Work programme (GRFW, see Section 2.4.2), such as construction, engineering and customer service. The GRFW programme was often perceived as a means of gaining qualifications, either through completion of the programme itself, or as a route to gaining qualifications in that it was seen as a stepping stone onto an apprenticeship, or onto a mainstream college programme.

In relation to lack of qualifications some of the respondents mentioned that they had difficulties with ‘core skills’, that is, reading, writing and numeracy. Lack of core skills impacted on the respondents’ ability to get into work or training in a number of ways. In the first instance, low literacy levels meant that some respondents had difficulty filling in forms, which hindered their ability to apply for jobs or college courses. With some respondents, lack of core skills meant that they did not have the skills necessary to work in certain industries. For example, Charlie stated that he is unable to get work in the call centre industry because he is dyslexic:

“With me being dyslexic they won’t take me on because of all the computers, phones and writing stuff down. It is hard for me to get a job, with me being dyslexic it is even harder.”

(Charlie, 16)

Lack of core skills was also sometimes mentioned as a barrier by respondents that wanted to train in a skilled trade. For example, Conner wants to train to become an electrician, but needs to improve his numeracy. He stated:

“Electricians – they need maths; I need qualifications in maths to be an electrician. If I had maths then I would have more chance of getting a job.”

(Conner, 16)

### Lack of experience

Lack of experience was also commonly mentioned as a barrier to employment. The lack of experience barrier was implicit in that a number of respondents stated that employers were not willing to take on any school-leaver and preferred to employ older people. Respondents often stated that most job vacancies specified that applicants must have experience of working in that occupation. Lack of experience was especially a barrier for respondents who wanted to work in skilled trades. For example, Craig stated that he had been refused employment in a garage because he did not have any experience in the trade:

“All the places that I applied like garages say that you need experience. You need experience; you need qualifications, so there is nothing there for me.”

(Craig, 16)

Respondents were asked about measures they had taken to try to gain work experience. One avenue for gaining work experience is through the Work Experience Unit at school. Very few of the respondents had found this to be relevant to them beyond gaining general experience of working life. Some respondents complained that their placement had not been related to what they wanted to do, or they had not known at the time of arranging the placement what they wanted to do and had therefore missed the opportunity. Some respondents had not done the unit for reasons such as forgetting to fill in the relevant forms, being off truant when the unit was running or not being allowed to go on placement because of behavioural problems.

Some respondents had speculatively contacted firms to ask for work experience after leaving school. Although these respondents stated that they had tried hard, most of them had not been able to secure work experience. When respondents did get work experience, it was not always meaningful. For example, Tim wants to work in construction and had experience working on a construction site but had not found the experience helpful:

“I’ve had experience as a labourer to a brickie. I was fetching him his breeze blocks and his compound and the tools - but that was all I was doing, fetching stuff. I wasn’t getting experience fetching him his tools.”

(Tim, 18)

Another avenue for gaining work experience was to engage in voluntary work. Most of the respondents had not thought about voluntary work, or had had

voluntary work suggested to them. A small number had thought, or had made enquires about, voluntary work; only one respondent, Mark, was currently engaged in voluntary work:

“I’m doing voluntary youth work at a youth cafe. I do the tuck shop and making sure people behave. I used to go to the cafe when I was younger. I thought if I go then they’ll help me out at the same time; it’ll be good to put down on my CV.”

(Mark, 17)

Reasons why the other respondents were not engaged in voluntary work were: not being motivated enough to arrange it; not knowing how to go about arranging it; and in one case, being excepted for a GRFW programme and perceiving that they no longer need to do voluntary work to gain experience. Also, one respondent had contacted an organisation to arrange to do voluntary work but that organisation had not got back to her.

Again, going to college was seen as a way of gaining experience through work placements as well as gaining qualifications for employment. For those on the GRFW programme, the programme was often perceived primarily as a means for gaining work experience and references to help with finding employment. For example, Ruth stated that she hoped that the experience she would get from the GRFW programme would help her get a job:

“On the training course you get your work placements and hopefully you get a job at the end of it. But if not, it is something good on your CV, it is experience.”

(Ruth, 17)

### Lack of jobs

In all geographical areas, most respondents had the perception that the reason they could not find work, at least in part, was due to a general shortage of jobs. Some respondents stated that there was a shortage of trainee/apprenticeship type posts within the vocational areas that they wanted to go into. For example, Callum wants to train to be a joiner. However, he stated that very few joinery firms take on trainees and, when they do take on trainees, there is such high demand for posts that he misses out to other applicants:

“I phoned a couple of joiners companies last week, but no-one is taking on the now. Nobody is looking for anybody and if you phone somewhere the job has just been taken.”

(Callum, 17)

As well as competition for apprenticeships, there was a perception among some of the respondents that employers prefer 16 year old apprentices because they can pay them less. For example, at 17, Mark thought that he was too old to get an apprenticeship:

“With the apprenticeships for most employers you need to be 17 at the end, but by the time I would have finished it I would have been 18 so I thought I’d just leave it. It is hard to get an apprenticeship as they’re looking for 16, 17 year olds.”

(Mark, 17)

Some respondents mentioned the need for ‘connections’ in the labour market to overcome the job shortage barrier. Some respondents had used family and friend connections to get work in the past, or perceived that they could get work or an apprenticeship through family and friend connections in the future.

Respondents were asked about the availability of ‘low-qualification’ type jobs. There was a perception among some respondents that there are also few low qualification-type job opportunities; this was especially the perception of respondents in the Leven area. One respondent mentioned travelling to nearby areas where there are more work opportunities as a way of overcoming the job shortage barrier.

Some respondents stated that the low qualification vacancies that did exist tended to be for part time, insecure and temporary work only, and some respondents stated that low qualification type work still specified qualifications that they did not have. Some respondents did not think there was a lack of low qualification work, but stated that they were not willing to do low qualification work, even though often this was all that was available to them. Reasons stated for this were that it was boring, unpleasant, or lowly; for example, Sandy said that he was unwilling to do factory work:

“I got a job in a potato factory – I don’t know why, I hated it, I only lasted a week and then I left. I don’t see the point in doing a job if you are not enjoying it.”

(Sandy, 19)

### Apathy

A lack of drive and organisation emerged as a barrier to employment or college. Respondents often mentioned feeling bored and lethargic because they were not working or studying, and in turn this made them less motivated to change their situation. There were many other examples of apathy: respondents talked about how they had left school without planning what they would do next, or talked about a course they were interested in but had not followed it up any further. Other examples of apathy were forgetting to turn up for college or job interviews, or sending application forms into colleges late and then losing out on a college place. Some respondents had been to college previously, sometimes on several occasions, and had been expelled from their course for problems with lateness, attendance and/or behaviour. Example comments were:

“I couldn’t get back into the routine of getting up in the morning. I have been on the dole now for a year and I have just got used to my lazy ways of doing stuff.”

(Emma, 17)

“I wanted to be a joiner when I left school but I never sent off for the apprenticeships or anything. I never sent off the form and I have never tried since.”

(Callum, 17)

“I wanted to do body repair panel beating but I never really went to careers or nothing and I only applied for one college and then that course was full, so then I never got onto the course.”

(Steve, 16)

Some respondents had a very passive attitude to finding employment and admitted that they had not tried very hard. Some had completed the GRFW programme, but had not used the training to progress to employment or further training; some respondents had the perception that the GRFW programme would automatically lead on to employment; for example, Charlie stated:

“Get Ready for Work lasts six months; they try to get you a job after it and if they don't do that then they put me on another course.”

(Charlie, 16)

### Personal problems

Some of the respondents mentioned personal problems that they stated had either directly, or indirectly, contributed to their not being in employment, education or training.

A range of mental health problems were mentioned, such as stress, anxiety, self-harm, bereavement, anger issues and various levels of depression; sometimes these problems were attributed to having had a difficult upbringing. Mental health problems affected how able respondents were to find employment; for example Tim talked about how anxiety prevented him from finding work:

“I had an interview for Argos but didn't go because I had a panic attack. I don't feel as confident as any other person. It is the main thing that prevents me from applying.”

(Tim, 18)

Closely linked to mental health problems is alcohol and, less commonly, drug dependency among the respondents. A small number of respondents talked about how they had lost work or dropped out of college because of an alcohol and/or drug problem. For example, Keith had left his job so he could focus on addressing his alcohol problem and underlying personal problems:

“I went on a bender with drink for eleven days solid. I was getting uptight and anxious at work still drunk from the night before. It was either carry on drinking and lose my job, or leave and sort my head out.”

(Keith, 19)

Some of the respondents were homeless or had experienced homelessness. Homelessness had a direct impact on respondent capacity for employment, education or training. As well as the emotional effects of homelessness,

respondents often moved frequently between the homes of family members, friends and/or homeless hostels; many of them stated that their first priority was to find a permanent home, and employment or college came secondary to this. For example, Emma had been a high achiever at school with ambitions to go to university; however, the emotional and physical upheaval of being homeless meant that she did not continue at school:

“I wanted to be a lawyer or a social worker so I could help other people because I never had a very good upbringing and I would be able to understand their circumstances. But when I turned 16 I got chucked out of my house....I would have liked to have stayed on but I just didn't feel like I could.”

(Emma, 17)

### Financial problems

Respondents sometimes mentioned barriers relating to money. Some of the respondents claiming benefits expressed concern over how benefits would be affected by working or going to college. One respondent, Emma, perceived that she would be no better, or very little better off, working than claiming benefits, especially as she was getting her debt paid for her, she stated:

“With me being on the dole they will pay my rent for me, my council tax for me, the debt that I am in to the Fife Furniture Association they are paying that off as well. It is obvious to stay on the dole....it is working out much better than it would if I had a job. I am getting £30 a week for doing nothing.”

(Emma, 17)

Most respondents had not investigated how college would affect their benefits, and suggested going to see a careers advisor or a college financial advisor as a means of investigating this concern.

Respondents on benefits often perceived returning to college as more risky than those respondents not claiming/eligible for benefits. Some expressed concern that if they went to college and then, for whatever reason, discontinued their college course, then they would have to go through the lengthy process of making a claim again. Some respondents, currently claiming housing benefit, expressed the additional concern that to return to college they would need to move back into the family home and therefore lose their council accommodation, which they had gone through a lengthy process to attain.

Sometimes financially- related barriers meant that respondents had not been able to pass or complete a college course. Financially- related barriers included respondents having difficulty supporting themselves while in college; one respondent stated that he had failed his course because he was working and did not have enough time to devote to his studies. One respondent did not have the means to pay for travel and, when his travel bursary was held up, he was expelled from his course in part for non-attendance. In the case of Grant, he left a sport and fitness course because he had been offered short-term paid work; his need for money in the short term outweighed the long-term benefit of gaining a qualification, he stated:

“I wasn’t being paid at college, so I got a job. I just left to get money.”

(Grant, 17)

### Immaturity

Immaturity and naivety sometimes arose ‘retrospectively’ with respondents as a barrier to employment and college. Some respondents stated that they thought that they would enjoy the ‘freedom’ of not being in employment, education or training, but had come to realise, with maturity, that they wanted to work or go to college. Respondents often expressed regret about having not tried harder at school, having not behaved better at school, having not stayed on at school, or having not planned ahead what they wanted to do when they left school. This notion was especially apparent in the older respondents; example comments were:

“I didn’t know then what I know now. I was in trouble at school for fighting and skiving - I used to just drink and do what I wanted. It took me until I was about 18, until the last time I got out of jail, to realise I need a job.”

(Rick, 19)

“I wish I had stayed on, but at 16 I thought I was an adult and knew it all. I didn’t have a clue. I am a lot more wise now. I didn’t really think much about the future and I really should have been thinking about what road I want to go down. That is what messed me up - not deciding.”

(Sandy, 19)

Also, respondents that had criminal records expressed regret at their past criminal behaviour, again attributing it to immaturity. However, it should be noted that having a criminal record was not stated as a barrier to employment, apart from limiting the type of jobs that respondents could go into, such as the army or the police.

### Confusion

Although most of the respondents stated that they had a clear idea about what they wanted to do, some respondents were experiencing, or had experienced, confusion. Confusion was implicit in that some of the respondents had tried several very different courses in the past, but had not completed them.

Some respondents did not know what they wanted to do. For example, Sandy is keen to return to college but does not know what he wants to study:

“I want to go to college but I really don’t know where to start or what to do at college. I have looked through prospectuses many times but I don’t even know what course I would want to do or anything like that.”

(Sandy, 19)

Sometimes respondents stated that they did not have enough information about what jobs are available and, for the jobs that are available, what they involve. For example, upon leaving school, Steve had applied for jobs without fully understanding what the jobs would involve:

“You need to know the basics instead of just applying; when I left school I tried to apply for stuff and I never really knew anything about it.”

(Steve, 16)

Respondents talked about ways of overcoming confusion. One respondent had done a ‘taster’ type GRFW programme, where he had tried out different vocations, and had found this helpful. Vocation specific GRFW programmes were also seen as a good way of finding out about the different career paths within a particular vocational area. It was suggested that there should be talks in schools about various jobs and what jobs involve.

### Lack of aptitude

Often respondents would mention that they disliked school because they did not like ‘sitting in a classroom’ and preferred to do practical-based learning. Aptitude for the non-practical aspects of learning sometimes came up as a barrier to college. For example, Jim stated that he would like to progress to a mainstream programme upon completion of his GRFW programme, but was concerned that he would not be able to cope:

“I am thinking about filling out an application for the NC in painting and decorating. I was chatting to the lecturer for the course and he says it’s more theory - learning about the paints and how you get different colours. I’m better at practical work than theory. I hate doing theory.”

(Jim, 17)

While Jim perceived a lack of aptitude for learning theory, some respondents had taken up vocational training programmes in the past and had floundered because they were in fact unable to cope. For example, Rick had wanted to work in the construction sector and had embarked on an NC programme but had not been able to cope:

“I don’t like sitting in a classroom. I done a construction course last year but I packed it in after a week because it was sitting drawing scale drawings, drawing outlines of houses - I dinnae draw, it is not my thing. I don’t want to be an architect; I want to be hands on.”

(Rick, 19)

### Employability skills

‘Employability skills’ refer to the generic, soft skills/qualities over and above the technical skills necessary for a specific occupation. Occasionally, respondents mentioned employability skills that they perceived as lacking in them and creating a barrier to employment. Lacking employability skills that were mentioned were timekeeping, personal appearance and communication skills.

Confidence was mentioned by a number of respondents as being important for finding work or applying for college; some respondents had found it easy to find work in the past and put this down to having the confidence to approach employers. A lack of confidence was expressed explicitly and implicitly in a number of the respondent comments; some respondents talked about fear of going into an Opportunity Centre, applying for college or going to an interview. Some respondents stated that they needed to have a friend with them to feel confident.

### Reluctance to go to college

A small number of respondents mentioned a reluctance to go to college. Reasons for this reluctance was that they had had a bad past experience of college and this put them off returning to some extent. Similarly, one respondent was reluctant to go to college because he thought that it would be boring like school. Some stated that the idea of returning to education after having not studied for a period of time was daunting.

### Difficulty getting onto a desired college course

A number of difficulties was mentioned regarding getting onto a desired college programme. Occasionally, respondents would say that the course they were interested in was not available locally, or that the course did not exist to their knowledge. Some respondents had applied for a course and had not been accepted because the course was already full. Respondents sometimes mentioned tough competition for college places; for example, Craig was unable to get on a NC Motor Vehicle programme partly because of competition for places:

“I tried for NC Motor Vehicles but there was about 30-40 places and about 70-80 folk applied for it and all the places had been filled by the time I got an interview.”

(Craig, 16)

### Reluctance to travel

Reluctance to travel was occasionally mentioned as a barrier to employment or college. A small number of respondents cited having to travel as a reason or part-reason for leaving a job or college course. Some respondents were unwilling to look for work outside their local area.

## **Summary**

The above mentioned barriers and sub-barriers to employment, education and training, and suggestions for overcoming barriers are summarised in Table 3.1 below for quick reference.

Table 3.1: Barriers and related sub-barriers to employment, education and training and respondent suggestions for overcoming barriers

<b>Barrier</b>	<b>Sub-barrier</b>	<b>Suggestions for overcoming barrier</b>
<b>Lack of qualifications</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of vocational qualifications</li> <li>• Lack of core skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GRFW programme</li> <li>• Skillseekers/MA programme</li> <li>• Mainstream college programme</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employers unwilling to employ school leavers</li> <li>• Lack of general work experience</li> <li>• Lack of occupation specific work experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speculative work experience</li> <li>• Work experience through GRFW/mainstream college programme</li> <li>• Voluntary work</li> <li>• Better work experience in school</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of jobs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of apprenticeship/trainee jobs</li> <li>• Too old to get apprenticeship</li> <li>• Lack of low qualification type jobs</li> <li>• Unwillingness to engage in low qualification type jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family/friend connections</li> <li>• Travelling to an area with more work opportunities</li> <li>• Get qualifications/work experience</li> </ul>
<b>Apathy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of planning/organisation</li> <li>• Lack of drive/determination</li> </ul>	
<b>Personal problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental health problems</li> <li>• Alcohol/drug problems</li> <li>• Homelessness</li> </ul>	
<b>Financial problems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lose benefits if work/attend college</li> <li>• The need to work while at college to support oneself</li> <li>• Travel expenses to get to college</li> <li>• Lack of study bursaries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss how benefits may be affected with careers advisor/job centre/college</li> </ul>
<b>Immaturity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regret at not having attained at school</li> <li>• Regret at past criminal behaviour</li> </ul>	
<b>Confusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not know what they want to do</li> <li>• Lack of knowledge on college courses/prospective jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taster /vocation specific GRFW programmes</li> <li>• Better careers advice in schools</li> </ul>
<b>Lack of aptitude</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Difficulties coping with level of college course</li> </ul>	
<b>Employability skills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of confidence</li> <li>• Poor timekeeping</li> <li>• Poor communication skills</li> <li>• Untidy personal appearance</li> </ul>	
<b>Reluctance to go to college</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that college is boring</li> <li>• Fear of returning to education</li> </ul>	
<b>Difficulty getting onto a desired college course</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course not available locally</li> <li>• Course does not exist</li> <li>• Course full/competition for course places</li> </ul>	
<b>Reluctance to travel</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwilling to travel to college</li> <li>• Unwilling to look work outside local area</li> </ul>	

## Influencers

Respondents were asked about people or organisations that had influenced them. A number of influencers was discussed with respondents; these are listed and examined below in loose order of prevalence, starting with the most significant influencer:

- Friends and peers
- Family
- School
- College
- Careers Scotland
- Employers

### Friends and peers

Friends and peers were often said by respondents to have an influence on them. Most of the respondents have both friends who are NEET and friends who are in employment, education and training; a small number only had friends who are NEET.

Sometimes friends had inspired respondents to apply for college and/or find employment. Occasionally respondent would mention friends who were earning good money and stated that this made them want to work so that they could enjoy the same lifestyle. More commonly, respondents had been recommended college by a friend, or wanted to go on a college course because their friends had applied to college, or were already at college, sometimes on the same course. For example, Ben has applied to do a construction course at college and stated that he had been influenced by his friends who were currently on the same course:

“I have filled in an application for a construction course starting after the summer; all my friends are doing construction so that made me think about it.”

(Ben, 16)

Friends who were NEET were perceived by respondents to have a less direct influence on them. None of the respondents stated explicitly that they are NEET because their friends are, and sometimes respondents said that they did not want to ‘end up’ like NEET friends. However, some respondents blamed bad behaviour at school and at college, at least in part, to being led astray by friends. Some respondents stated that they prevented themselves from getting bored by spending time with friends that are also NEET, which could imply that there is some kind of NEET culture. For example, Conner is currently on a GRFW programme; however, prior to this, instead of looking for work he was in the routine of seeing friends who are also NEET:

“Looking for work just did not appeal to me at the time. I wasn’t really interested in it - I just got up and went out to see my pals, because they are all bums too!”

(Conner, 16)

## Family

All of the respondents, with the exception of one, stated that they had received encouragement from a parent or a guardian while at school and, upon leaving school, received encouragement to look for work or go to college. Although this was generally the case, how influential parents were varied. With some respondents, parents had clearly had an influence on them. Often respondents said that they had gone to the jobcentre or had made an appointment to see a careers' advisor after encouragement from a parent. Also, in a small number of cases, a parent had been a role model to the respondent in that they had aspirations to work in the same vocation as their father. The influence of parents was implicit in that in a small number of cases respondents had said that they wanted to join the Armed Forces, but had not been allowed by their parents to do so.

Despite receiving encouragement from parents, it was common for respondents to say they had not been influenced by their parents, or they had rebelled against their parents. Many respondents said that they had gone against their parents' wishes by not trying harder at school, staying on at school, or going into employment, education or training upon leaving school. There were also some cases where tensions had broken down the parent-child relationship, sometimes to the extent where the respondent had been thrown out of the family home, and this limited the influence of parents further still. An example of a respondent who was not influenced by his parents is Tim; Tim had been in severe trouble at school and his father was unable to control his behaviour. He stated:

“He was always too soft. At school when I misbehaved like he would just come and collect me and take me home, which wasn't really helping. He did mind me getting suspended, he would moan for half an hour and then be all right with me again so I would just forget about it. He should have been harder on me. “

(Tim, 18)

Non-parental family members also influenced respondents. Siblings, brothers in particular, were especially significant and were often perceived to be more influential than parents were. Sometimes respondents stated that they would go to an older sibling for advice; they received encouragement from an older sibling; or they had been inspired by an older sibling to go to college/work in a certain vocation. Also, grandparents, aunts, and uncles were occasionally mentioned as providing respondents with advice and encouragement.

Conversely, for respondents who did not have positive family role models it did not necessarily translate that they were a bad influence on them. For example, Joe has two older brothers who are unemployed but stated that he did not want to 'end up' like them:

“My two big brothers do nothing, they just lounge about; I don't want to be like that.”

(Joe, 17)

## School

All of the respondents had been disaffected at school to some degree. The underlying reasons stated for this were that they found school boring; they did not get on with their teachers; or occasionally respondents stated that they struggled to cope with schoolwork. Severe disaffection was reflected in that a number of the respondents stated that they were often truant from school, had received behavioural support and/or had been suspended from school. Disaffection at school was often cited as a reason for why respondents had left school without planning what they would do when they left; their first and only priority was to leave school. Occasionally disaffection from school was directly linked to not going to college, for example, school had put Callum off going to college:

“I just don’t fancy college. I think it would be too much like school...boring.”

(Callum, 17)

Respondents were asked if they had received any help while at school as to what they would do when they left. Very few of the respondents stated that they had received careers’ advice while at school, which limited how influential school had been. The reasons stated for not having received advice were: they were unable to make a careers advice appointment due to lack of availability; they were not motivated to make an appointment; and they were off school truant and were not there to make an appointment.

Some respondents had received advice that had influenced them. Some respondents had taken advice from school to leave and go to college and had also received support from the school with filling in college application forms. A small number of respondents had received tuition on employability skills and job searching skills, which they stated they had enjoyed. For the respondents that did receive advice, some stated that they had found the advice unhelpful in that career options were not explained to them properly. Some thought that the support was inadequate; for example, Charlie stated that he was deterred from applying to college because of lack of support from school:

“Just before I left school I thought about college, but the school was not giving me no help or nothing with filling out my forms and that, so I just didnae bother. I asked every day, but she would say: ‘aye wait half an hour’, but she wouldn’t do it. It was a teacher I was asking to help me; the careers’ officer was not in the days that I was in.”

(Charlie, 16)

## College

Many of the respondents were either at college on a GRFW programme or had been previously to college on a GRFW programme, mainstream programme, or, in a small number of cases, had attended college while still at school. In general, the perceptions and experiences of respondents towards college were positive for reasons such as they prefer practical-based learning,

good lecturing staff, treated more like an adult, and that college was less formal. For example, Ray, who is currently on a GRFW programme, stated:

“College is much better. You can have a laugh with the lecturers and you make more friends. The teachers give you a chance and listen to you; when you make a mistake they don’t just go down on you hard, which was what high school was like. You do the things you enjoy not just what they tell you to.”

(Ray, 16)

The influence that college had on respondents was implicit in that many of the respondents on the GRFW programme stated that they wanted to go onto a mainstream course, or that it had informed their decision about what career path they wanted to take.

Some respondents had had negative experiences of college, such as being part of a disruptive class, various issues with lecturers, or not getting the support they needed from the college to apply for a course or continue with a course. Despite these negative experiences, in the majority of cases respondents stated that this did not put them off returning to college in the future.

### Careers Scotland

Support and advice from Careers Scotland had influenced respondents. Many of the respondents had been referred onto GRFW programmes by Careers Scotland career advisors. For example, Carl was referred by his local Opportunity Centre onto the programme and had received support with making his application:

“I went to the Opportunity Centre and the careers advisor from my school was there and she gave me an application and I got my interview at the college and I got in.”

(Carl, 17)

Respondents mentioned other services that they had accessed through the Opportunity Centre such as referral onto core skill programmes, help with applying for colleges/apprenticeships, help with job searches. Some respondents had used the centre’s Internet and phone facilities to look for work/college courses themselves.

### Employers

Most of the respondents had worked in the past at some point and some had had several jobs. Jobs that respondents stated they had done included sales assistant, factory worker, catering assistant, field labourer, construction labourer, and office worker. In general, respondents stated that they had enjoyed earning money and had enjoyed the work itself. Reasons for leaving were that they had been made redundant, they had moved, they left to return to college, it was a stop-gap only, and it was casual/short term work only.

Some respondents stated that they had had negative experiences of work. Some had given up a job because it was unpleasant and this made them reluctant to do low-qualification type work. Some respondents had given up work because of a disagreement with a manager or co-workers and in some cases this made respondents reluctant to work, for example Grant left his job because he felt that he was being badly treated at work:

“I kept getting hassle from the managers. Everyday when you walked in they were always on my back all the time, giving me a hard time. So I thought: ‘stuff it’ and I left. Since that I have come back down to the Opportunity Centre to claim Jobseekers Allowance.”

(Grant, 17)

### **3.3 Findings: young people in education and training**

Focus groups were carried out to establish the perspectives and motivations of young people engaging in education and training. Section 3.3 is divided into two areas: ‘motivations’ in relation to engagement in learning and ‘influencers’ in relation to engagement in learning. The area of ‘motivations’ examines respondent attitudes and how these led them to take up education and training; and the area of ‘influencers’ examines people and organisations that have had an influence on respondents taking up education and training. Please note that all names in this section have been changed to protect the anonymity of respondents.

#### **Motivations**

There are a number of motivational factors that influenced respondents to go into education or training. These are listed and discussed in turn below:

- Ambition
- Intrinsic interest
- Perceived lack of alternative
- Financial support
- Attitude

#### Ambition

Respondents were on vocational programmes with clearly defined career paths and the most common motivation for coming to college was the ambition to work in the field relating to that programme of study; all of the respondents mentioned their desire and determination to enter the programme related vocation. Ambition was implicit in particular when respondents were asked to name people who had influenced them to go to college; it was many respondents’ initial response to state their own drive foremost, for example:

“I think to start with you have to influence yourself and be decisive and from there forward other people help.”

(Dean, Access to Teaching)

“I’ve been wanting to do this since I was about eight!”

(John, Army Preparation)

Respondents also mentioned money and success as a motivating factor. Respondents in the teaching and computing focus groups commented that they believed jobs in their respective areas were well paid. Respondents often commented that they would like to ‘work their way up’ in the profession relating to their programme of study, for example, some of the cookery and construction respondents mentioned ambitions of starting their own business:

“Once I’ve done my apprenticeship I can do what ever I want - set up my own business.”

(Greg, Construction)

“I’d like to become a head chef - maybe even open up my own restaurant.”

(Robin, Cookery)

### Intrinsic interest

Many of the respondents had come to college because they had an intrinsic interest in their programme subject area. For example, they enjoyed cooking, they enjoyed computing, they had chosen to go on the army preparation course because they enjoyed keeping fit, or they wanted to be a primary school teacher because they enjoyed working with children.

Previously, some respondents had applied for or even started courses that they had not wanted to do and which they had subsequently discontinued. This was said to have occurred because respondents had felt pressure or even co-ercion from school careers and guidance staff to have a college place lined up for after they left school regardless of whether it was suitable or agreeable to them. It was apparent that when respondents had not made carefully thought out and ‘free’ decisions about what programme they enrolled in, they became unmotivated and uncommitted to that programme of study. For example, Paul commented that he had a college place set up for him by his school and that he had dropped out of the course after a short time:

“I went to another college before and I didn’t like it. I left school at 15 and a half and got put into college onto a course but I only went for about two weeks.”

(Paul, Cookery)

### Perceived lack of alternative

There was a perception among many of the respondents that there are few employment opportunities for school-leavers and those that are available are undesirable; some of the respondents had experienced unemployment prior

to enrolling on their programme of study and this had also been their experience of job searching. Going to college to learn a specific skill or prepare for further career-specific study was perceived as the only route to employment or eventual employment in a particular sector; respondents often described their programme of study as a 'stepping-stone' to employment/apprenticeship in a specific area. A perceived lack of alternative for entering a particular industry seemed to be a motivating factor to stay in or return to education or training. For example, Simon commented on the lack of opportunities available to school-leavers:

"There is nothing out there - stacking shelves or a paper round that is about it. College is about the only option."

(Simon, Computing and Information Systems)

Most of the respondents that had experienced unemployment after leaving school stated that they had not enjoyed this time. The reasons stated for this were that they had fallen into a 'bad crowd' and got into trouble, felt lethargic and, most commonly, they had been bored. These bad experiences seemed to be a contributing factor for respondents deciding to go back to education and training. For example, Iain stated that people from his year at school were currently applying to college after having a period of unemployment because they were bored:

"I know lots of folk that are only just filling out forms now because they're bored all the time."

(Iain, Construction)

### Financial support

Financial support to study at college was also mentioned by respondents on programmes where bursaries were given, or there was potential to progress onto an apprenticeship programme. Respondents on the army preparation course were given a bursary and this, in part, had influenced them to take up the programme. Respondents in the construction group also stated that the potential to progress to a paid apprenticeship programme appealed to them; for example, Dan stated:

"I want an apprenticeship because your learning and getting paid."

(Dan, Construction)

### Attitude

There was a belief among many of the respondents that people who are NEET possess certain personality traits. It was common for respondents to have friends, and sometimes family, who are NEET, on whom they had based these perceptions. Many respondents stated that people who are NEET are lazy, that they are free-loaders, and that they are drug and alcohol abusers: words like 'waster', 'bum', 'junkie', 'scrounger' and 'alkie' were often used to

describe them. There was very little sympathy or understanding expressed during the focus group interviews despite the fact that some of the respondents had experienced unemployment prior to enrolling on a programme of study themselves.

There was also a belief that people who are NEET belong to a lower social class; for example, words with class connotations, such as the slang word 'jokie', and 'scum' and 'lowlife' were often used to describe people who are NEET. The apparent negative perception of people who are NEET and the stigma associated with being NEET could therefore have an influence on respondents engaging in education and training.

Some respondents commented that they perceived that NEET people had a different mindset to them and this is why they are NEET. For example, Douglas stated that he believes that people who are NEET have a certain attitude, implying that his attitude differs to that of NEET people:

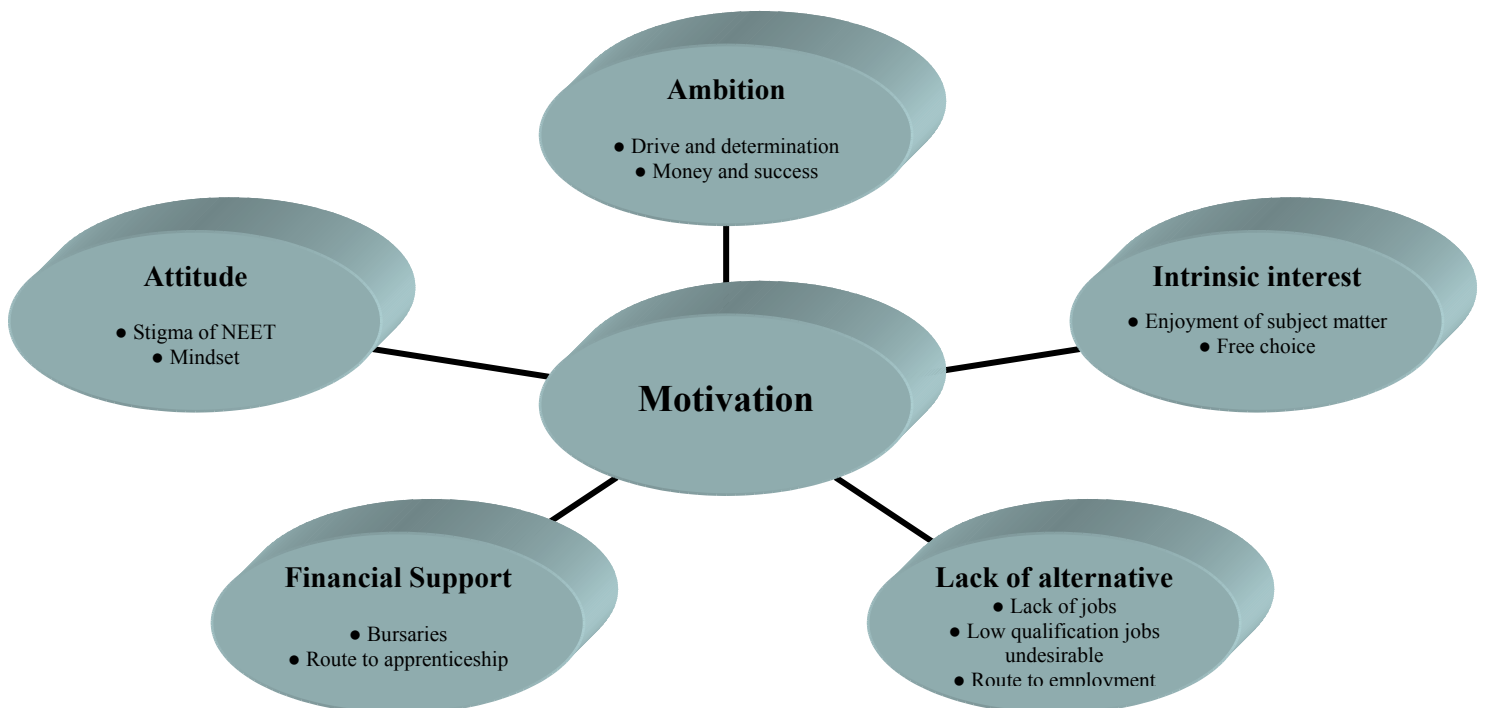
“It is the way they’ve been brought up, where they come from. Sometimes it’s not their fault but other times they just can’t be bothered. It’s nothing to do with having a brain; it’s just their attitude. It’s up to them.”

(Douglas, Construction)

## Summary

Diagram 3.1 below summarises the motivations stated by respondents for engaging in education and training.

Diagram 3.1: Motivations for engaging in education and training



## **Influencers**

There were a number of people and organisations that had influenced respondents to engage in education and training. Influencers are listed and examined in turn below and in order of prevalence, starting with the most commonly stated influencer:

- Family
- Friends and peers
- School
- College

### Family

Parents/guardians and other family members, siblings in particular, were the most commonly attributed influencer on respondents engaging in training and education. Family influenced respondents in a number of ways. Many of the respondents had family who encouraged them to go to college because they wanted them to do well. For example Lisa stated:

“My big sister really encouraged me. I told her I wanted to do catering and she told me I should go for it. My mum said that I wouldn’t last a week. My sister was like: don’t listen to her, just go for it.”

(Lisa, Cookery)

It was common for respondents to know someone who worked in their field of study. Many respondents had family members working in to the same field and this had inspired or set an example for them to pursue a career in the same area. For example, Colin mentioned how he had observed his mother return to education to train to become a primary school teacher and how this had influenced his decision to train to be a teacher also:

“My mum is a primary teacher and just seeing what she went through to get there definitely influenced me. When she divorced, she became a cleaner but while she was doing that she was on an Open University course doing English and from there she got her degree. She worked her way up from being a cleaner to being a teacher and she made that wage jump as well.”

(Colin, Access to Primary Teaching)

### Friends and peers

Closely related to the stigma of being NEET (see above) is pressure to conform to peers by taking up education and training. After family, friends and peers were cited to be the biggest influence on respondents making the decision to take up education and training after leaving school. Peers influenced respondents in a number of ways. Some respondents stated that almost everyone in their year at school had gone to college or university and there was an expectation that they should continue with education. Some respondents expressed a fear of being ‘left behind’ if they did not enrol in

college because their peers had applied to college or university. For example, Peter had been influenced by his friends to go into further education, he stated:

“Your pals are an influence. If they are all going and your sitting about doing nothing then you may as well go to.”

(Peter, Computing and Information Systems)

Friends and peers sometimes influenced respondents more directly. Often respondents had known someone who had been on their course previously or had been to college previously and had recommended it to them. Some respondents had been encouraged by concerned friends to take up education or training because they wanted them to do well; for example, Mikey’s friends were concerned that he was wasting his life by not being in employment, education or training:

“My friends kept telling me I needed to do something with my life!”

(Mikey, Army Preparation)

## School

After family and friends, school had a significant influence on respondents taking up further education and training. Sometimes teachers were praised by respondents for sparking their interest in a particular subject area or were said to have encouraged them to study the subject further at college. Guidance and careers staff were praised in particular. For example, Alan commented that guidance staff at school had a major influence on his decision to enrol in college:

“Guidance staff at the school was important. I would say that they were the main influence for me to join the course because it was them that were saying I would be good at teaching – they encouraged me to take the next step.”

(Alan, Access to Primary Teaching)

Some respondents had done their Work Experience Unit in the area that their course was in and this had confirmed to them that they wanted to work in that field.

Although school had had a positive influence on some of the respondents, there were very mixed experiences within the focus groups. There were comments that guidance/careers staff was often unavailable, that they broke appointments, that they disliked guidance/careers staff, and that the guidance they provided was confusing and unhelpful. For example, Martin commented that when pupils were not sure what they wanted to do careers staff was of little help:

“When I went for my 4<sup>th</sup> year interview I had absolutely no idea what I wanted to do - so the guidance teacher was on the computer applying to a college for me to go away and

do mechanics; it was not very helpful at all. If I'd have come along and said something they would definitely have helped me out, but if you didn't have an idea, they just were not interested."

(Martin, Access to Primary Teaching)

It was not uncommon for respondents to comment that they had been badly treated by their school. Some stated that they had been told to leave school, or had been told by the school that they were stupid. For example, one student commented:

"The school put me down a lot and said that I would never achieve nothing...that I was a dummy."

(Sean, Cookery)

## College

Although cited less often, college was also mentioned as having an influence on respondents making the decision to take up further education or training.

College had influenced respondents to take up education and training in a number of ways. Respondents often mentioned that looking at college marketing materials such as websites and prospectuses had made them interested in college and/or a particular programme. Some of the respondents had had contact with college while still in school and this had influenced them to go. Some respondents had attended college 'taster' courses while still at school and commented that this had been a positive experience and helped them make an informed choice about what they wanted to do.

Some respondents commented that course entrance interviews and meetings with lecturing staff had been positive and had influenced them to attend a particular programme of study. For example, Malcolm stated that he met with lecturing staff prior to being accepted onto the programme:

"Staff in the college influenced me. I had a meeting with the Computing Department programme co-ordinator and he looked at my course choices and helped me choose the one that would suit me best."

(Malcolm, Computing and Information Systems)

Respondents also mentioned how the structure of college life suited them better than school. Respondents often commented that they liked not having to wear school uniform, and that college-lecturing staff treated them more like adults than school teaching staff. It was also commented by some respondents that the style of the curriculum in college was more suitable to their needs, for example, Brian stated:

"My main motivation was to get out of school. I had to do so many subjects that I couldn't focus on the one thing I wanted. Whereas at college we are still doing Maths and English but I can really focus on the main subject of teaching."

(Brian, Access to Teaching)

### **3.4 Discussion**

Section 3.4 provides a discussion and conclusion to the findings presented throughout Section 3. Section 3 is divided into three subsections: Section 3.4.1 provides a summary and discussion of the NEET respondent findings; Section 3.4.2 provides a comparative analysis of the NEET and non-NEET respondent findings; finally, Section 3.4.3 provides an overall conclusion to the research in relation to the research questions set out at the start of Section 3.

#### **3.4.1 Summary and discussion: NEET respondents**

The NEET respondents wanted to be in employment, education or training, further education in particular, as most respondents aspired to work in occupations that require vocational qualifications. The perception of respondents with regard to their likely future prospects was often negative; examination of respondent barriers to employment, education and training gives insight into these negative perceptions. Barriers varied greatly between respondents in terms of both numbers of barriers and combination of barriers; no two respondents were the same. The most commonly arising barriers were lack of vocational qualifications and core skills, lack of experience, lack of jobs, apathy, personal problems, financial problems and immaturity.

##### Commonly arising barriers

Lack of vocational qualifications was a barrier to employment for all the respondents who knew what they wanted to do, as none of them had the technical skills required to do such work. Lack of qualifications was also sometimes cited as a barrier to even 'low qualification' type work, meaning that some respondents could not take up elementary jobs even as a 'stop gap'. This linked with lack of core skills and many of the respondents who had left school with no or low qualifications stated that poor reading, writing and numeracy skills were a barrier to employment or study on a mainstream college programme. Unsurprisingly, enrolling in college and gaining qualifications was seen as a way of overcoming this barrier. Often, for those who did not have the entry requirements for a mainstream college programme, the GRFW programme was seen as a stepping stone onto a mainstream programme.

Lack of experience was also a commonly mentioned barrier to employment. Some of the respondents had very little experience of work and none of them had relevant or meaningful experience in their desired vocation. Again, enrolling in college and engaging in work placements through a college programme was seen as a way of overcoming this barrier. Some of the respondents engaging or planning to engage on the GRFW programme hoped that the programme work placements would provide a route straight to employment/an apprenticeship. Some hoped to be able to gain experience by

speculatively asking firms for work experience and, in a small number of cases, engaging in voluntary work.

A general lack of any job opportunities was commonly mentioned by respondents; they cannot find work simply because there are so few jobs. Some of the respondents who knew what they wanted to do stated that despite looking they could not find trainee positions/apprenticeships in their chosen vocational area. Some respondents thought that they were too old to get apprenticeships. In terms of low qualification type work, most respondents stated that they were willing to do this but often perceived that there is also very little low qualification work, and that which does exist is usually part-time/temporary/ insecure. Some respondents were unwilling to do low-qualification type work because they perceived it to be undesirable. Going to college was also perceived as a way of getting over the job shortage barrier in that college qualifications and experience made respondents more competitive in the job market. Some respondents stated that they could get over the job shortage barrier by finding work through the informal job market, that is through friends and family connections.

Financial barriers to both college and employment were also often mentioned. Sometimes financial hardship meant that respondents had not passed a college course because they were working to support themselves and did not have time to devote to their studies, and some left college because they did not receive a bursary for their course of study. For some of the respondents, claiming benefits complicated their decision to go to college or find employment; they had to investigate whether it was worth returning to college and no longer being eligible for the same benefits, or taking a low paid job over benefits. Respondents suggested that speaking to a careers advisor or college financial advisor would help them to investigate this.

The above mentioned barriers were stated explicitly by respondents. Other commonly arising barriers were often more implied than explicit and can loosely be described as attitudinal. Apathy towards finding a job or going to college was occasionally stated by respondents but more usually implied by comments relating to how they had not followed up an idea, how they had left something too late, and so forth. Some respondents also mentioned personal/mental health type problems, such as depression and anxiety, which could link to apathy. Respondents who were homeless or had experienced homelessness were often both physically and mentally not in a position to be able to look for work or apply to college.

Some of the respondents, when reflecting on their past, implied that there is a maturity/naivety -related barrier to college and employment. Some respondents had not thought about the future when they left school but, with maturity, had decided that they would like to 'do something with their lives'. For some respondents this was perceived as merely a temporary barrier that they were overcoming with maturity and wisdom. Other respondents felt that they were still suffering from the effects of actions they had taken or had failed to take when they were younger; they perceived that it would have been

easier to have continued with education rather than to return to learning after they had been away from it for some time.

### Less commonly arising barriers

Other less commonly cited barriers were: confusion, lack of aptitude, employability skills, reluctance to go to college, difficulty getting onto a desired college course, and reluctance to travel.

Most of the respondents stated that they had a clear idea about what they wanted to do; however, some of the respondents were unsure and this prevented them from making the decision to go to college. Sometimes respondents stated that they did not understand what college programmes involved, or what the prospective career involved and this made it hard for them to make a decision about college. It was suggested that there should be better careers' advice at school on vocational learning and career opportunities.

Lack of aptitude was sometimes stated or implied by respondents. Some respondents had not been able to cope with previous learning and this could have been because of a lack of aptitude. The respondents who had left school with no or low qualifications did not have the entry requirements to get straight onto their desired mainstream or MA programme and it is possible that some of these respondents do not have the aptitude for the level of learning required on these programmes.

Sometimes respondents mentioned employability skills that they felt that they lacked and made them less likely to secure work. Some of the respondents stated that they were unpunctual and this was a barrier to employment; these respondents were currently on the GRFW programme and may have had poor timekeeping pointed out by lecturers. Other employability skills mentioned were appearance - they did not have smart clothes for an interview - and communication-type barriers - they spoke with a broad accent and this made a bad impression on employers. Lack of confidence was also sometimes stated or implied by respondents; communication/confidence issues also came across during interviews with respondents who were quiet/shy and/or did not make eye contact.

While college was often seen as a route to eventual employment, in turn, there were barriers to college. Reluctance to attend college or travel to college or employment arose with a small number of respondents. Respondents did not want to go to college because they thought that it would be like school, which they had disliked, or did not want to go to college because they felt nervous about returning to learning after being out of education for some time. Some respondents mentioned difficulties with getting onto a desired college course. Problems included having applied too late to get onto a course, a course not being available locally, and, as with the job market, some had found that there was competition for college places.

Finally, a small number of respondents mentioned reluctance to travel to college or to areas where there are more employment opportunities.

### Influencers

Friends, peers and older siblings came across as having the most significant impact on respondents in both positive and negative ways. More often than any other influencer, respondents stated they were inspired to make plans to go to college by friends and older siblings. Conversely, it was often friends who were perceived to have led respondents astray during school or other learning experiences, despite encouragement from parents. The significance of friends on respondents was reflected in that respondents often talked about 'we', meaning themselves and their friends, when referring to going to college or not going to college as the case may be. Spending time with NEET friends also kept respondents amused and this could be a negative influence in that it prevented them from being bored, and could 'normalise' NEET to respondents.

In general, school had not positively influenced respondents; all of the respondents had been disaffected at school to some extent, including the respondents who had left with good qualifications, and this limited how influential school had been. In some cases, respondents had been deterred from going to college by their experiences at school. Most of the respondents had not received careers advice, often because they were not there, and those that had received advice/support said that they had not found it useful. The Work Experience Unit at school had also made little impact; some had not done the unit and none of the respondents had done work experience in their desired vocation. However, a small number of the respondents had been influenced by school to leave and go onto a GRFW programme.

Some of the respondents had been to college in the past or had had some kind of contact with college. In general, college had had a positive influence on respondents in that most had enjoyed the experience of being at college and were not deterred from going back to college. Some of the respondents on the GRFW programme stated that they would like to go onto further education, indicating that the college experience had had a positive influence on them. Careers Scotland was an important influencer for referring respondents onto GRFW programmes; often respondents had found out about the programme and had their programme place arranged through an Opportunity Centre.

Most of the respondents had worked at some point in the past and previous employers had had some influence. None of the respondents had been inspired to aim for a certain career by a previous employer; however, most had positive experiences of working and some said that they would do the same work again in the future. In some cases, previous employers had had a negative influence on employees, some had done work they had not enjoyed and would not do again and some had experienced harassment at work.

### **3.4.2 Discussion: Comparative analysis**

It is possible to make some tentative comparisons between the NEET and the non-NEET respondent sets, despite the limitations of the study (see Section 3.1, Research strengths and limitations).

#### Comparisons

In terms of motivation, both the non-NEET respondents and the majority of the NEET respondents had ambition to work in a certain vocational area. A number of respondents in both sets shared the same perceptions, such as the perception that being in education, employment or training is desirable, the perception that there is a shortage of jobs, and the perception that college is the prime route to a desired vocation or any kind of 'decent' job.

Like many of the NEET respondents some of the non-NEET respondents had been concerned about how college would impact on them financially. This was reflected in the fact that many of the non-NEET respondents had been influenced, at least in part, to take up a course that offers a bursary or has the potential for progression onto a paid apprenticeship.

Respondent movement between being NEET and not being NEET marked a similarity between some of the respondents in the two sets. Some of the respondents in the non-NEET respondent set had been unemployed in the past and had experienced some of the same barriers as the NEET respondents, such as being unable to find a job or realising with maturity that they would like to be in employment, education or training, before eventually returning to learning. Also, some of the respondents in the NEET respondent set planned to go onto a mainstream programme and, presuming they do, are similar to the non-NEET respondents who did not go to college straight from school. This indicates that some of the respondents within the two sets are not so different and, with time, individuals can change their circumstances. It should be noted that many of the NEET respondents had been in employment, education and training in the past and movement can work both ways.

In terms of influencers friends, peers and older siblings are a key influence on both sets of respondents. Both sets of respondents indicated that they were inspired or influenced by friends and older siblings to go to college, and there were cases in both sets where respondents had been, or were being, 'socialised' to go to college by friends and peers. Both the NEET respondents and most of the non-NEET respondents had a positive experience/perception of college and this influenced their decisions to go to college. Also, both sets of respondents had received encouragement from parents.

## Contrasts

The NEET respondents faced barriers (see Table 3.1) to college that limited their ability to make steps towards realising their ambitions, which presumably the non-NEET respondents had either not experienced or had overcome. In a small number of cases NEET respondents were confused about what they would like to do and therefore lacked ambition altogether. There also appeared to be a difference in the extent of ambition between respondents in the two sets. There was often evidence of apathy in the NEET respondent set and, conversely, there were more instances of 'extreme' ambition in the non-NEET respondent set, such as the desire to start up a business or go to university. An intrinsic interest in the vocational area of study was a motivation for most non-NEET respondents, whereas the NEET respondents tended to have a more pragmatic attitude to college and wanted to study in an area that would lead to employment, rather than being as passionate about the subject area. Another motivating factor that differed between the two sets was their perception of 'NEET' itself. The non-NEET set showed disdain towards NEET and, although both respondent sets showed awareness of a perceived stigma with being NEET, the non-NEET respondents expressed an aversion to being NEET themselves.

There were some differences between the circumstances of some the respondents in the two sets that marked a clear contrast. Many of the respondents in the non-NEET respondent set had gone straight to college from school and had not had a period of being NEET, or required to do a GRFW programme to prepare them for a mainstream programme. Some of the NEET respondents did not want to continue with learning beyond completion of the GRFW programme, whereas the non-NEET respondents were all on mainstream programmes.

In terms of influencers there were more instances of non-NEET respondents stating that parents/family members had inspired them, or that parents had had a significant influence on them engaging in education or training. Similarly, while both sets of respondents had had negative experiences at school, there were more instances where non-NEET respondents had been inspired or influenced by school staff to engage in education or training. In terms of friends and peers, there were instances in the NEET set of respondents who had been negatively influenced by friends.

For quick reference Table 3.2 below summarises the comparisons and contrasts between the NEET and the non-NEET respondent sets within the areas of motivation, perceptions/attitudes, circumstances, and influencers.

Table 3.2: Comparisons and contrasts between NEET and the non-NEET respondents within the areas of motivation, perceptions/attitudes, circumstances, and influencers

Area	Comparisons	Contrasts
Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ambition to work in a specific vocational area</li> <li>• Financial incentives important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NEET respondents have barriers to college and hence realising ambition</li> <li>• Some NEET respondents do not have ambition to work in a specific vocational area</li> </ul>
Perceptions/attitudes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education, training and employment desirable</li> <li>• There is a lack of jobs</li> <li>• College is prime route to employment in a specific vocation/ any decent job</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most NEET respondents apathetic; non-NEET respondents tended to be more ambitious</li> <li>• Most NEET respondents have pragmatic attitude to learning; most non-NEET respondents have intrinsic interest in learning</li> <li>• Non-NEET respondents have aversion to being NEET</li> </ul>
Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some non-NEET respondents NEET in the past</li> <li>• Some NEET respondents had been non-NEET in the past</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most NEET respondents not ready for mainstream study; non-NEET respondents all on mainstream programmes</li> <li>• Some NEET respondents do not want to continue learning beyond GRFW; non-NEET respondents all on mainstream programmes</li> </ul>
Influencers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Friends are important influencers</li> <li>• Older siblings are important influencers</li> <li>• College is an important influencer</li> <li>• Parents provide encouragement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More instances where non-NEET respondents influenced by parents/family</li> <li>• More instances where non-NEET respondents influenced by school</li> <li>• More instances where NEET respondents negatively influenced by friends</li> </ul>

### 3.4.3 Conclusion

- *What are the perceptions of NEET young people with regard to their likely future prospects?*

All of the respondents wanted to be in employment, education and training, and most had ambitions to work in a specific vocation, usually a skilled trade type occupation. Most respondents had a negative perception of their future prospects. Some respondents were less negative and attributed their NEET status to temporary circumstances. Analysis of respondent barriers to employment, education and training provide insight into these negative perceptions.

- *What barriers to employment, education or training are perceived by NEET young people?*

Barriers varied between respondents in terms of number of barriers and combination of barriers. Commonly arising barriers are lack of qualifications and core skills, lack of experience, lack of jobs, apathy, personal problems, financial problems, and immaturity. Less commonly arising barriers are confusion, lack of aptitude, employability skills, reluctance to go to college, difficulty getting onto a desired college course, and reluctance to travel.

- *What changes do they perceive are likely to help them to overcome these barriers and move into employment, education or training?*

Respondents did not have suggestions for overcoming most of the barriers that they mentioned. Suggestions that were mentioned were for overcoming lack of qualifications and experience barriers, lack of jobs, confusion, and one type of financial barrier.

An often suggested, change for overcoming the lack of qualifications and experience barriers was to go to college; more specifically, engage in a GRFW programme or, for those who could, enrol on a mainstream programme. The GRFW programme was sometimes seen as a route straight to employment or as a stepping-stone onto a mainstream programme or apprenticeship. Some respondents perceived speculatively asking firms for work experience independently of college as an alternative means of overcoming these barriers. Also, some respondents perceived engaging in voluntary work as a means of gaining work experience.

College was also perceived by respondents as a way of getting over the job shortage barrier in that college qualifications and experience made them more competitive in the job market. Connections to the labour market through friends and family were also perceived as a means of overcoming this barrier.

A suggested means of overcoming the confusion barrier was for there to be better careers advice and information on vocational training in school. The GRFW programme was also perceived, and experienced, as being a means of finding out about different vocational areas, and therefore informing decisions about college programmes and careers.

A suggested means of overcoming financial barriers for respondents that were concerned about how college would affect their benefits was to speak to a careers advisor or college financial advisor.

- *Who/what are the key influencers for NEET young people?*

Key influencers on respondents were friends, peers and older siblings. Many of the respondents were influenced by friends and older siblings to go to college; often when NEET friends went to go to college respondents had

started to think about going also. Conversely, respondents often stated that they had been led astray by friends at school, or filled their time seeing NEET friends, which could have 'normalised' NEET to them. Careers Scotland had influenced a number of respondents to go on the GRFW programme and was a key influencer in terms of referral onto the programme.

- *Do the perceptions of non-NEET young people differ from those of their NEET counterparts?*

The two respondent sets had similar perceptions of employment, education and training. Perceptions that came across in both sets were that employment, education and training is desirable, that there are few job opportunities, and that college is the prime route to overcoming barriers to employment. There did appear to be some differences in perceptions/attitudes. There were more instances of NEET respondents being apathetic, and more instances of non-NEET respondents being very ambitious. NEET respondents tended to have a pragmatic attitude to learning, whereas most of the non-NEET respondents were passionate about their area of study. Finally, non-NEET respondents had an aversion to being NEET.

- *What factors influence non-NEET young people of similar background to take up employment, education or training?*

Factors that influenced non-NEET respondents to take up employment, education and training varied between respondents. Factors that arose were ambition to work in a vocational area, intrinsic interest in the course subject matter, a perceived lack of alternative to going to college, stigma of not engaging in education or employment, and, for some respondents, receiving financial support with study.

- *Who/what are the key influencers for non-NEET young people?*

Key influencers on the non-NEET respondents were parents, and friends, peers and older siblings. Family was the most often mentioned influencer and many of the respondents had been influenced to take up education and training after being inspired or encouraged by parents and siblings. Friends and peers were also significant and often respondents stated that friends continuing with education influenced them to do the same, or they had been encouraged by friends. School was also an important influencer on some of the respondents; sometimes respondents had been inspired by a subject they had enjoyed at school, or had received encouragement from school staff.

## **Section 4 Action Research: school-parent intervention**

Section 4 relates to the action research phase of the project. The remit for the action research phase was to implement a school-parent intervention that involved the parents of potentially NEET secondary school pupils. The approach taken to the project was underpinned by Freire's (1970) theoretical understanding of critical education. That is that oppressed people, in this case the disengaged parents of potentially NEET pupils, can become empowered given the proper tools.

The importance of parents is often mentioned in the NEET literature. For example, research by the Centre for Research in Social Policy (March, 2005) found that young people are less likely to progress to NEET status upon leaving school when parents are involved in their child's educational decision-making and when parents have a positive attitude to the value of education. Despite evidence of the importance of this, there is very little advice and support for the parents of adolescents (see Henricson and Roker, 2000; O'Conner, 2002), which would promote such parent involvement. The mapping exercise outlined in Section 2.3.1 revealed that schools do have some links with parents through practices such as Parent Teacher Associations; however, the mapping exercise demonstrated that there are very few measures that target the parents of potentially NEET pupils; it is those parents who are least likely to get involved in conventional school-parent links.

Section 4 is divided into four subsections: Section 4.1 discusses existing parent interventions for consideration as the project intervention; Section 4.2 discusses the chosen project intervention; and Section 4.3 provides an evaluation of the chosen project intervention.

### **4.1 Existing school-parent models**

A literature review was carried out to research existing parent intervention models that could be adapted and used as the project intervention. Not all of the intervention models aim directly to promote parent interest in child educational attainment; however, they all aim to assist parents to engage positively with children and increased interest in educational attainment is linked to this. Seven potential interventions were identified; these are listed and described briefly below.

- Parenting programmes
- Parent helpline
- Parent self-help/friendship groups
- Parent liaison officers
- Parent resource centre
- Newsletters
- Home visits

## Parenting Programmes

There are several parenting programmes that have been developed that aim to improve family functioning. Typical topics for these programmes include communication skills, handling conflict, and encouragement.

### Parent helpline

A telephone helpline for parents to call to get information, support, or advice on parenting-related issues.

### Parent self-help/friendship groups

Self-help or friendship groups where parents can discuss and support each other on parenting related issues.

### Parent liaison officers

Key contact persons through whom parents can engage with the school. Responsibilities could include developing relationships with parents, providing information/support/advice to parents, and training other staff members on building relationships with parents.

### Parent resource centre

A resource centre where parents can access information on parenting-related issues.

### Newsletters

A letter for parents that provides information and support on parenting-related issues.

### Home visits

The pro-active engagement of parents through home visits to discuss child's educational outcomes.

## **4.2 Chosen model**

### Selected intervention

It was decided that a parenting programme would be the most appropriate intervention for the project. This decision was made by the project steering group (see Appendix 7 for list of steering group members) and was based on a number of factors. Firstly, it was thought that a parenting programme would have the greatest impact in that participants engage in an intense programme of face-to-face learning, using quality materials written by field experts. Also, because the teaching and learning materials are written, no development time

would be required; this was particularly appealing given the resource restraints for the project. Finally, it was thought that evaluating a parenting programme would be relatively straightforward.

Equally, many of the other interventions were ruled out because they were not thought appropriate, or as appropriate. A parent helpline, parent liaison officers, and home visits are long-term interventions that would involve the employment of staff and considerable involvement from schools. Another important factor was that the chosen intervention reached out to parents who may not normally engage with the school; a parent resource centre and again, a parent helpline, are dependent on parents being pro-active and making use of them, which was thought unlikely. Parent self-help groups, newsletters, and again, a parent resource centre, were ruled out because these were thought to have less of an impact than a parenting programme. Finally, it was stipulated in the remit for the project that the intervention should be fully evaluated and it was thought that it would be challenging to evaluate the impact of any of the other interventions.

#### Selected programme

The Positive Parenting programme: Time out for Teenagers was selected as the programme for the intervention. Again, this decision was made through consultation with the project steering group. The steering group reviewed six short listed programmes (see Appendix 8 for content, duration, and cost details for the short listed programmes). Four programmes were ruled out: one was discounted because of its high cost; another because it was more appropriate for the parents of primary school children; another because it was not specifically a parenting course; and another because the organisation did not have enough facilitators to deliver to multiple groups and were not willing to train facilitators to do so. Two programmes, Time Out for Teenagers and the Parent Network Scotland programme: Getting on with your Teenager, were short-listed further. Both programmes were thought to be equally appropriate for the intervention; the Positive Parenting programme was selected finally because of their enthusiasm at being involved in the project.

#### Intervention action plan

Five secondary schools, representing a cross section of secondary schools in Fife in terms of associated level of pupil deprivation, were invited to take part in the project. The schools were:

Beath High School  
Glenrothes High School  
Kirkland High School  
Viewforth High School  
Waid Academy

All five schools bought into the intervention and therefore there were potentially five facilitators required to deliver the programme. Five members of Adam Smith College staff with lecturing and/or experience of working with similar client groups were recruited as facilitators. The facilitators were then trained to deliver the programme by a Positive Parenting trainer during a one day training session. The five schools were asked to recruit parents to take part in the programme.

### **4.3 Intervention evaluation**

Section 4.3 provides a full evaluation of the intervention. Section 4.3 is divided into four subsections: Section 4.3.1 outlines the methods used to evaluate the intervention; Section 4.3.2 outlines the findings; Section 4.3.3 provides a discussion in relation to the findings; and Section 4.3.4 provides an overall conclusion.

#### **4.3.1 Method**

Four assessment methods were used to evaluate the success of the intervention. These were the programme recruitment rate, the programme retention rate, facilitator reflective diaries, and interviews with programme participants. Each assessment method is described in turn below.

##### **Recruitment rate**

A record of the number of participants who signed up to the programme was kept. This assessment method indicates how much demand there is for such a programme.

##### **Retention rate**

A record of participants who completed the programme was also kept. This assessment method indicates how beneficial participants found the programme.

##### **Facilitator reflective diaries**

Facilitators were asked to keep a weekly diary recording their thoughts and observations after each session.

##### **Participant interviews**

All programme participants were asked to take part in a telephone interview (see Appendix 9 for interview schedule).

### 4.3.2 Findings

#### Recruitment rate

Three groups were assembled containing a total of 22 individuals. These three groups will be referred to as Group A, Group B, and Group C from here on. Group A and Group C were single school groups and Group B was a composite group containing individuals from two schools. One of the five schools failed to recruit anyone onto the programme.

The 22 individuals translated into 18 family units or participant 'sets': fourteen people who had signed up on their own with no other family member; three people who had signed up with their partner; and one person who had signed up with a grown-up daughter. Please note from here on a family unit/participant set will be referred to in the singular as a 'participant'. See Table 4.1 below for details of recruitment rates and participant set type per group and across the three groups.

Table 4.1: Participant set type recruitment rate per group and total across the three groups

Participant set type	Group A	Group B	Group C	Total
Individual parents	7	2	5	14
Couples	1	2	0	3
Individual parents + other relative	0	1	0	1
Total no. of participants	8	5	5	18

Fourteen of the participants had a son in mind specifically and four of the participants had a daughter in mind specifically when taking up the programme. Nine of these children were in 1<sup>st</sup> year, three in 2<sup>nd</sup> year and two in 3<sup>rd</sup> year. See Table 4.2 and Table 4.3 below for details.

Table 4.2: Gender of child

Gender	
Male	Female
14	4

Table 4.3: School year group of child

School year group			
1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	Missing
9	3	2	4

## Retention rate

A total of eight participants completed the programme; five from Group A, three from Group B, and none from Group C. Across the three groups, the majority of the participants who started the programme completed it.

Three participants, all from Group C, had a sporadic attendance rate on the programme; that is, attended three or less of the six sessions. Reasons recorded for sporadic attendance were sickness, ill health, lack of childcare, a mix up with transport, absentmindedness, and clashes with other appointments.

Four participants withdrew from the programme before completion, two from group A and one from each of the other two groups. It was recorded that the two participants from the same group withdrew because they knew other members of the group, which meant they felt uncomfortable. It was recorded that the other two participants withdrew for health and personal reasons.

One participant from each group did not start the programme. Two because they could not make most of the six sessions, and one because she decided that she was no longer interested in taking up the programme. See Table 4.4 below for details on programme retention.

Table 4.4: Participant retention rate per group and total across the three groups

Retention	Group A	Group B	Group C	Total
Completed programme	5	3	0	8
Had sporadic attendance rate	0	0	3	3
Withdrew from programme	2	1	1	4
Did not start programme	1	1	1	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>

## Facilitator reflective diaries

Facilitator reflective diaries were analysed for positive and negative thoughts and observations. Please note, because one of the three facilitators was male and only two of the 15 participants who started the programme were male, all persons will be referred to as female to protect anonymity. In terms of an overarching evaluation of the programme, two of the facilitators were positive about the programme and felt that it had been successful with their groups, and one of the facilitators was positive about the programme but felt that the success of the programme was limited for her group. All three facilitators reflected in their diaries that they perceived that participants had engaged well in the sessions. An example comment from each facilitator is:

“I think the sessions went really well. The parents enjoyed the meetings and it provoked them into thinking more about their life and that of their teenager.”

“The parents listened well and appeared to be interested in the course. I view them as being genuinely concerned and having a desire to improve the behaviour and wellbeing of their children.”

“We had some really excellent sessions where the parents went away feeling like a weight has been lifted off their shoulders.”

Table 4.5 below summarises the positive and negative reflections drawn from the diaries. Each reflection is explored in more detail below.

Table 4.5: Facilitator positive and negative reflections

Positive reflections	Negative reflections
Gradual ‘buy in’	Defensiveness
Group discussions	Non-commitment
Home tasks	Facilitation
Mutual support	Aftercare
Child involvement	Practicalities

### Positive reflections

#### Gradual ‘buy in’

All three facilitators reflected on how participants gradually bought into the programme after being initially sceptical and reticent. For example, after the first session one facilitator noted in her diary that one participant had been so disengaged she did not think she would return the following week. The participant did return and by the second session commented that she was benefiting from the programme. After the final session, the facilitator wrote:

“The lady who had been quite negative at the start said that she was glad that she had come and that she had got something out of the meetings. She no longer felt alone or that her son was the only ‘bad one’.”

Facilitators also noted in their diaries how they perceived enthusiasm for the programme increasing over the weeks; participants went from being quiet at the start of the programme to increasingly showing more interest as the weeks went on. For example, after the final session the above-mentioned facilitator wrote:

“The parents came in with examples of behaviour and discussed how they had dealt with it, what they think had caused it, and what the outcomes were. They are all eager to share their experiences now, especially if they have a positive outcome.”

### Group discussion

A major element of the programme is task-based group discussion and the sharing of experiences and advice. All three facilitators reflected in their diaries how beneficial group discussion had been. Most of the parents contributed to discussions, which were often lively, and sometime participants came up with their own solutions for dealing with problems. Example comments from the diaries were:

“The parents began to be very open about their personal situations, of the difficulties they were currently experiencing, and past life events which were important to them.”

“The ‘We All Have Needs’ activity was an excellent activity that was met with great discussion and led to them discussing the needs of their ‘young teens’.”

### Home tasks

Another element of the programme is a weekly task where participants try out a task at home; for example, giving their child a responsibility, or having a conversation with their child. The facilitators noted in their diaries that when parents had done the weekly task they reported back that they had found it helpful. One facilitator noted in her diary how success with a weekly task had given a shy member of the group a confidence boost:

“One of the participants told the group how she had introduced a strategy of earning pocket money in her household. This was received with anger from her daughter, but during the week, the daughter relented and conformed to the new rules. The other group members gave her a great cheer and she raised her head with pride for the first time at our group sessions.”

Another facilitator wrote in her diary that a participant had had a breakthrough with her son after trying out home tasks:

“One participant told the group that her son had cuddled up to her on the sofa for the first time in months.”

### Mutual support

An important element to the programme is the notion of parents supporting each other. All three facilitators noted examples of this in their diaries. For example, one facilitator wrote;

“During the last session one participant had had one of the worst weeks in ages with her son. The support network from the rest of the group was incredible as they discussed the way forward to help her through this time.”

One facilitator noted that her group had decided that they were going to keep on meeting regularly after the programme had finished, she wrote:

“One of the parents asked how many weeks were left and I explained that there were only one week left. They said that they were really enjoying the course and it was a shame it had to end. They agreed that it would be good for them to still get together and share ideas and discuss issues with each other.”

### Child involvement

Two of the facilitators noted in their diaries that some participants had reported that their children had taken an interest in the programme. For example, they wanted to know what happened at the sessions, read the parent manuals, enjoyed participation in the tasks, and one child asked if he could attend the sessions with his mother.

### Negative reflections

#### Defensiveness

All three facilitators reflected in their diaries how participants came across as being defensive about being invited onto the programme. One facilitator also noted that there was concern in her group regarding confidentiality and whether she would divulge anything that was said during the sessions to the school or any other authority. One facilitator noted that parents in her group thought that if they did not attend the meeting the school would look badly on them. Following the first session, one facilitator wrote in her diary:

“Parents were a bit unsure. One parent asked who had decided that their children were bad and that they were bad parents and that’s why they had to attend the meeting.”

Facilitators had not been involved in the participant selection process and not all schools had sent a member of staff to attend the first session to answer any questions relating to this.

### Non-commitment

As stated above, one of the groups had participants with a sporadic attendance rate. The facilitator concluded that the participants in her group were not fully committed to the programme.

“While they appeared genuinely interested, attendance was erratic to the point of neglect. My overall view of the course is that the parents did not take full advantage of the information and help the course had to offer.”

After the fourth session, the facilitator noted in her diary that she thought that poor attendance on the programme related to the chaotic lifestyles of the participants, rather than a failing with the programme:

“The parents were ‘disadvantaged’ in some way. I view that generally speaking the parents appreciated what the course was trying to achieve, but could not give it a high enough priority when comparing it with other demands.”

### Facilitation

One facilitator noted in her diary that during one session she found it difficult to facilitate a member of her group who dominated discussion and made the other participants feel uncomfortable. She wrote:

“One participant felt the need to divulge her whole life story and, even though I expressed concern about her pouring her entire story out to us, she still felt the need to continue. This was received by the other group members with a look of shock at some of the information revealed.”

One of the facilitators found it difficult to get through the session plan as discussions would often last longer than the time allotted and it was difficult to get participants to move on to the next item.

### Aftercare

Participants in the three groups asked facilitators about what support was available to them after the programme had finished. All three of the facilitators reflected that they were concerned with the lack of aftercare for participants post-programme.

### Practicalities

Facilitators perceived some drawbacks to the practical arrangement for the programme. Two facilitators did not like their venues, these being a school and a hotel bar; the school had negative connotations for some group members and this may have affected participants negatively, and the acoustics in the hotel let sound travel, presenting a privacy problem, and the seating set up made it difficult to include everyone in the conversation. Two of the facilitators commented that they thought that it would be better if parents were not recruited from the same community; it was thought that if participants did not know each other they would be able to speak more openly and there would be less risk of participants offending each other.

## Participant interviews

An attempt was made to contact all 15 participants who had started the programme. A total of twelve telephone interviews was carried out: six with 'completers', that is participants who completed the programme; six with 'non-completers'; three with 'sporadics', that is participants who had sporadic attendance on the programme; and three with 'withdrawers', that is participants who withdrew from the programme. The three participants who did not take part could not be contacted. Interviews were carried out approximately two months after the programme had finished, so that participants had time to practise what they had learnt and reflect on its success. Please note that all participant names have been changed to protect anonymity.

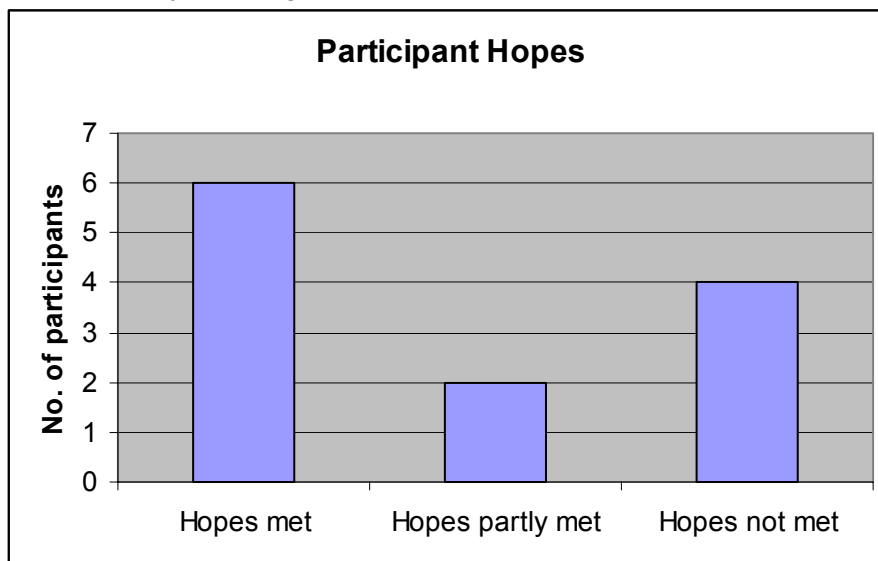
### Quantitative findings

Participants were asked if the hopes they had for the programme had been met. The most commonly mentioned hope was help and ideas on how to control their teenager's behaviour. Other hopes were to develop better coping strategies, to meet other parents in the same situation, to be a better parent and develop a better relationship with their child, and to receive encouragement and be reassured that they are not a bad parent. Six participants felt that their hopes had been met, three completers and three sporadics, and two participants, both completers, felt that their hopes had been partly met. Four participants felt that their hopes had not been met, one of these was a completer and three of these were withdrawers. See Table 4.6 and Graph 4.1 below.

Table 4.6: Participants who felt that their hopes had been met, partly met, and not met by the programme, by participant type

Participant type	Hopes met	Hopes partly met	Hopes not met
Completer	3	2	1
Non-completer - sporadic	3	0	0
Non-completer - withdraw	0	0	3
All	6	2	4

Graph 4.1: Participants who felt that their hopes had been met, partly met, and not met by the programme

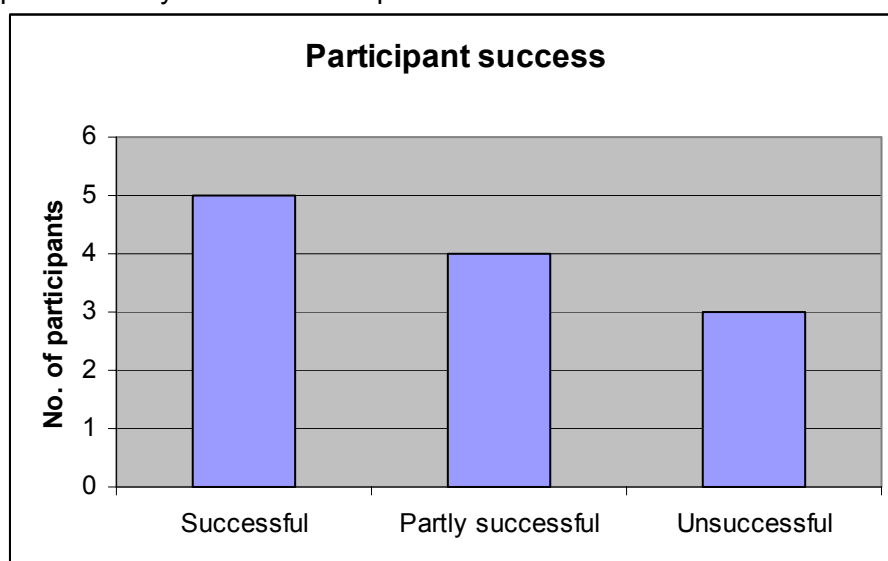


In terms of behaviour, participants were asked if they had successfully put what they had learnt on the programme into practice. Five participants had been successful, three completers and two sporadics; four participants had been partly successful, three completers and one sporadic; and three participants had been unsuccessful, all withdrawers. See Table 4.7 and Graph 4.2 below.

Table 4.7: Participants who successfully, partly successfully, and unsuccessfully put what they had learnt into practice, by participant type

Participant type	Successful	Partly successful	Unsuccessful
<b>Completer</b>	3	3	0
<b>Non-completer - sporadic</b>	2	1	0
<b>Non-completer - withdraw</b>	0	0	3
<b>All</b>	5	4	3

Graph 4.2: All participants who successfully, partly successfully, and unsuccessfully put what they had learnt into practice

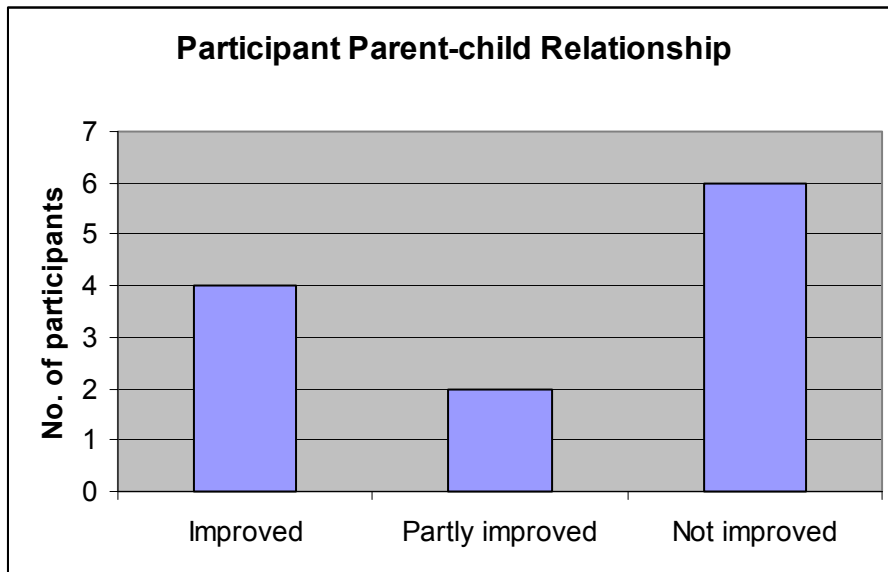


Participants were asked if they felt that their relationship with their child had improved. Four participants felt that their relationship had improved, one completer and three sporadics; two participants felt that their relationship had partly improved, both completers; and six participants felt that their relationship had not improved, three completers and three withdrawers. See Table 4.8 and Graph 4.3 below.

Table 4.8: Participants who felt that the relationship with their child had improved, partly improved, or not improved, by participant type

Participant type	Improved	Partly improved	Not improved
Completer	1	2	3
Non-completer - sporadic	3	0	0
Non-completer - withdraw	0	0	3
All	4	2	6

Graph 4.3: All participants who felt that the relationship with their child had improved, partly improved, or not improved

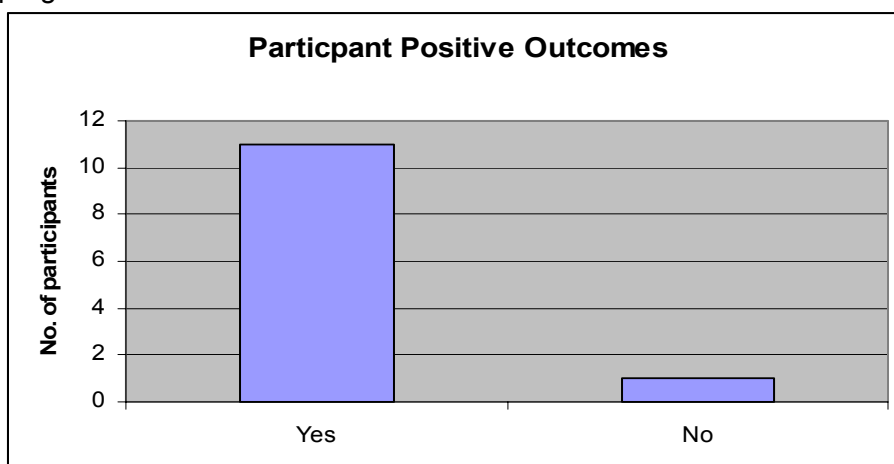


Participants were asked if they felt that they had got anything positive out of the programme. Eleven participants felt that they had, six completers and five non-completers; and one participant who had withdrawn from the programme felt that she had not got anything positive out of the programme. See Table 4.9 and Graph 4.4 below.

Table 4.9: Participants who felt that they had got something positive from the programme

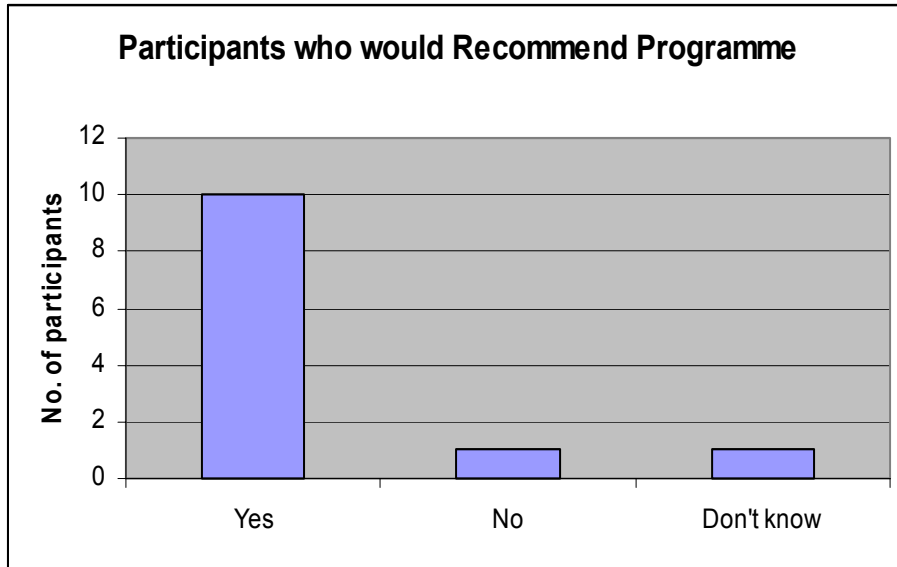
Participant type	Yes	No
Completer	6	0
Non-completer - sporadic	3	0
Non-completer - withdraw	2	1
All	11	1

Graph 4.4: All participants who felt that they had got something positive from the programme

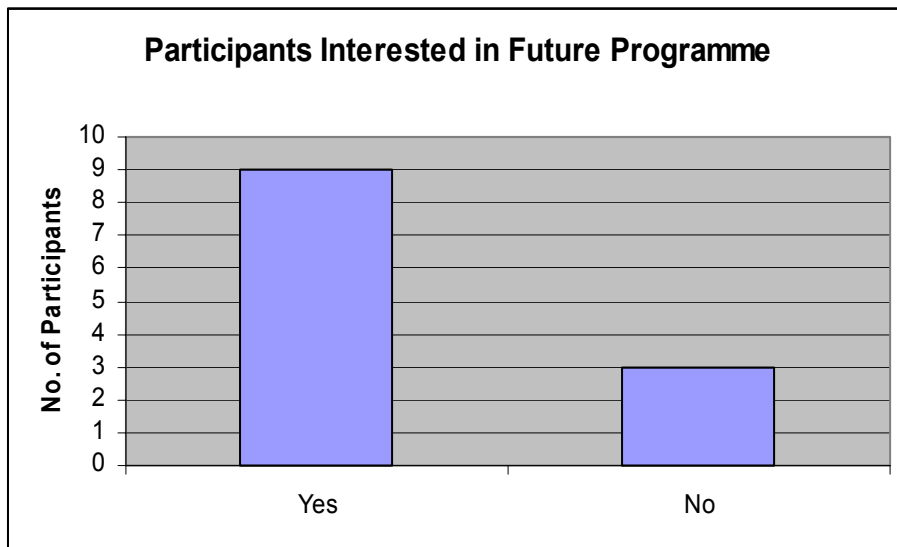


Ten of the twelve participants would recommend the programme to another parent, and nine of the twelve participants said that they would be interested in another programme in future. See Graph 4.5 and Graph 4.6 below.

Graph 4.5: All participants who would recommend the programme to another parent



Graph 4.6: All participants who would be interested in another programme in future



### Qualitative findings

Table 4.10 below summarises the positive and negative comments made by participants. Each comment is expanded upon below.

Table 4.10: Positive and negative comments made by participants

Positive	Negative
Ideas work	No new ideas/ideas don't work
Handbook useful and can be referred back to	Not appropriate to some parent circumstances
Group discussion useful	Concerns about confidentiality
Mutual support and contact with similar parents beneficial	Non-involvement of children in the sessions

### Positive comments

There were many positive comments made by participants. Some participants felt that their relationship with their child had improved. Example comments were:

“Our relationship has improved a lot. I am better with my son and have more time for him. I hear his side more and am less confrontational; when the school rang, I used to be like: What have you done this time!”

(Jane, Completer)

“I learnt how to talk to him instead of shouting. He has calmed right down. I sit down and have chats with him and it works!”

(Sally, Sporadic)

Some participants felt that they had seen some improvement in their relationship with their child. Example comments were:

“We still argue every day but I am stronger with her. I've cut down on her pocket money and she does more to help me out.”

(Ellie, Completer)

“I got a few useful tips that I have used and some of them have worked; my son is not violent any more, does not argue as much, he has calmed down a bit.”

(Alice, Sporadic)

“I've had some tough times since the course finished, but I negotiate with him more, I listen more, which I used to find hard.”

(Dana, Completer)

Almost all of the participants mentioned the benefit of having contact with people in the same situation as themselves. Some participants mentioned how they continued to support each other after the programme had finished. Example comments were:

“By seeing other mums, I realised I am not on my own. Everyone goes through it and it is not just me who has a problem child.”

(Sally, Sporadic)

“Sometimes it can be really isolating – ‘what have I done?’ type thing. I wanted to find out I wasn’t alone. Being around people was great; we shared feelings and ideas and there was a feeling of belonging. We were able to laugh about some of it and put it into context! It is not the end of the world, not such a big thing.”

(Dana, Completer)

“We all bonded really well and that was the strongest thing that came out of it. We still see each other and I am going to set up a support group so people can come along and offload.”

(Fiona, Completer)

In relation to this, many of the participants mentioned how they had received advice through group discussions. Example comments were:

“We could be really open and give each other advice. We could say ‘don’t do that’, or ‘try doing it another way’.”

(Paula, Withdrawer)

“There were a lot of things said by other people in the group that were good and were not in the handbook.”

(Kelly, Completer)

Many of the participants spoke favourably about the handbooks. Most of the participants liked the content, and many of them said that they still refer to the handbook. An example comment was:

“The handbook is very useful and there is quite a lot of information that you can pick up on. You could look back on it - I’m still reading it!”

(Jenny, Completer)

One participant had attended the first session only, but had continued to use the handbook:

“The handbook is great, brought it to light. I have tried all the stuff before, but just seeing it printed makes a difference.”

(Kay, Withdrawer)

### Negative comments

There were some negative comments made by participants. Some criticised the course content for not having any new ideas and some did not think the ideas were useful. Example comments were:

“There was nothing in the course I have not tried before; it is not rocket science!”

(Dana, Completer)

“I did not find the course very good at all. You could try the stuff but at the end of the six weeks, are you really going to get anywhere?”

(Helen, Withdrawer)

Some participants had tried the ideas in the course but had not been successful. An example comment was:

“I went through the handbook, but to no avail! It is easier to read than to put into practice.”

(Linda, Sporadic)

The programme was sometimes criticised for not being appropriate to a participant’s particular situation. Example comments were:

“The course did not match my situation; it has typical teenagers in it and my teenager is not typical, my teenager is extreme - in trouble with the police.”

(Kate, Completer)

“I realise that the mentor was not there to ‘teach’ or as a ‘professional’, but I do think it would have been better if she had a wider scale of knowledge about drugs and alcohol.”

(Kay, Withdrawer)

Although some participants commented that they felt more comfortable being in a group with people that they knew, one participant withdrew from the programme because she was concerned about confidentiality. She commented:

“Our community is very small. You can promise confidentiality and all that, but it will never happen. I am not a private person but, at the same time, I would not like to have everyone round here know my business. The next time someone is drunk they will tell everyone in the pub.”

(Kay, Withdrawer)

One participant stated that she would have liked her child to have attended some of the sessions, or have had more involvement in the programme:

“I would have liked my son to have come along for the last couple of weeks. It would have given him a chance to voice his opinions as children don’t get a voice.”

(Kay, Completer)

### **4.3.3 Discussion**

The schools had the parent contacts and therefore it was necessary for recruitment to be done by the schools themselves. As directed by Positive Parenting, school Guidance Departments were advised to promote the

programme face-to-face in the first instance, and then send invitations to interested parties requesting them to RSVP by way of signing up to the programme. To ensure transport was not a barrier to take-up, participants were offered free transport to and from the programme sessions.

The recruitment rate for the programme was below target, with 22 individual places taken up out of a total of 30 (six places per school). There were a number of factors that should be taken into account when drawing conclusions about the demand for such a programme.

Firstly, time restraints for the project created some practical barriers that may have hindered parent take up. School guidance staff had only two weeks to promote the programme to parents face-to-face and this proved to be challenging as the two weeks fell during their busiest time of the year. Also, one school had reservations about contacting parents to ask them to join the programme for fear that it would cause offence. This school only mentioned the programme to parents when contacting them about something else and then only when they sensed it to be appropriate; this meant that the programme was not promoted to many parents face-to-face.

Although travel arrangements were made where required for participants, it was not possible to make childcare provision. Lack of childcare was occasionally mentioned by parents as a reason for not taking up the programme, or not attending a session.

Lack of knowledge about the ethos behind the programme among guidance staff may have affected parent recruitment. According to Positive Parenting, some parents feel intimidated, or feel that they have been branded as a bad parent, and it is therefore important that the friendly and non-judgemental ethos behind the programme is put across when recruiting parents to try to allay any fears or concerns. Guidance staff had only written information about the programme and had not had any contact with Positive Parenting; schools were invited to attend the facilitator training day, but, because it was during the Easter holidays, they were unavailable. Facilitator reflective diaries state that parents were defensive, which suggests that guidance staff may not have put the programme ethos across to parents, and therefore there might have been more recruitment success if guidance staff had been better briefed on the programme.

The retention rate for participants who started the programme was good. Only four participants who started the programme withdrew and the reasons recorded for withdrawal were personal. Similarly, reasons recorded for absences by the three participants who had a sporadic attendance rate were also personal. This was confirmed by participant interviews: five of the six non-completers who took part in interviews cited personal circumstances for non-participation; and only one cited a failing with the actual programme. Three participants did not start the programme, but, again, this was usually because of other commitments, rather than an issue with the programme.

Facilitator reflective diaries were generally positive about the programme and the extent of its success. All three facilitators mentioned how they felt that participants gradually bought into the programme, and how beneficial they thought group discussions and home tasks had been. The facilitators also observed mutual support between participants; this success was exemplified in one group where the facilitator reported that participants had decided to continue to meet regularly after the programme finished. This was also mentioned during participant telephone interviews. Another indicator of programme success was that parents often reported to facilitators that their children had shown a positive interest in the programme, and that the programme had stimulated a dialogue between parent and child.

There was one group where the facilitator was less positive about the success of the programme. Poor group attendance rates affected momentum as the facilitator often had to deliver the same session twice, or postpone a session when no one attended; this meant that, despite a two week extension, there were not enough allotted weeks to complete the programme. A higher recruitment rate may have benefited the success of this group, as there would be more likely to be regulars to move the programme through the six session topics. Despite this, the facilitator believed that the participants had benefited from the sessions they had attended; this was confirmed by telephone interviews with respondents in this group.

Lack of aftercare was mentioned by facilitators and was also implied during participant interviews in that most of the participants would be interested in another programme in future. Given that the intervention was a pilot, it was not possible to offer aftercare or follow up sessions/support to participants.

Discussion overrun was an issue for facilitators in that it was difficult for them to get through a planned session in the two hour slot. However, facilitator reflective diaries and participant interviews revealed that participants found discussion particularly beneficial and therefore this was not necessarily bad as it meant that parents were empowered to control what they wanted from the sessions. This was also in accordance with the theoretical approach to the project.

Confidentiality-related issues with recruiting participants from the same community were also mentioned by facilitators and by a participant during a telephone interview. However, some participants thought that it was beneficial to have community-specific groups because they felt more comfortable around people they knew. Also, it should be noted that because the schools were in different geographical locations, the potential for mixing groups was limited as, by doing so, may then have created travel barriers for some participants.

Other less positive facilitator reflections tended to relate to unique circumstances and were not a criticism of the programme, or how beneficial they thought it was to participants; for example, an overzealous participant, or venue problems.

Participant interviews revealed that participants had positive to mixed experiences of success on the programme in terms of meeting their hopes, improving their child's behaviour, and improving their parent-child relationship. This was encouraging given that the programme was only six sessions long in duration, and, especially for participants with older children, behavioural patterns were well established and therefore likely to be difficult to change.

Hopes varied between participants, and some had greater expectations than others, therefore perceived improvement in child behaviour and the parent-child relationship is perhaps a better indicator of success. Improvement in child behaviour was fairly successful among participants who completed the programme: half had had success and half had had part-success; none of the participants had been unsuccessful. Surprisingly, non-completers who had sporadic attendance on the programme had also had success or part-success with improving their child's behaviour. Improvement in the parent-child relationship had been less successful among completers. Only one felt that the relationship had improved greatly; and half said there had been no improvement. Again, surprisingly, the non-completers who had sporadic attendance perceived their parent-child relationship to have improved.

The three non-completers who had withdrawn from the programme had not seen an improvement in their child's behaviour, or their parent-child relationship. This was perhaps unsurprising as they had not completed the programme and were therefore unlikely to get any benefit from the programme. However, two of these participants did question how beneficial the programme was likely to have been if they had completed it, with one citing this as her reason for withdrawal.

Success in terms of participants feeling that the programme was worthwhile was high. This was reflected in that the majority of the participants would recommend the programme to another parent, and would be interested in another programme in future. Some of the completers were critical of the programme; had limited success with the programme; or did not feel that the programme was appropriate to their situation but continued to attend. A major benefit for participants was group discussion and support from other parents. Almost all of the participants mentioned how they benefited from this and one respondent even stated that she had been inspired by the programme to start up a support group for parents.

### Project implications

A number of implications for future projects of this kind were generated through the evaluation process and project steering group discussions. These are discussed below.

Parents would benefit from continuous support opportunities with bringing up their teenagers. The parents benefited from a single programme and it is therefore logical that regular interventions throughout parenthood would reap greater benefit still. Pre-teenager programmes with the parents of older

primary school children would also be beneficial as there is more likely to be success with modifying behavioural patterns before they become entrenched.

In terms of recruitment, the programme should be oversubscribed to compensate for inevitable withdrawal by some participants. To ensure demand, those promoting the programme should be knowledgeable about the programme so that they are able to persuade parents of its potential benefits. The recruitment process must not reinforce feelings of inadequacy in parents, as this may be a barrier to take-up, and goes against the philosophy of the project. Recruitment should be done over a long period time to ensure that it is handled sensitively and face-to-face with potential recruits, and a member of school staff should attend the start of the first programme session to answer any concerns participants may have regarding the participant selection process. Alternatively, recruitment through Parent Forums may have fewer negative connotations for parents than Guidance Departments and may therefore enhance take-up. Recruitment and retention may also be improved if childcare is made available.

In terms of parent group composition, it is not conclusive whether participants should be recruited from the same community, or whether they should be recruited from mixed communities. The project found that there were advantages and disadvantages with both: some participants felt that they could talk more openly in front of people they knew, whereas others were concerned about confidentiality.

An appropriate venue for the programme could be a college or college outreach centre. Such spaces are equipped for learning situations, but do not have the negative connotations that a school may have. Using a college as a venue is an opportunity to introduce participants to learning and may provide the first step onto further study, which participants may otherwise not have had.

In terms of programme delivery, it may be beneficial for children to be involved in the programme as the programme is essentially about them. For example, children could be invited to sessions, or another programme could run parallel involving a leisure activity that parents and children could engage in together.

#### **4.3.4 Conclusion**

The aim of the action research was to bring about a NEET prevention intervention involving the parents of potentially NEET secondary school pupils. The parents of potentially NEET pupils across several Fife schools participated in the Time Out for Teenagers programme, a programme linked to NEET prevention in that it aims to help parents engage more positively with their children. The intervention was fairly successful and it would be beneficial to repeat the intervention, taking on board the lessons learned from the pilot, on a wider scale so that more parents can benefit from the programme, or a programme like it.

The definitive success indicator for the intervention would be the school progression route statistics for the children of the parents involved in the intervention. However, this is impractical as, at present, the children are still in school; and also, as there are many variables that can affect NEET progression, it would be impossible to attribute future NEET prevention or otherwise to the programme. The most workable indicator is participant interview responses to whether they felt that their child's behaviour had improved, or their relationship with their child had improved. Here there were mixed responses, although overall most participants, including those who had sporadic attendance on the programme, felt that their child's behaviour had improved and their relationship with their child had improved at least to some extent. This is a real achievement, given that the programme was short and involved the parents of children who already had, in some cases, severe behavioural problems.

In terms of programme recruitment and retention rates, success was mixed. There were enough participants recruited to assemble three groups; however, not as many parents benefited from the programme as there was capacity to accommodate, especially considering that some participants who were recruited onto the programme were not able to start it. Below target take-up rates could reflect a low demand for such a programme, although it should be considered that demand may have been affected by time constraints and lack of knowledge about the programme among recruiters, and the unavailability of childcare for participants. The retention rate for the programme was good, with only a small number of participants who started the programme withdrawing; and the majority of participants who had a sporadic attendance rate, or withdrew from the programme, attributed this to personal reasons rather than a failing with the programme.

From the perspectives of the participants and facilitators, the intervention was, in general, successful. Interviews with participants and facilitator reflective diaries indicate that the majority of the participants benefited from the programme through either the stimulation of dialogue with their child, improving the relationship with their child, improving the behaviour of their child, and/or receiving support from other parents. Almost all of the participants particularly benefited from having contact with parents in a similar situation to their own, and for many this was the greatest benefit of the programme.

## **APPENDIX 1: National NEET strategy summary extract**

Taken from More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education, Employment or Training in Scotland, Scottish Executive, June 2006, p47-p50

### **ACTION: PRE-16**

We are transforming the opportunities for and expectations of all pupils, including and especially those who are at risk of becoming NEET through a mix of action across mainstream education and specific targeted measures. Key actions include:

#### **Providing flexible, personalised learning opportunities and developing employability:**

(i) Implementing *A Curriculum for Excellence* to improve choice and flexibility and develop the wide range of capacities young people need to succeed in the modern world, and ensure they remain fully engaged throughout their school career.

(ii) Implementing *Assessment is for Learning* to ensure high quality learning and teaching tailored to the abilities, preferences and life circumstances of every child.

(iii) Recognising young people's wider achievements through giving credit to their different skills and abilities.

(iv) Simplifying the structure of qualifications to widen opportunities and improve progression for all our young people through reviewing Standard Grade and its links with other National Qualifications.

(v) Developing suitable models and expanding choice for work-related vocational learning, including Skills for Work courses, within schools, colleges and partner organisations in order that all young people can develop their vocational and employability skills.

#### **Ensuring appropriate support for all learners regardless of abilities, needs and wider circumstances:**

(vi) Additional Support for Learning to ensure that the support needs of all children are properly assessed and monitored and appropriate support is put in place.

(vii) Targeting additional action for those groups who currently do not benefit appropriately from school. Including implementing the forthcoming recommendations of the Ministerial working group on improving outcomes for looked after children, in order to improve the achievements and employability of looked after children and care leavers.

#### **Transforming the learning environment:**

(viii) Investing in the Schools of Ambition programme to bring about a step change in ambition and achievement to transform the educational outcomes for all children in those schools.

(ix) Highlighting and promoting excellence throughout the system through the adoption of the new excellence standard in school and education authority inspection and supporting that through extensive guidance and good practice resources.

(x) Establishing a broad programme of leadership development to foster talent and improving the training and development opportunities for teachers.

(xi) Investing further new resources for new teachers, including taking account of severe deprivation to allow local authorities to address the link between deprivation and low attainment.

**Focus on outcomes:**

(xii) Modernising the improvement framework to focus on securing better outcomes for children, requiring the adoption of more flexible performance indicators which track and monitor the achievement of individual children, support a culture of innovation in schools.

(xiii) Ensure better support for children across services through integrated planning, a single assessment framework, and the introduction of inspection of integrated children's services.

(xiv) Careers Scotland will review its current deployment of resources (generic careers advisers and specialist key workers) in order to improve school leaver destinations and pilot an enhanced careers resource for selected schools in selected NEET areas which have high negative school leaver destinations.

**ACTION: POST-16**

**Guaranteeing options on leaving school:**

(i) Scottish Enterprise (SEn) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), including Careers Scotland (CS), will continue to build on the success of - and strengthen linkages between - GR4W (including Lifeskills) and Skillseekers. SEn and HIE should further consider how the national training programmes can be developed to improve vocational pathways pre and post-16.

(ii) The Scottish Executive (SE) will review the Youth Training Guarantee (YTG) with a view to developing a new guarantee for school leavers, together with an improved vocational training model, testing out these approaches in the 10 schools participating in the CS pilot in NEET target areas.

(iii) Local authorities, together with their partners, will collectively plan and articulate the training and support for 16-19 year olds they will guarantee to deliver in their area. Building on their statutory duty to plan for the employability of young people who will cease to be looked after, this will make specific reference to the support and provision available to care leavers.

(iv) Project Scotland will set out its proposals for ensuring that young people NEET/at risk of becoming NEET can engage with and sustain volunteering opportunities.

**Losing no-one:**

(v) The SE will specify the core management information required - at a national and local level - from CS on young people NEET, recognising that local partners may wish further enhancements.

(vi) CS will take lead responsibility - at a national and local level - for working in partnership with the SE, local authorities and schools to establish and maintain a national 14-19 database.

**Supported transitions and sustained opportunities:**

(vii) The SE, to build improvements into policies and practices at points of transition and across the post-16 sector, will roll out Post-School Psychological Services to those NEET

target areas not currently covered by Pathfinder activity; with a view to further considering national roll out.

(viii) SEN and HIE will support - through contract management and quality improvement processes - the professional development of service providers in order to raise the quality of what's on offer across the board.

(ix) The SE will support the Scottish Funding Council to implement the action plan in *Learning for All* to continue to improve engagement, retention, and progression in further education.

(x) The SE will develop an employer engagement strategy, complementing other activity with employers, aimed at increasing the range and type of work-related and job opportunities for young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET.

## **ACTION: FINANCIAL INCENTIVES**

### **Ensuring learning is a financially viable option:**

(i) The Scottish Executive (SE) will review the financial support arrangements for 16-19 year olds in Scotland, in the light of the UK Government's recent review, addressing the specific issue of parity for young people in education and those on vocational training.

(ii) The SE will consider ways to promote progression from informal to formal learning and to improve training for those in low-paid low-skilled work, specifically through the development and piloting of Activity Agreements and Allowances for 16/17 year olds who are NEET and Learning Agreements for 16 and 17 year olds in work without training.

(iii) The SE will commission further research to test the impact of EMAs on changing outcomes for young people at risk of becoming NEET and will assess ways in which to maximise the potential of EMAs to encourage retention, attainment and progression for young people in sub-groups who are known to be at risk of becoming NEET.

## **ACTION: THE RIGHT SUPPORT**

### **Intensive, one to one support from key workers:**

(i) Careers Scotland (CS) will continue to provide a highly accessible, highly skilled, key worker service to young people who most benefit from intensive support in order to progress towards the labour market.

### **Building the skills and employability focus of a range of providers who deal with NEET and at risk NEET:**

(ii) CS will build the capacity of the whole organisation in working with the NEET group and those at risk, recognising that a range of responses is needed in order to meet the needs of these young people.

(iii) CS will take the lead in building the capacity of - and strengthening operational links with - specialist services (e.g. social and health services, in order to promote employability as an integral part of personal planning - not an add-on.

(iv) The SE will support local partnerships to further develop common assessment processes, and will request details of proposed action to progress this within local delivery plans.

**Losing no-one:**

(v) CS, with local authorities and schools, will provide a systematic follow-up service for school leavers who do not have a positive outcome on leaving school, and those who do not go to or who drop out of secondary school.

(vi) CS will undertake a follow-up survey of school leavers (a) tracking leavers with negative destinations in the October and then (b) tracking all school leavers, following the annual School Leaver Destination Report, in order to better track progress in the post-school transition year.

**ACTION: JOINT COMMITMENT AND ACTION**

**Focussing on where the need is greatest:**

(i) The Scottish Executive ( SE) will establish seven geographic target areas - Glasgow, Clackmannanshire, Dundee, Inverclyde, North and East Ayrshire, West Dunbartonshire - to lead developmental work and take forward a series of local tasks as detailed in para. 130.

**Losing no-one:**

(ii) The SE will set a challenging national target - supported by related local targets - for year on year NEET reduction.

(iii) The SE will undertake research in order to better understand the BME profile of the NEET population in Scotland and the particular barriers facing NEET individuals from an ethnic minority background.

**Delivery which can meet the challenge:**

(iv) Local partners, using existing structures where possible ( e.g. Community Planning, Integrated Education and Children's Services Planning, Welfare to Work), will collectively plan and develop the service infrastructure required to meet the needs of the NEET group, and those at risk of becoming NEET, as detailed in para. 130.

(v) Local authorities will lead and put in place a joint delivery plan, integrating with pre-existing plans where possible, for the local NEET target, and account to the Executive on progress.

(vi) The SE will set up a NEET Delivery Team to support implementation of the NEET strategy by developing and sharing best practice, handling funding incentives, improving the employability focus of specialist agencies, monitoring performance against targets (national and local), and addressing other relevant national issues within the wider Employability Framework.

## APPENDIX 2: Local NEET strategy summary extract

Taken from Strategic Action Plan 2006-2008: Agenda for action to Tackle NEET in Fife (14-19 Years), Fife NEET Action Plan Group, December 2006, p18-p25

<b>1: Audit of Activity</b>					
	<b>Priorities for Action</b>	<b>Current Identified Tasks</b>	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Agency/ Individual</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
<b>1A</b>	Improve intelligence in relation to the status of 18-19 year old NEET group	Carry out quarterly analysis of claimant count for 18-19 year olds, including details of duration of claims	3 months  9 months	Jobcentre Plus  Colleges	Improve knowledge of scale of NEET  Improve targeting of support  Enable better tracking
<b>1B</b>	Ensure early identification of those at risk of becoming NEET	Ensure agreed criteria are in place for early identification of young people at risk of NEET  Ensure the information is shared with key partners	6 months	Education Service  Education Service	Enable early introduction of targeted interventions
<b>1C</b>	Establish a mechanism for the drawing together and verification of key client group data at a Fife level	Liaise with Local Children's Service groups and Joint Action Teams re sharing intelligence  Liaise with Scottish Executive contacts re data sources and verification	3 months	NEET Strategy Delivery Group (NSDG)	Improve intelligence of sub-groups  Improve measurement and analysis against baselines

<b>2: Mapping of Service Delivery</b>					
	<b>Priorities for Action</b>	<b>Current Identified Tasks</b>	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Agency/ Individual</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
<b>2A</b>	Completion of the mapping exercise with a focus on key gaps – voluntary sector, NHS and Education Service	Establish small partnership working group	6 months	NSDG	Full picture of the service map in these sectors
<b>2B</b>	Instigate a further level of mapping with a focus on better understanding of linkages and connections, highlighting good practice and determining who funds what (in conjunction with Workforce Plus)	Investigate appropriate mapping tool	12 months	NSDG	Fuller understanding of service relationships  Clear identification of gaps and overlaps
<b>2C</b>	Process map some of the key client groups transition pathways e.g. care leavers, offenders, young parents	Review the current “pathway” arrangements for LAC and care leavers  Develop effective tracking systems for LAC and care leavers  Identify offenders being liberated from Polmont YOI and other prisons and target partner resources	12 months	Social Work  Social Work  Jobcentre Plus	Identify good practice, gaps and where linkages require improvement
<b>2D</b>	Develop intelligence on NEET provision in Fife Colleges	Commission an independent study into the work of colleges in Fife in relation to NEET prevention and response for the 16-19 age group.  Identify risk points and reasons for these, identify positive actions and impacts achieved, and use in data-sharing activities (as per Section 5)  Conduct destination analysis for college leavers including early leavers	9 months          9 months	Colleges          Colleges	Better understanding of outcomes and impacts of college provision for NEET group  Clearer understanding of best practice within the sector to allow sharing of information

<b>3: Local Entitlement</b>					
	<b>Priorities for Action</b>	<b>Current Identified Tasks</b>	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Agency/ Individual</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
<b>3A</b>	Work towards a provision and support service entitlement for the NEET group	Review and expand non advanced provision at pre-GRFW and pre-NQ level	6 months	Colleges	All young people will be able to access an agreed level of service to meet their needs
		Increase number of school / college link places through further development of school / college partnership programmes	9 months	Colleges	
		Enhance levels of transition support and guidance in targeted schools	12 months	Education Service	
		Develop a more strategic approach to the allocation of resources to NEET	12 months	Education Service	
		Review GRFW including life skills and target at areas of need	6 months	Scottish Enterprise Fife	
		Pilot a sectoral approach to GRFW mapping progression into Skillseeker and Modern Apprenticeship provision	9 months	Scottish Enterprise Fife	
		Identify and enhance support and guidance through youth information services e.g. Dialogue Youth	6 months	FC Community Services	
<b>3B</b>	Develop joint commissioning and procurement processes across partners in Fife	Work in partnership with Workforce Plus group	12 months	NSDG	Better targeting of available resources  Less duplication
<b>3C</b>	Develop a focus for resources in the ROA eligible areas	Further develop college and community partnerships for young people, parents and influencers	12 months	Colleges	Reallocation of resources
		Target enhanced resources for planning and guidance activities with a focus on local opportunities	12 months	Education Service	Improvement in key indicators in the ROA
<b>3D</b>	Establish a partnership pilot initiative in Levenmouth	Appoint Lead agency  Establish clear aims and targets  Identify key partners and other players  Develop an action plan for the initiative	3 months	NSDG	Closer partnership working  Clearer and more effective transitions  Reduction in NEET figures

<b>4: Labour Market</b>					
	<b>Priorities for Action</b>	<b>Current Identified Tasks</b>	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Agency/ Individual</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
<b>4A</b>	Address LMI gaps in information and ensure LMI messages are disseminated to key intermediaries and influencers	Provision of information about post school destinations from non-mainstream schools  Key sector event for teachers  Teachers undertaking placements in key sector companies  Expand and ensure distribution of key LMI documents across partners	12 months	Careers Scotland  Careers Scotland  Careers Scotland  FC Development Services	Raised awareness amongst stakeholders of trends and opportunities
<b>4B</b>	Continue to develop effective partnerships with employers to provide opportunities for the NEET client groups	Continued development of LOAN / FILM approach  Focus on key sectors approach  Develop partnership with Scottish Business in the Community	Ongoing	SEF/FC Development Services  SEF  SEF	Improved mutual understanding  Better matching of clients to opportunity

<b>5: Training Development and Capacity Building</b>					
	<b>Priorities for Action</b>	<b>Current Identified Tasks</b>	<b>Time-scale</b>	<b>Lead Agency/ Individual</b>	<b>Expected Outcome</b>
<b>5A</b>	Review transition intervention processes as part of process mapping and ensure dissemination of best practice	Ensure mainstreaming of lessons learned from Educational Attainment Project	12 months	Education Service	Shared awareness of partner processes
		Share good practices from Levenmouth pilot activity	12 months	NSDG	Improved quality of processes
<b>5B</b>	Develop joint training to partners to meet identified needs	Training of GRFW training providers in assessment and action planning skills	3 months	SEF	Shared best practice
		Set up cross partner training / CPD opportunities for front line staff	Ongoing	NSDG	Partnership and capacity development
<b>5C</b>	Raise awareness of employability across key sectors	Homeless Service will refer to appropriate NEET services as part of initial assessment	6 months	Homeless Service	Improved knowledge of employability options across partners
		Care plans to include plans for employment and training for YP accommodated in independent sector	6 months	Social Work	
		Develop employability awareness activity programme	6 months	NSDG	
<b>5D</b>	Develop effective user involvement and feedback mechanisms	Identify good practice from partners and share	12 months	NSDG	Provision and services more responsive to users
		Identify and share good practice nationally		NSDG	
<b>5E</b>	Develop more effective engagement strategies with young people	Review of Careers Scotland key worker resource	9 months	Careers Scotland	Young people will stay in touch with support services and duration of time NEET will be minimal
		Review aftercare support arrangements for care leavers	6 months	Social Work	
		Develop clear links with good practice approaches within youth work in particular targeted projects and detached youth work	12 months	FC Community Services	
		Maintain close links with ROA projects focusing on engagement – link with Sustainable Communities Group	Ongoing	NSDG	

## **APPENDIX 3: Get Ready for Work recommendation summary**

Taken from National Get Ready for Work Programme Evaluation, Smart Consultancy and Eddy Adams Consultants, June 2006, commissioned by Scottish Enterprise, p87-p91

### **Recommendations**

Our recommendations primarily suggest action for the enterprise network, but given the importance we attach to the programme's fit within the wider operating context, we have also suggested some areas where other agencies need to contribute – most fundamentally in terms of Scottish Executive guidance on the future of the youth guarantee.

This is an extensive package of action and it is essential that SEN use the year 2006/7 to manage the changes. A related action plan to achieve this should be developed by the Skills and Learning Team. This should recognise this will be a sensitive process demanding clarity and good communication.

Recommendations are grouped into the following categories:

- Targeting and programme objectives
- Programme design, operation and delivery
- Partnership and strategic linkages
- Recording programme impact
- Programme progression
- Quality

- Funding and resources
- Promotion

#### *Targeting and programme objectives*

1. Scottish Enterprise should seek clarification as to whether the implications of the proposed revised targeting approach aligns with future Scottish Executive decisions on the “youth guarantee”, and receives clear and unambiguous advice in this regard
2. Scottish Enterprise should restate the objectives of GRFW in terms of recruitment and outcomes, agree these at a national level with Careers Scotland and implement a local programme of dissemination events involving LEC, Careers, and training provider staff
3. Scottish Enterprise should ensure mainstream GRFW is in future targeted at young people assessed as likely to progress to positive outcomes within the specified periods they are expected to be on the programme

#### *Programme design, operation and delivery*

4. Scottish Enterprise should limit structural change to GRFW, and rather build on and amend the current model
5. Scottish Enterprise should phase out the mainstream GRFW strands and introduce a single strand model. An ongoing customised approach should in future be ensured through good review processes, documentation review, and general contract management
6. Scottish Enterprise should continue to provide information and advice on good practice approaches, and details of practices which should be phased out
7. Scottish Enterprise should retain Lifeskills provision within the GRFW programme on the basis of the following conditions/alterations:
  - the strand should be separately reported on and promoted, but retain a tangible connection to some form of evidenced labour market progression
  - the reduction and over time elimination of full time LS option – in future, participation should be either ad hoc or part time, where any full time engagement is considered this should only be for very short periods of time
  - a clear restatement that progression to “mainstream” GRFW provision is a legitimate and likely positive outcome for many participants
  - the year commencing April 2006 is used as a transition year to the revised arrangements
8. Scottish Enterprise and Careers Scotland should develop a template for joint LEC/CS training sessions on the redefined role of LS – addressing in particular the tensions between a client led and outcome focused perspective, and the need to identify alternative local interventions for young people not ready or suitable for GRFW

9. Careers Scotland should continue to monitor the dedicated and generic delivery options to PAS delivery ensuring maximum practical delivery of the good practice features identified
10. Scottish Enterprise should consider in detail the option to integrate the Action Plan and Individual Training Plan documentation
11. Scottish Enterprise and LECs should only support the development of further aftercare support based on a clear understanding of the baseline position on sustainability, and what additionality increased investment is expected to achieve

*Partnership and strategic linkages*

12. Scottish Enterprise should, on the basis of this report, detail and define the anticipated future contribution of GRFW to the Scottish NEET strategy
13. Scottish Enterprise should track national developments of the information sharing demands of the new ASL Act, and inform LECs of the new developments. LECs and CS should develop links between GRFW and local ASL related developments –possibly via the local GRFW Development Forums
14. Scottish Enterprise should establish a national template of the future expectations from Careers Scotland inputs, and support the development of detailed LEC service level agreements based on this. CS's national guidelines and revised statement of services should be used as a starting point for this process
15. Scottish Enterprise should lead early developmental work to consider the implications for the GRFW programme of the relocation of Careers Scotland outwith the enterprise network
16. Scottish Enterprise and Careers Scotland should conduct a "health audit" of LEC level GRFW working relationships, and from this act in those areas where ongoing issues of tension remain

*Recording programme impact*

17. Scottish Enterprise should separately record outcomes for Lifeskills and reinforce that formally recognise progression to the mainstream programme is the main intended progression route
18. Careers Scotland should report on progress on the continued rollout of the CAS system within GRFW operation, and inform local LEC partners on the potential implications for GRFW of the new proactive case management approach
19. Scottish Enterprise should develop a specification for further information requirements in terms of the longer term labour market progress of former GRFW participants, including details on the types of jobs the young people enter
20. Careers Scotland should be invited to develop and introduce systems linked to Insight to provide the identified additional MIS on national and LEC level

21. Scottish Enterprise and LECs should clarify the role of soft indicators of distance traveled in the programme – indicating that these are linked to the continuous improvement of delivery as opposed to the justification for funding
22. Scottish Enterprise should continue to set outcome targets, and follow through all the implications flowing from these. This must link to the different measurement indicators applied to the Lifeskills strand

*Programme progression*

23. Scottish Enterprise should openly acknowledge the role of GRFW as a feeder programme into Skillseekers and promote this through:
  - Setting a rising annual target for Skillseeker progressions within the programme
  - Promoting GRFW alongside Skillseekers as a positive business focused vehicle designed to meet employer needs
  - Ensuring that LEC managers and training providers involved in Skillseekers have a positive and well developed understanding of GRFW
  - Ensuring that GRFW providers understand the Skillseekers programme and the opportunities it offers
  - Supporting the development of the sector-focused bridging pilots connecting the two programmes
  - Ensuring that the data fully reflects all of those GRFW graduates who become Skillseekers
  - Linking action from this report with corresponding action from the forthcoming SEN evaluation of Skillseekers and MAs
24. Careers Scotland should ensure that all of its advisers involved in GRFW fully understand the Skillseeker programme and the opportunities it offers.
25. Scottish Enterprise should continue to track the lessons of the pre Skillseekers sectoral pilots, and spread good practice from these across the network

*Quality*

26. SEN should establish a quality development group which assumes responsibility for the:
  - Development of a competence framework for staff involved in the delivery of GRFW
  - Design an HR development process which complements this framework and offers a systemic support programme for front line staff
  - Creation of an on line resource bank of materials for use by GRFW staff
27. Scottish Enterprise should investigate the establishment of a specific inspection regime for the programme which might involve either SQMS personnel or HMIs.
28. Scottish Enterprise should also have a closer look at the YouthReach programme in Ireland

29. Scottish Enterprise should implement a training programme for LEC contract management staff on challenges of core funding – and the opportunity to combine this with tight management of unit cost calculations

*Funding and resources*

30. Scottish Enterprise and LECs should continue to encourage wider funding inputs to the resourcing of GRFW
31. Scottish Enterprise should contribute to and be informed by the wider Scottish Executive led debate on financial rewards for young people in post school progression

*Promotion*

32. Scottish Enterprise should encourage an increased promotional campaign for GRFW based on the use of positive messages on participant potential. This should be locally based on existing good practice
33. Scottish Enterprise should establish support systems to collate and share ongoing good practice in promotional activities across the network
34. Scottish Enterprise should separately promote Lifeskills on a lower key basis, with activities primarily based on niche marketing to likely referral sources

## **APPENDIX 4: Interview schedule**

### Classification questions:

Gender  
Age  
Postcode  
Occupation of main breadwinner  
School attended  
Age left school  
Qualifications

### Questions:

#### **What are the perceptions of NEET males with regard to their likely future prospects?**

- Thinking back, what did you want to do when you left school?
- What happened? Why?
- What prospects do you think there are for lads when they leave school?
- What would you like to be doing in two years time?

#### **What barriers to employment, education or training are perceived by NEET males?**

- Have you looked for work? If so, tell me about it. If not, why not?
- What prevents you from finding a job?
- Have you ever done any voluntary work? If so, tell me about it. If not, why not?
- Have you ever been to college or thought about college?
- What prevents you from going to college?

#### **What changes do they perceive are likely to help them to overcome these barriers and move into employment, education or training?**

- What would help you get a job?
- Who do you think could help you get a job?
- What would help you to go to college?
- Who do you think could help you go to college?

#### **Who/what are the key influencers for NEET males?**

- What do your parents/guardian think?
- What help to you get in school about what you were going to do when you left?
- Have you had contact with any colleges?
- Do you have friends that are in college/employment? Any who are not? - expand
- Have you had any advice from Careers Scotland?
- What work have you done/work experience? Did you enjoy it?
- Who do you think was the most important influence on you in deciding not to go to a job or go to college?
- Who encourages you to find a job or train?

## **APPENDIX 5: Focus group schedule**

**Do the perceptions of non-NEET young people differ from those of their NEET counterparts?**

- Have you ever looked for work?
- How did you find it?
- Have you ever been unemployed?
- Do you know anyone who is unemployed?

**What factors influence non-NEET young people of similar background to take up employment, education or training?**

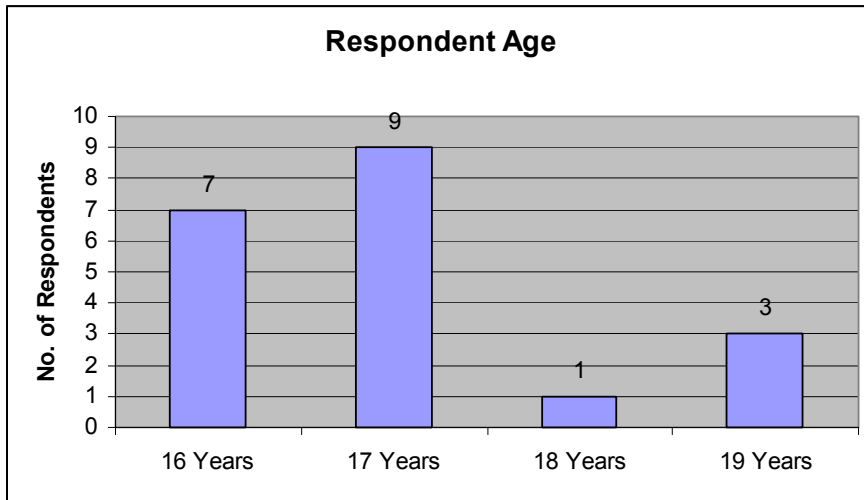
- What were your main motivations for going to college?
- Was there anything that put you off going to college?

**Who/what are the key influencers for non-NEET young people?**

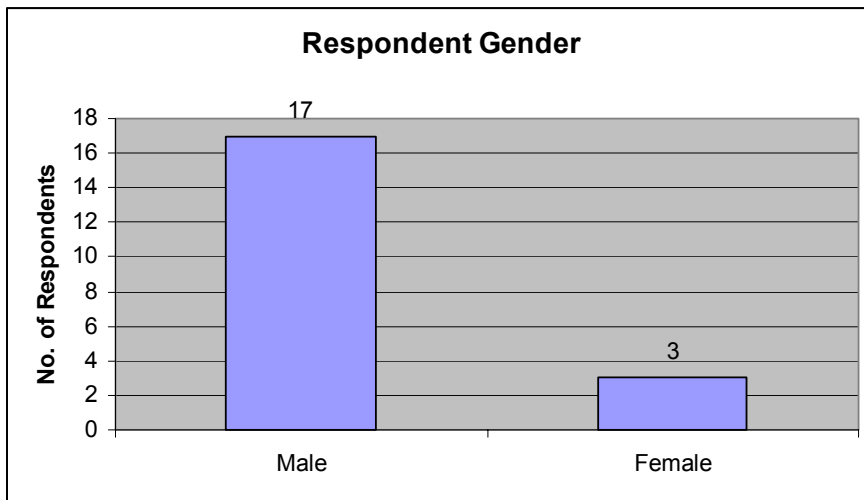
- Who influenced your decision to go to college?
- What help did you get at school?
- How did you find out about the course?

## APPENDIX 6: Respondent classification information

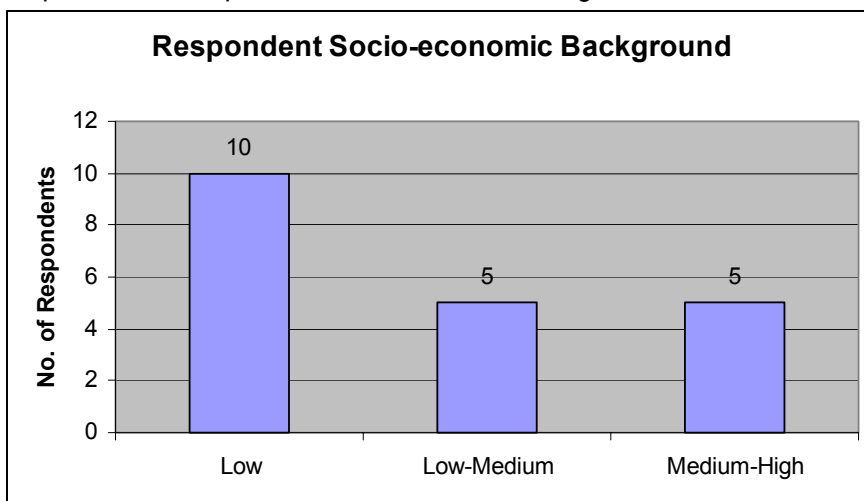
Graph 1: NEET respondent age



Graph 2: NEET respondent gender



Graph 3: NEET respondent socio-economic background



### Note

To establish socio-economic background, respondents were asked for the postcode of the parental home, the occupation of the main breadwinner in the parental home, and the name of the secondary school that they had attended.

Eleven respondents were brought up in one of the 25% most deprived areas in Fife. Within this group, four of the respondents were from a household where no parent worked and three were from a household where the parent had a low qualification occupation. Of the remaining four respondents in this group, two had a parent who had a medium qualification occupation, and one had a parent who had a high qualification occupation. See Table 1.10 in Section 2.1.2 for occupation classification and associated level of qualification explanation.

Of the nine respondents that lived or had lived in a household out with the 25% most deprived areas in Fife, two of them came from a household where no parent worked, and one came from a household where the parent had a low qualification occupation. Three respondents came from a household where the parent had a medium qualification occupation, and three of the respondents had a parent in a high qualification occupation. Again, see Table 1.10 in Section 2.1.2 for occupation classification and associated level of qualification explanation.

All twenty respondents had gone to state-funded schools.

In total, ten of the respondents could be described as being from a low socio-economic background with parents who are either unemployed, had a low qualification occupation, or a medium qualification occupation **and** were from a household within the 25% most deprived areas in Fife.

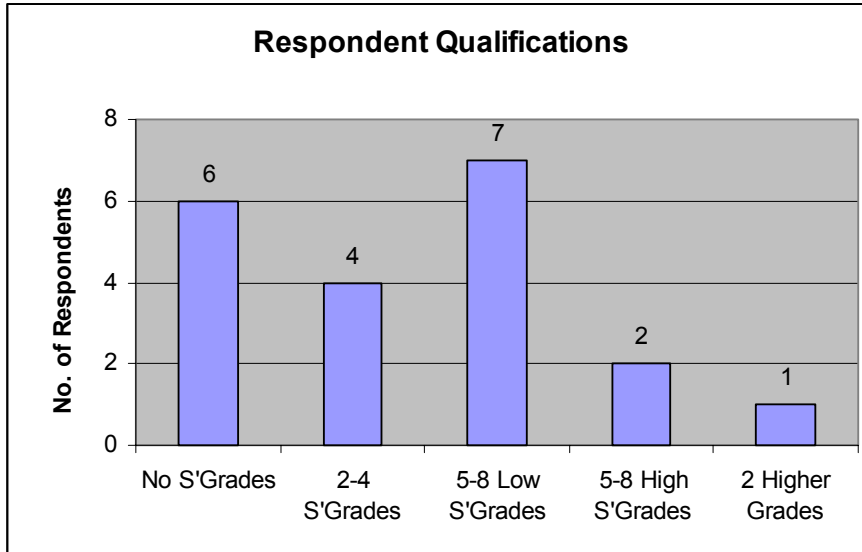
Five of the respondents could be described as being from a low to medium socio-economic background with parents who are either unemployed, had a low qualification occupation or a high qualification occupation **and** were from a household between the 25 to 50% most deprived areas in Fife.

Although none of the respondents had attended a private school, five of them could be described as being from medium to high socio-economic backgrounds, with either a parent with a high qualification occupation **and/or** from one of the 50% least deprived areas in Fife.

### Aside

The majority of the respondents were from non-nuclear family households. Thirteen were from single parent households; eleven respondents lived or had lived with their mother; and two respondents had lived with their father. Of the seven remaining respondents, two lived or had lived with grandparents, and one had lived with his mother and step-father. The remaining three respondents lived with both parents. Please note that this was not a criterion for categorising respondent socio-economic background.

Graph 4: NEET respondent qualifications

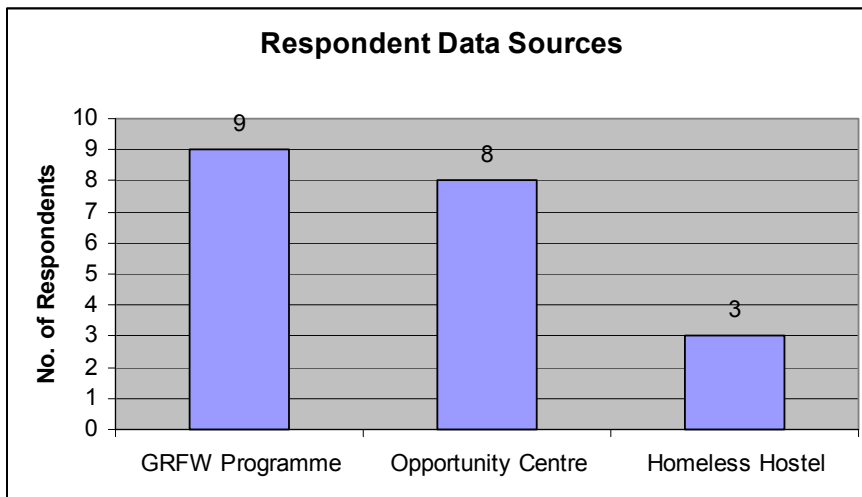


Note: S' Grade stands for Standard Grade or equivalent

Note

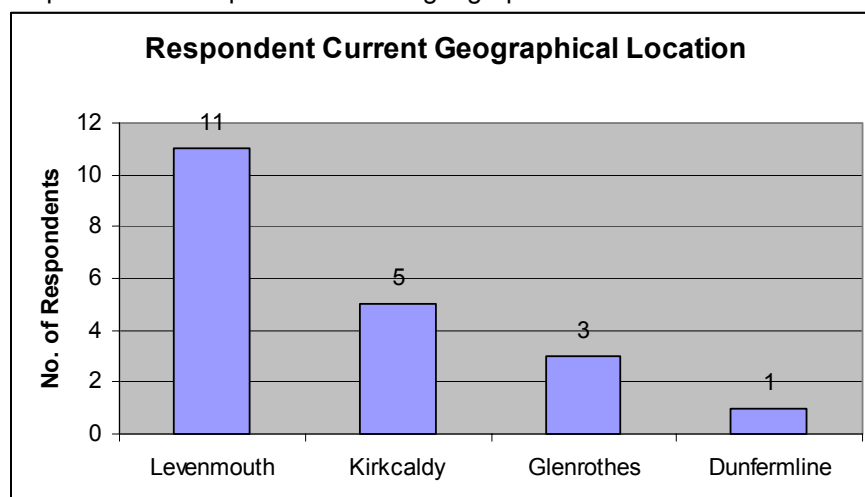
Nineteen of the twenty respondents had left school at the end of 4<sup>th</sup> year, or were 5<sup>th</sup> year Christmas leavers. 'Low' school qualifications are classified as respondents with either no Standard Grades, 2-4 Standard Grades, or 5-8 Standard Grades at mainly general or foundation grades, or respondents who could not remember what grades they achieved. 'High' Standard Grades are classified as mainly credit grades. For the purposes of this research, low level qualifications are classified as either no Standard Grades, 2-4 Standard Grades or 5-8 Standard Grades at General or Foundation level.

Graph 5: NEET respondent data sources



Note: GRFW stands for Get Ready for Work

Graph 6: NEET respondent current geographical location



Graph 7: NEET respondent household type

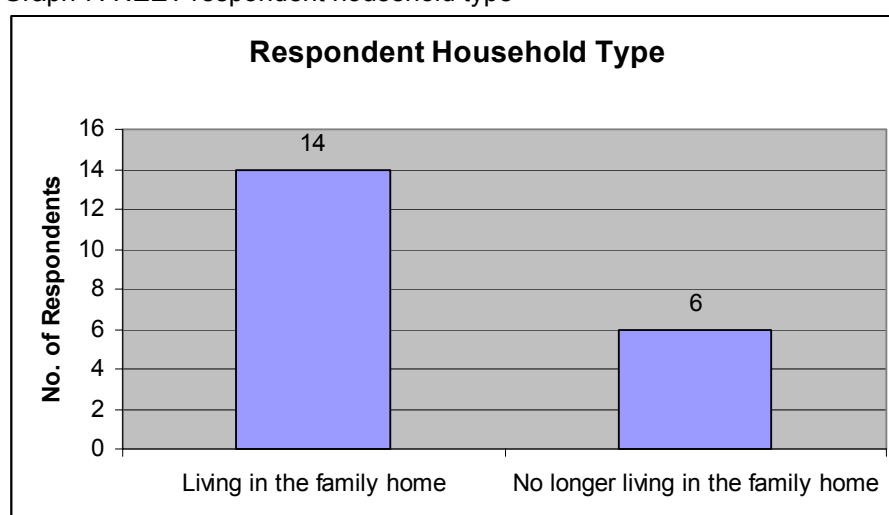


Table 1: Non-NEET respondent focus group associated programme name, SCQF Level, minimum entry requirements, and further study paths

Programme name	SCQF Level	Minimum entry requirements	Further study paths
Army Preparation Course	5	No formal requirements	Selection to army; SVQ/MA level study
Construction Craft Foundation Programme	5	No formal requirements	Modern Apprenticeship
Scottish Group Award in Professional Cookery (Intermediate II)	5	4 Standard Grades at Foundation Level or equivalent	Employment in the hospitality sector; NQ/SVQ/MA level study
Computing and Information Systems (Intermediate II/Higher)	5/6	Standard Grades at General Level or equivalent	HNC Computing
NQ Access to Teacher Training	6	6 Standard Grades at Credit and General level or equivalent	BEd Degree in Primary Teaching

## **APPENDIX 7: Project steering group members**

Michelle Adamson  
Iain Duncan  
Fraser Durie  
Anne Gillen  
Caroline Gourlay  
Beth McIntyre  
Hamish McPhee  
Sarah Morrison  
Steve Norris  
Lesley Porter  
Nyree Rothwell  
Pippa San Roman  
Olive Sneddon  
Peter Wright

LIFT OFF  
Waid Academy  
Adam Smith College  
Adam Smith College  
Viewforth High School  
Kirkland High School  
Fife Council  
LIFT OFF  
Glenrothes High School  
Beath High School  
Adam Smith College  
Fife Council  
Careers Scotland  
Fife Council

## APPENDIX 8: Potential school-parent intervention models

Programme Name and Description	Costs	Duration	Available in Fife	Other Information
<p><b>The Parenting Teenagers Course</b>  <b>Topic 1: Where do I start</b> - Introduces parents to common behaviour of teenagers, changes in hormones and their effects on the teenager + connecting with teenagers  <b>Topic 2: When listening helps</b> - Looks at listening and the participants are introduced to good and bad listening, active listening and non-judgemental listening  <b>Topic 3: What encourages teenagers</b> - Looks at encouragement and the difference between praise and encouragement  <b>Topic 4: Managing conflict</b> - Methods of conflict management  <b>Topic 5: Teenagers and discipline</b> - Looks at discipline through natural consequences  <b>Topic 6: Family health</b> - Looks at ways of keeping the family together and connected</p>	£75 per person (negotiable)	6 sessions	Facilitator is based in Edinburgh, can deliver in Fife	Course based on Family Caring Trust materials - a well-known parenting organisation. Course ran by freelance facilitator
<p><b>Time Out for Teenagers</b>            Course materials cover: teenagers' needs, self-esteem etc. - influences on teenagers; relationships (with their parents and peer groups); communication; parenting styles; boundaries; challenging behaviour; keeping them safe (sex, drugs, alcohol)  <b>Session 1:</b> Introductions  <b>Session 2:</b> Why it's tough being a teenager  <b>Session 3:</b> Parenting styles  <b>Session 4:</b> Communication  <b>Session 5:</b> Tools for handling conflict  <b>Session 6:</b> Problem solving</p>	£100 per person + £5.95 per handbook	6 sessions (flexible)	Facilitator based in Falkirk, can deliver in Fife	A Positive Parenting course delivered by trained Positive Parenting facilitators
<p><b>Getting on with Your Teenager</b>            Parents consider their own needs as parents and the needs of their teenager; reflect on positive and negative communication behaviours; explore and practise active listening techniques; understand and model assertive communication and setting limits; reinforce sensitivity and empathy in communication around teenager issues</p>	£87 per person ( £870 per course based on a maximum of 10 places)	8 sessions	Facilitator based in Edinburgh, can deliver in Fife	A Parent Network Scotland course in association with Parentline Plus

Programme Name and Description	Costs	Duration	Available in Fife	Other Information
<p><b>Steps to Excellence</b>            *Introduces self-esteem as part of the process of lifelong learning            *Increased motivation, confidence and self-efficacy for all by equipping participants with the tools to engage their learning potential so helping to break the cycle of poverty and disadvantage through improved self esteem            *Improved wellbeing of individuals by helping them to understand and develop positive thought processes            *Improved wellbeing, self-esteem and confidence of children and young people by raising the self-awareness and self-understanding amongst the parents caring for them            *Ensuring that all the influences on children and adults are, as far as possible supportive and positive</p>	<p>£600 per person + VAT (£6000 based on 10 delegates) - for the Pacific Institute to deliver programme themselves (usually they train facilitators rather than deliver directly)</p>	<p>9-10 sessions (2.5 hours each) either once or twice a week</p>	<p>Pacific Institute can deliver in Fife, however, there are trained facilitators in Adam Smith and Lauder College</p>	<p>A Pacific Institute Course. The Pacific Institute is a commercial organisation. Course is generic and not specifically aimed at parents although course has been successfully adapted for parents</p>
<p><b>ESCAPE Parenting Adolescents programme</b>            *Provides a strategy for families to use in their everyday lives            *Helps parents look at what causes difficulties and how to take a different approach to their young person            *ESCAPE is a problem solving approach that gives parents a 6-point plan to approach the difficulties their young person presents</p>	<p>2 day facilitator training course is £1,320</p>	<p>?</p>	<p>Not practical (usually require 3 months notice + based in Brighton)</p>	<p>A Trust for the Study of Adolescence course - Specialists in teenage related research. Course recommended by Parenting Across Scotland</p>
<p><b>The Parent Talk Parenting Course</b>  <b>Session 1: Be Yourself, You're the Only One Qualified</b>            Recognising existing skills and recognising that every parent needs help  <b>Session 2: Love them and Let them Know</b> The importance of telling and showing children love  <b>Session 3: Look and Listen</b> Listening skills  <b>Session 4: Remember - It's Good to Talk</b> Communication skills.  <b>Session 5: Defend the Boundaries</b> Boundary-setting and providing children with security  <b>Session 6: Choose your Battles</b> Knowing when to step in and when to stand back  <b>Session 7: Parents with Elastic</b> Building child independence and the 'big issues' for steering children through adolescence  <b>Session 8: Back to the Future</b> Building positive memories</p>	<p>£50 per pack</p>	<p>8 Sessions</p>	<p>No - a DVD based course that is designed so that anyone can buy it and lead it</p>	<p>A Parent Talk course. Suitable for parents of all age groups; therefore not teenager specific</p>

## **APPENDIX 9: Participant interview schedule**

### **General feelings:**

What did you hope to get out of the programme?  
Did you get what you hoped from the programme?  
Have you successfully put any of the tips you were given on the programme into practice?  
Have you noticed an improvement in your relationship with your child?  
Did you get anything else out of the programme?  
What did you like best about the programme?  
Was there anything you did not like about the programme?  
Would you recommend the programme to other parents?

### **Programme delivery:**

How did you find the tutor?  
How did you find the structure of the programme?  
Was there a session you particularly found useful/not useful?  
Would you have preferred more/less sessions?  
Would you be interested in follow on sessions/programme?  
Would you have preferred the individual sessions to be longer/shorter in duration?  
What did you think of the handbooks?  
How did you find the group/being in a group situation?  
Were group discussions/activities helpful?

## References and sources of data

Eddy Adams Consultants Ltd with Smart Consultancy (Scotland) Ltd (November 2006). Action Planning Support: Draft Report, commissioned by the Fife NEET Partnership

ETLLD Analytical Service (September, 2006). NEET Statistics for Fife

Fife Council (2007). Labour Market Update – January 2007

Fife Council Development Services (2006). Fife Business Directory 2005 & Jobs & Investment Monitor, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (September, 2006). Scottish Parliamentary Constituency Economic Profiles: Central Fife, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (October, 2006a). Scottish Parliamentary Constituency Economic Profiles: Dunfermline East, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (October, 2006b). Scottish Parliamentary Constituency Economic Profiles: Dunfermline West, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (October, 2006c). Scottish Parliamentary Constituency Economic Profiles: Kirkcaldy, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (October, 2006d). Scottish Parliamentary Constituency Economic Profiles: North East Fife, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (2007a). Economic Profile: Cupar & The Howe of Fife, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (2007b). Economic Profile: Dunfermline, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (2007c). Economic Profile: Glenrothes, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (2007d). Economic Profile: Kirkcaldy, published by Fife Council

Fife Economic Forum (2007e). Economic Profile: Levenmouth, published by Fife Council

Fife NEET Action Plan Group (December, 2006). Strategic Action Plan 2006-2008: Agenda for Action to Tackle NEET in Fife (14-19 Years), Fife Council

Fife Research Co-Ordination Group (2006). 'Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (SIMD 2004) Fife Briefing' in KnowFife Briefings, produced by Fife Council

Freire, P. (1970). Pedagogy of the Oppressed, New York, Seabury

Gorinski, R. (2005). Parent Mentoring Initiative Evaluation, for The Ministry of Education, Pacific Coast Applied Research Centre: Tauranga

Hallam, S. Rogers, L. and Shaw, J. (2004). 'Improving Children's Behaviour and Attendance Through the Use of Parenting Programmes: An Examination of Good Practice', in Research Report No 585, published by the Department for Education and Skills

Henricson, C. and Roker, D. (2000). 'Support for the Parents of Teenagers: a review', Journal of Adolescence 23: 763-783

McGregor, A. Clelland, D. and Reid, J. (2006). The University of Glasgow Training and Employment Research Unit, Evaluation of Measurement Options for Those Aged 16-19 Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET), commissioned by Scottish Executive Central Research Unit, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/07/28090808/0>> (accessed 11/11/06)

Moran, P. Ghate, D. and van der Merwe, A. (2004). 'What Works in Parenting Support?: A Review of the International Evidence', in Research Report RR574, published by the Department for Education and Skills

O'Conner, T. (2002). 'The 'effects' of parenting reconsidered: findings, challenges and applications', Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry 43: 555-572

Rennison, J. Maquire, S. Middleton, S. and Ashworth, K. (March, 2005). 'Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training: Evidence from the Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots Database' in Research Brief No: RB628, published by the Department for education and Skills

Scottish Executive (1999). Implementing Inclusiveness Realising Potential, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library2/doc04/bere-00.htm>>

Scottish Executive (November, 1999) Social Justice ... a Scotland where EVERYONE matters, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/1999/11/4174/File-1>>

Scottish Executive (2000). The Framework for Economic Development in Scotland, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/Key-Publications/FEDS>>

Scottish Executive (2001). A Smart Successful Scotland: Ambitions for the Enterprise Networks, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2001/01/8107/File-1>>

Scottish Executive (2003). Life Through Learning; Learning Through Life: Lifelong Learning Strategy for Scotland, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2003/02/16308/17776>>

Scottish Executive (September, 2004). The Framework for Economic Development in Scotland, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Economy/Key-Publications/FEDS>>

Scottish Executive (November, 2004a). Ambitious, Excellent Schools: our agenda for action, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/11/20176/45852>>

Scottish Executive (November, 2004b). A Curriculum for Excellence, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/11/20178/45863>>

Scottish Executive (May 2006). Closing the Opportunity Gap (CtOG) Programme: Scoping Work for Design of Impact Assessment, <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/05/22120926/15>>

Scottish Executive (June 2006a). More Choices, More Chances: A Strategy to Reduce the Proportion of Young People not in Education Employment or Training in Scotland, retrieved from <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/13100205/0> (accessed 03/04/07)

Scottish Executive (June 2006b). Workforce Plus: An Employability Framework for Scotland, retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/06/12094904/14>>

Scottish Executive (December, 2006). 'Destination of Leavers from Scottish Schools: 2005/06', Statistics Publication Notice, Scottish Executive: Edinburgh

Scottish Executive (December, 2006). 'Attendance and Absences in Scottish Schools: 2005/06', Statistics Publication Notice, Scottish Executive: Edinburgh

Scottish Executive (January, 2007). 'Exclusions from Scottish Schools: 2005/06', Statistics Publication Notice, Scottish Executive: Edinburgh

Shepherd, J. and Roker, D. (2005) The Parenting of young People: Using Newsletters to Provide Information and Support, in Children and Society, vol. 19, pp. 264-277, published by John Wiley & Sons

Smart Consultancy and Eddy Adams Consultants (June 2006). National Get Ready for Work Programme Evaluation, commissioned by Scottish Enterprise, retrieved from <[http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom\\_home/training-providers-top/training-providers/strategy-and-research](http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom_home/training-providers-top/training-providers/strategy-and-research)> (accessed 02/06/07)

York Consulting Limited (2005). Literature Review of the NEET Group, commissioned by Scottish Executive Social Research retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2005/10/27175707/57121>> (accessed 20/07/06)

### Websites

2000 Standard Occupational Classification System: [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods\\_quality/ns\\_sec/soc2000.asp](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/methods_quality/ns_sec/soc2000.asp)

Annual Business Enquiry: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nscl.asp?ID=5316>

Career Box, information retrieved from <<http://www.careers-scotland.org.uk/Initiatives/CareerBox.asp>>

Claimant Count dataset, NOMIS: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

Department for Welfare and Pensions statistics: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/>

Duke of Edinburgh Award, The; information retrieved from <<http://www.theaward.org/>>

Enterprise Activities, information retrieved from <<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2003/03/3328>>

FEAT programme, information retrieved from <<http://www.cvsfife.org/directory/org0056.htm>>

FILM project, information retrieved from <<http://www.fife.gov.uk/news/index.>>

Get Ready for Work programme, information retrieved from <[http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom\\_home/stp/careersadvice/develop-your-skills-work-based-training-2/getreadyforwork.htm](http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom_home/stp/careersadvice/develop-your-skills-work-based-training-2/getreadyforwork.htm)>

Jobcentre Vacancies, NOMIS: <http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/>

June Start programmes, information retrieved from <[http://www.lauder.ac.uk/documents/school\\_leavers\\_prospectus\\_bookmarked.pdf](http://www.lauder.ac.uk/documents/school_leavers_prospectus_bookmarked.pdf)>

Learning Game, The, information retrieved from <<http://www.tlgworks.com/>>

LIFT-OFF programmes, information retrieved from <<http://www.lift-off.org.uk/>>

Modern Apprenticeship programme, information retrieved from <<http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/modernapprenticeships>>

New Deal, information retrieved from <[http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/New\\_Deal/index.html](http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/Customers/New_Deal/index.html)>

Pathways programme, information retrieved from <<http://www.cvsfife.org/directory/org0031.htm>>

Prince's Trust xl, information retrieved from <<http://www.princes-trust.org.uk/Main%20Site%20v2/common%20cause/xl%20clubs%20in%20schools.asp>>

Progress 2 Work, information retrieved from <<http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/jcp/partners/progress2work/index.html>>

Project Scotland, information retrieved from <<http://www.projectscotland.co.uk/>>

Scottish Enterprise: [http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom\\_home.htm](http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/sedotcom_home.htm)

Scottish Executive Education Department statistics: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/School-Education>

Scottish Executive Looked After Children statistics: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/12/08105227/0>

Scottish Executive Prison statistics: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Justice/Prisons>

Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/SIMD/Overview>

Scottish Neighbourhood Statistics: <http://www.sns.gov.uk/>

Skills for Work programmes, information retrieved from < <http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/nq/nqframework/skillsforwork.asp>>

Skillseekers programme, information retrieved from <<http://www.scottish-enterprise.com/skillseekersinformation>>

West Fife Enterprise programmes, information retrieved from < <http://www.cvsfife.org/directory/org0317.htm>>