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Best Practice in Tackling 'NEETs'

Research Report

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Research by:
Simon Bysse
Dorothy Berry-Lound,
John Austin
Judy Staton

of
HOST Policy Research

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1 In January 2008, HOST Policy Research (HOST) was commissioned by LSC West Yorkshire to undertake the second phase of the Young Persons' Study undertaking research to identify best practice in West Yorkshire in supporting those 16-18 year olds who are not in education, training and/or employment (NEETs) to enable them to secure appropriate opportunities.

2 The first phase of the research was undertaken by the Centre for Education and Industry (CEI) at the University of Warwick and focused on factors contributing to learner withdrawal from post-16 education. The focus and approach of this current research arose out of recommendations made in Phase One.

3 This research report is one of a suite of outputs to be produced by the project which will include summary reports (aimed respectively at policy-makers and practitioners) and best practice guides (aimed respectively at providers of Entry to Employment (E2E) and flexible starts provision in Further Education (FE)). A bibliography supporting this research is included as Annex A.

Purpose

4 The overall purpose of the research project is to evaluate a number of good practice interventions or systems and through collaborative research to identify the key mechanisms of success that can inform policies, priorities, action plans and the design of the 14-19 system to facilitate improved participation, retention and success of post-16 learners.

Methodology

5 The methodology for the project, which commenced in February 2008, is being undertaken in seven interrelated stages. Following necessary preparatory work and baseline research in Phases One and Two, 13 E2E and college case studies were selected in consultation with the LSC and local partners.

6 Initial fieldwork was undertaken with them in Stage Three, and emerging findings and issues shared at a Stakeholder Workshop in April 2008. A summary of the second interim report (May 2008) was widely circulated (Stage Four). This was followed by agreed fieldwork with case study organizations which sought to explore effective practices in working with young people who are NEET which continued into autumn 2008 (Stage Five). The summary reporting of the project was undertaken in Stage Six (December 2008), with local and national dissemination to take place in Stage Seven (up to March 2009).

Key messages

7 The key messages that have come from the research are as follows:

NEET

The issue of young people aged 16-18 who are NEET has been a long-standing focus of public policy concern. Despite work to date, the level of NEET nationally remains stubbornly high. Current year-end data shows that the NEET level stands at 9.4 per cent nationally, down from a 9.6 per cent baseline, which means that a significant reduction is required to meet the 2010 target, a task made more challenging by the current economic downturn.

Previous research has highlighted that those who are NEET are not a homogeneous group and have very varied characteristics. Often stereotyped as being the least able and most disadvantaged 'school leavers', it is increasingly recognized that the 16-18 NEET cohort also includes increasing numbers of 17-18 year olds, some of whom have achieved Level 2 qualifications, or above.

There is an argument that the term NEET is unhelpful in so far as it concentrates on what young people are not rather than what they are, and that the pervasive nature of the PSA 2010 NEET target distracts services from focusing on facilitating young people's transitions effectively.

It is certainly true to say, in an increasingly flexible labour and learning market, that the distinctions between different groups of young people are increasingly unclear and under-researched. In practice, many have a 'portfolio of activities', which (by choice or necessity) can include periods of inactivity, and/or a changing mix of paid employment, learning and other activities (LSN, 2008).

Furthermore, research would indicate that whatever solutions are devised for tackling NEETs must take account of the wider context in which young people so categorized operate. This should include taking adequate account of the influence of families and neighbourhoods on individual choice, and both identify and, in the wider context of social and economic development, tackle the distinct needs of particular areas (that is, 'NEET hotspots').

Although not explored in this research, this can include successful approaches in working in workless families and neighbourhoods, rather than just seeking to support individuals alone (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008).

Provision

Flexible start provision: the majority of current full-time FE provision aimed at 16-18 young people starts in September. The need for increased flexibility, both in terms of different starting dates (for example, January) and more flexible delivery (for example, 'roll-on' provision) has been strongly advocated by DCSF.

The LSC in West Yorkshire invited local colleges to bid for Local Initiative Funding (LIF) in 2007/2008 and nine colleges successfully did so, including Bradford College which, with LSC support, had previously developed flexible start provision in 2007. Survey data provided by all participating colleges indicated that a total of 314 young people started on provision funded under the initiative, just under two thirds (60 per

cent) of whom were recorded as being NEET on entry. Just over a third (36 per cent) of those who started on flexible learning courses discontinued, some of whom in turn will have subsequently entered positive destinations.

The case study research (which included focus group work with learners) indicated that many participants had gained a range of 'soft' outcomes from participation, including increases in confidence, career focus and self-esteem. In terms of 'hard outcomes', of the completers, the destinations of 161 leavers (80 per cent of the total) are recorded in the survey, of whom two thirds (66 per cent) continued in FE at the college where they undertook the flexible start provision, with a further 11 per cent joining an FE course elsewhere.

A range of effective practice was identified through the research. This included the development of wholly new provision (such as the Shuffle and Xplorer programmes respectively at what are now the Dewsbury and Huddersfield sites of Kirklees College), as well as offering existing provision more flexibly (as at Bradford College). However, much of the development work was small-scale and developmental in nature, and in some colleges a number of elements of its delivery were problematic. Despite problems encountered, it is clear that a number of providers (including Kirklees College) have now mainstreamed piloted provision in 2008/2009.

Evidence of best practice was probably most apparent in the support systems, and to a lesser extent the curriculum offer, that will be explored further in the 'best practice' guide for flexible start provision. A key issue for colleges is now both how best to develop provision (including as Bradford College have done by enabling learners to enter mainstream provision at points in the year other than September) and how to fund/develop the support structures necessary to engage these learners.

E2E: this is a programme which has been available to young people in England since August 2003. Current funding guidance (LSC, 2008) indicates it is for young people aged 16-18 who have yet to attain Level 2 qualifications and is, 'aimed at young people who are not yet ready or able to access a Level 2 Learning Programme, Apprenticeship or employment'.

LSC guidance (LSC, 2008) indicates that the Progression Pathways, which are being developed as part of the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT), 'will in time replace the E2E programme'. Although details are uncertain, it is clear that following re-commissioning in early 2009, E2E provision, as currently badged and delivered, is likely only to continue until 2010. However, that being said, it is clearly vital that the good practice that has been developed within E2E, building on earlier work through the Learning Gateway (DfES, 2001), is incorporated into FLT.

E2E is delivered in West Yorkshire by four E2E Partnerships, covering respectively Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. There is a considerable variation in the size and complexity of the Partnerships. Based on E2E start data for West Yorkshire in 2007/2008, 40 per cent of the delivery is in Calderdale and Kirklees, 28 per cent in Leeds, 23 per cent in Bradford and 9 per cent in Wakefield.

A clear example of effective practice in E2E delivery is the way that the Partnerships currently work with the LSC in respect to holding regular Partnership meetings at

which operational and strategic issues arising are openly and freely discussed, and the Partnerships encouraged to share experience, plan and review jointly West Yorkshire-wide activities.

The focus of most of the case studies was on the day-to-day delivery of E2E rather than on its leadership and management. However, it is clear that the pattern of co-operation and support seen at the West Yorkshire level was mirrored strongly in the way that the E2E Partnerships operate on the ground (as detailed in the Partnership reports at Annex C).

Clear evidence was given through the case studies of how local delivery partners feel supported by the Partnerships and, in turn, how they work with each other (for example, in organizing tasters and transfers), all of which is essential to delivering responsive services which are closely in touch with local needs and opportunities. Effective Partnerships in turn are able, through reviewing the capacity and capabilities of the providers they have working locally, to be able to ensure that an appropriate range of learning opportunities (including enrichment activities) is provided, including those able to deliver provision flexibly in 'NEET hot spots'.

In terms of delivery of services, a range of effective practice was seen at different stages of the learner journey. As indicated, in the best of these, learners' needs were identified and effectively assessed at an early stage, appropriate activities/learning were arranged (including drawing down resources from within the Partnership), learners' support needs were regularly reviewed (with appropriate external support from Connexions and other agencies), progression opportunities explored and sustainable transitions made. Again, what is being undertaken (including how and why it is effective) will be explored further in the 'best practice' guide for E2E.

However, clearly there are operational pressures and issues in E2E delivery. For example, the question was raised by LSC about whether the flexibility that is felt to be in the LSC guidance is being fully applied by Partnerships. At an operational level, it was clear that young people were typically spending up to 12 weeks on Tier One and up to 22 weeks on Tier Two. The concern expressed was whether these averages were becoming norms, to the possible detriment of learners on the programme who might require more time.

Conversely, there is a pressure on Partnerships for learners to achieve particular outcomes and progression routes, with some (particularly entry into JWT) being seen as less 'positive' than entry into accredited learning.

For E2E to thrive there needs to be clear understanding about how best to manage the flexibility and diversity that is crucial to the programme, whilst clearly being able to agree what the key success criteria are for the provision in general, and learners undertaking it in particular.

Recommendations

8 In light of these findings, HOST makes the following recommendations respectively to the LSC, LAs and Learning/E2E providers.

9 The LSC should:

- a) Ensure that the results of this research (and subsequent best practice guides and summary reports) are distributed widely both locally and nationally, to help inform the planning, development and commissioning of relevant services.
- b) Take the outcomes of this research into account in commissioning E2E provision in 2009/2010. This should include recognizing and valuing the E2E Partnership model and making necessary changes and adaptations to the 'Three Tier'/Feature model. It should also include considering: who E2E is for and what the key success criteria are (including qualification outcomes); the need to integrate 'Pre-E2E' provision to engage young people; the need to test and pilot 'Step Up' provision; how best to link E2E and Apprenticeship provision, including testing and piloting in selected cases the integration of Tier Three and Programme-Led Apprenticeships; roles/responsibilities regarding what support delivery partners and Connexions are respectively to provide to E2E learners; and roles and responsibilities in employer engagement.
- c) Consider, with local partners, establishing an Innovation and Development Project (IDP) to take forward, trial and pilot, with necessary external evaluation, agreed aspects of the proposed E2E delivery model, including:
 - the development of new ways of assessing the personal and social development and wider Key Skills of young people. As indicated, this could include supporting the West Yorkshire E2E Partnership to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider, with necessary support, what factors should be taken into account; how they could be assessed; and how assessments might link to the provisions of the E2E commissioning specification
 - the development of 'Step Up' provision to enable more effective transitions from 'Tier One' to 'Tier Two', and for appropriate young people from 'Tier Two' into learning or employment opportunities
 - development work in respect to exploring the integration of E2E into FLT Progression Pathways, with particular emphasis on ensuring that 'best practice' identified through this research is retained and enhanced in all elements of the learner journey, from engagement to progression.
- d) Explore with FE Colleges their experience of flexible start provision. Publicise the success and lessons learned through the case study work and encourage, and as appropriate support, both them and colleges that did not participate to plan and develop provision and learn from experience elsewhere (for example, practice collected by DCSF, 2008a).

- e) Seek, where possible, to extend flexible start provision in 2008/2009 in West Yorkshire to enable young people who are NEET, or who may become so in the current economic downturn, to be able to take up appropriate learning and training opportunities.
- f) In developing the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS), consider the issues raised by the Select Committee regarding ensuring the availability and quality of Apprentice opportunities and ensure that the Service is made coherent with others seeking to engage employers.

10 LAs in West Yorkshire should:

- a) Develop a clear understanding of the profile, aspirations and needs of young people who are NEET in their areas (particularly in 'NEET hot spots'), particularly through Connexions making forensic use of CCIS, and consider how best to make appropriate provision available.
- b) To maximize coherence, review links between ESF and other funded provision aimed at tackling NEETs and continue to work actively with other LAs on a sub-regional basis so that particular 'travel to work' and/or 'travel to learn' issues are taken into account in commissioning learning provision and support services.
- c) Consider work they are undertaking with NEETs in the context of their wider responses to economic and social issues such as worklessness, so the potential for area, family and inter-generational-based work is fully explored.
- d) Ensure they have adequate capacity and the right balance of skills amongst Connexions staff (especially PAs) to work with both young people who are NEET and also opportunity providers (especially employers) to assist in transition.
- e) Through their developing NEET strategies, and in consultation with key local partners, consider the best balance of preventative and remedial work that is being undertaken in respect to NEET, and consider the best practice messages in this research in the future commissioning and management of services.
- f) Liaise with Youth Offending Team (YOT) to discuss how best to integrate support for young offenders who are subject to ISSPs, including considering issues to do with roles, responsibilities and resources in respect to meeting their needs.
- g) Listen to the voice of young people in commissioning new services, including considering undertaking tracking studies, particularly with young people who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET, to learn from their experience and to help identify real-time barriers and issues they face.
- h) Review and evaluate externally the ongoing work they are undertaking in this area to ensure that it is meeting its objectives and building on effective practice highlighted in this report.

11 Learning/E2E providers should:

- a) Seek to develop more flexible start provision that is suitable for 16-18 young people who are NEET, or at risk of being NEET, and ensure that satisfactory progression routes are available.
- b) Develop opportunities to ease the transitions between different types and levels of provision (for example, through setting up 'testers' and 'tasters' in E2E and summer school provision in colleges).
- c) Consider what support they are able to provide to learners (for example, in E2E through looking at Partnership-wide support arrangements, such as Learning Co-ordinators, and in flexible start provision through Learning Assistants and Student Progress Coaches).

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 In January 2008, HOST Policy Research (HOST) was commissioned by LSC West Yorkshire to undertake the second phase of the Young Persons' Study undertaking research to identify best practice in West Yorkshire in supporting those 16-18 year olds who are not in education, training and/or employment (NEETs) to enable them to secure appropriate opportunities. The first phase of the research was undertaken by the Centre for Education and Industry (CEI) at the University of Warwick and focused on factors contributing to learner withdrawal from post-16 education. The focus and approach of this current research arose out of recommendations made in Phase One. This research report is one of a suite of outputs to be produced by the project which will include summary reports (aimed respectively at policy-makers and practitioners) and best practice guides (aimed respectively at providers of Entry to Employment (E2E) and flexible starts provision in Further Education (FE)).

1.2 Project purpose and aims

1.2.1 The overall purpose of the project is to evaluate a number of good practice interventions or systems, and through collaborative research to identify the key mechanisms of success that can inform policies, priorities, action plans and the design of the 14-19 system to facilitate improved participation, retention and success of post-16 learners.

1.2.2 Aims

Within the overall project rationale, its three key aims are:

1. To assess on an individual project basis, where relevant: what happened; how it happened; and why it happened.
2. To assess the impact of individual case study projects, including addressing: whether the project's aims were met or exceeded; the effects of each project intervention; evidence of effective innovative approaches and actions; what products, services and knowledge can be mainstreamed or shared, including how innovation can be enhanced and applied through similar projects, and consistency increased.
3. To report on findings, make recommendations, and assist with their dissemination through events and best practice guides.

1.2.3 Objectives

The specific objectives for the project are:

1. To identify with the practitioner community in West Yorkshire the appropriate interventions/providers to evaluate.
2. To review the background to identified interventions/providers, including their aims, learner engagement, scope, and stakeholders/third parties.

3. To review through desk research and fieldwork in co-operation with practitioners what activity has taken place, including its impact and wider contribution to the project's aims and objectives.
4. To identify and specify through desk research and fieldwork, in co-operation with practitioners, why certain activities have taken place, including their rationale, types of participation and partnership arrangements.
5. To review the impact and success of the interventions, including considering:
 - a) learner progress and outcomes (including positive and unexpected outcomes);
 - b) lessons learnt (including regarding delivery mechanisms and dissemination methods);
 - and c) innovation (including mainstreaming potential and how to ensure a more consistent approach based on best practice across West Yorkshire).
6. To produce two guides covering respectively best practice in E2E and delivering flexible starts to learning provision and facilitating agreed events.

1.3 Methodology

1.3.1 The methodology for the project has been undertaken in seven interrelated stages, including dissemination to be undertaken in early 2009.

- Stage One: Preparation. This preparatory stage, which was completed at the end of February 2008, involved attending inception meetings with the LSC and events (including a workshop at which Bradford College shared their experience of delivering flexible start provision to date), initial discussions with LSC contract managers and developing research tools.
- Stage Two: Baseline research. This stage involved the HOST team contacting E2E lead contractors and the colleges that bid successfully for additional funding to support flexible starts provision, with a view to identifying potential case studies and agreeing these with the LSC. A list of the 13 E2E and college case studies that were selected is set out below (see Table 1.1).

Research workplans were agreed with all of the case study organizations. These focused on specific areas of activity in regard to the work undertaken. In some cases (particularly in smaller projects), they sought to provide an overview of the whole activity. However, in larger projects they focused on specific activities (for example, learner support, or work with employers), where it was felt there was particularly effective practice that could be explored.

In addition, work was undertaken with the E2E Partnerships to identify best practice in the way they work with partners, and together. Work here included visits to the E2E Partnerships and meetings with the West Yorkshire E2E Partnership group.

The interim report was presented by HOST, with the companion 'Work in Progress' best practice reference document based on a detailed literature review, to the LSC West Yorkshire Review Group on 28 March 2008.

Table 1.1: Best practice case studies.

Colleges (Flexible Starts)	E2E
Bradford College	A&R Training Services Ltd (Huddersfield)
	BTCV (Wakefield)
Dewsbury College (Now Kirklees College)	Bradford Distributive Training Services Ltd (Bradford)
Huddersfield Technical College (Now Kirklees College)	Bradford Foyer (Bradford)
Joseph Priestley College	igen Future Pathways (Leeds)
Leeds College of Building	MPC North (Wakefield)
Wakefield College	Project Challenge (Huddersfield)

Source: HOST Policy Research, 'Best Practice in Tackling NEETs' research for LSC West Yorkshire, 2008

- Stage Three: Initial fieldwork. This stage, which was completed at the end of April, involved the HOST team undertaking fieldwork with the agreed case studies (see Figure 1.1).

An important part of this stage of the research was a Stakeholder Workshop held on 28 April 2008 at LSC West Yorkshire. This provided an opportunity for key stakeholders involved in the best practice research to come together to consider progress made to date and emerging good practice through the E2E and flexible start case studies.

Forty representatives attended for all, or part of, the day including from: colleges and E2E providers involved in the case studies; careers companies and Connexions; Learning and Skills Council (LSC); and Local Authorities (LA).

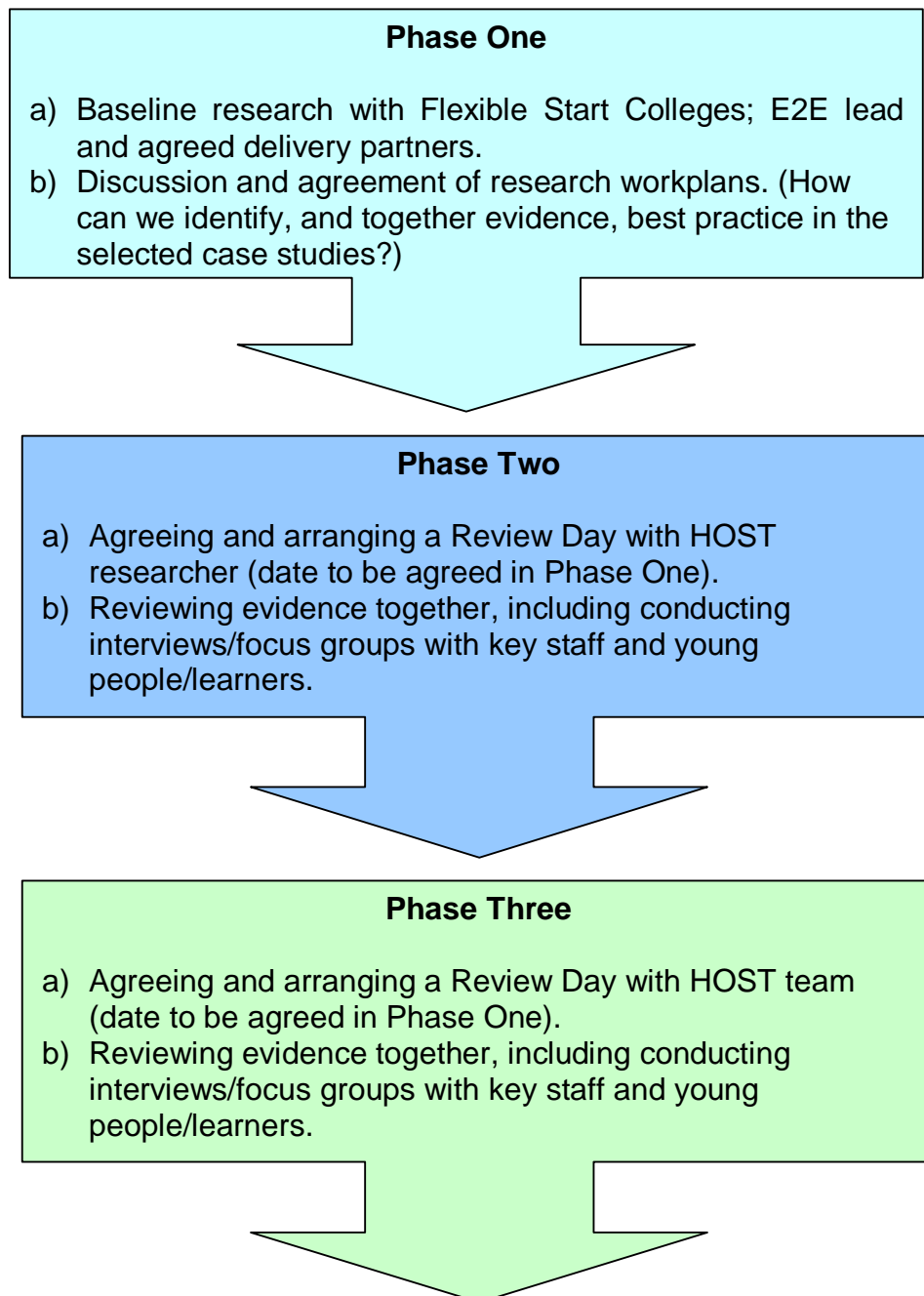
Just under three quarters (74 per cent) of participants in post-workshop feedback indicated that they thought the workshop was very useful or useful. The majority indicated that the five specific aims of the workshop had been fully met, with the balance indicating they had been partly met. A full summary of responses is set out as Annex C in HOST's second interim report (May 2008).

- Stage Four: Interim review. Following on from the Stakeholder Workshop, a second interim report was provided to LSC, which included details of issues

raised through the Workshop. A summary report was widely circulated to those involved in the research, and to wider stakeholders.

- Stage Five: Subsequent fieldwork. This stage, which was completed during November 2008, has involved the HOST team undertaking further fieldwork (Phases Two and Three) with the selected case studies at the most appropriate times as set out at Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1: Research with case studies.



Source: HOST Policy Research, 'Best Practice in Tackling NEETs' research for LSC West Yorkshire, 2008

- Stage Six: Reporting. This stage involved the HOST team collating and analyzing available research data and agreeing the research report with the LSC in December 2008.

Subsequently, in January 2009, the team will produce summary reports, respectively for policy-makers and practitioners, and two guides in respect to reducing NEETs through developing best practice in E2E and flexible start provision in colleges.

- Stage Seven: Dissemination. This will involve the HOST team conducting two dissemination events. The first of these is to be held on 22 January 2009 with agreed partners, aimed respectively at senior managers, policy-makers and funders. The second will be on 26 February 2009 with managers and practitioners in colleges and E2E providers (with a subsequent review with the LSC in March 2009).

1.4 Report

1.4.1 Following this introductory section, the report contains six further sections covering respectively:

- Section 2: What Works with NEETs? Review of Evidence.
- Section 3: Tackling NEETs: E2E and Flexible Start Provision in West Yorkshire.
- Section 4: Flexible Start Provision: Developing Best Practice - Evidence from the Case Studies.
- Section 5: E2E: Developing Best Practice - Evidence from the Case Studies.
- Section 6: Conclusions and Recommendations - Developing and Implementing Best Practice.

1.4.2 These sections are followed by four annexes:

- Annex A: Bibliography.
- Annex B: Exemplar Learning Cycle for E2E.
- Annex C: E2E Partnerships in West Yorkshire.
- Annex D: Baseline reports for colleges involved in the flexible starts initiative.

1.4.3 HOST would like to thank all those who have been involved in the research, including: national and regional consultees (including Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and LSC), staff at LSC West Yorkshire, Local Authorities, Careers Companies, Connexions, E2E Partnerships, staff and learners at FE colleges and work-based training providers, and all others who have contributed over the lifetime of the project.

Section 2: What works with NEETs? Review of Evidence

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 In this section, we will:

- provide an overview regarding the term NEETs and, in particular, consider who in policy terms the young people are who have been so classified
- set out 10 key areas of work that our review of the evidence base would suggest need to be addressed if the number of NEETs is to be reduced.

2.1.2 This section is supported by a bibliography presented at Annex A.

2.2 NEETs – who are they?

2.2.1 The term, or category, not in education, training or employment (NEET), was formally created by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 1999) in their seminal report *Bridging the Gap*. It refers to 16-18 year olds who, due to their NEET status, are at risk of not making successful and sustainable transitions to education, training and employment.

2.2.2 Over the past decade the group has remained central to public policy and the Government (DCSF, 2008) has set a Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to reduce by two percentage points (from a baseline of 9.6 per cent in 2004) the proportion of young people who are NEET by 2010 (LA targets in West Yorkshire in response to this are set out in Table 3.1).

2.2.3 The number of young people who are NEET peaked in the mid-80s when youth unemployment was at its highest. However, despite falling since then, levels remain stubbornly high (DfES, 2006), with the regional pattern showing the highest numbers in the North East, West Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber (including West Yorkshire).

2.2.4 It has to be remembered that the NEET cohort of 16-18 year old young people changes continually both in size and composition. Individuals enter and leave the cohort and many only leave to rejoin it at a later time, with some progressing into, or remaining on, welfare support rather than education, work or training at 19 years old.

2.2.5 Importantly, too, it is clear from the literature (Rathbone/Nuffield, 2008), and from the reactions of some consultees of this research, that the term NEET itself, although a well-used piece of 'policy shorthand', tells us only what young people are not, rather than what they are.

2.2.6 It has been recognized (DCSF, 2008c) that the NEET group is not homogeneous and contains, 'young people with quite different characteristics', although common features include that:

- the NEET group is getting older ('52 per cent are 18, compared with 40 per cent five years ago')

- the gender gap is widening ('16 year old boys are now more than twice as likely to be NEET as 16 year old girls')
- a higher proportion of young people are 'inactive' and not looking for work or learning
- thirty-nine per cent of those with no GCSEs are NEET at 16 years old, compared with 2 per cent of those with five or more A*-C grade GCSEs
- persistent absentees at school are seven times more likely to be NEET than their peers at age 16
- young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) are twice as likely as their peers to be NEET
- an estimated 20,000 teenage mothers are NEET.

2.2.7 It is also acknowledged (DCSF, 2008a) that, 'many young people who are NEET are high attainers, or potentially high attainers'. This is evidenced in findings from the Youth Cohort 12 survey (Sweep 3) that over a quarter (29 per cent) of NEETs aged 18 hold Level 3 or higher qualifications, and just under a quarter (21 per cent) hold Level 2 qualifications. Some of these are young people taking 'gap year' or other 'time outs'. However, at a time of economic downturn, there are bound to be an increasing number of young people who, despite having gained Level 2/3 qualifications, are unable to gain suitable employment.

2.2.8 For those young people in the NEET cohort who are long-term disengaged, research (Williamson, 1997; Merton, 1998) has identified a range of circumstances and recurring themes that characterize their disaffection and non-participation in education, training and employment (ETE). These include: adverse family circumstances; traumatic events (including bereavements); personality/behavioural difficulties; learning disabilities/disadvantage; disaffection with school; truancy; health problems; bullying; being in care, crime; drug abuse; homelessness; immaturity; lack of support; and lack of money.

2.2.9 To illustrate this further, Stone, Cotton, and Thomas (2000) in detailed qualitative research with young people who were NEET, described how they spoke in terms of, 'chains of events', where, 'behaviours such as truancy and involvement in drug and alcohol abuse were symptoms of, and reactions to, a series of preceding events'. They indicated that, 'looking back, the participants often recognized that they were making decisions - leaving home, quitting education - without any advice or support'.

2.2.10 In order to gain a clearer picture of the cohort, DCSF has commissioned the National Foundation of Education Research (NFER) to undertake further research into those who are NEET, or in jobs without training at 16 or 17 years of age. This will build on previous research undertaken by the Department into categorizations of disengagement (for example, EdComs, 2007).

2.2.11 NFER's research has been focusing on the sizes and characteristics of NEET groups, including: why certain groups and sub-groups do not participate in learning, strategies of support which would be likely to persuade them to participate, what proportion of NEETs are engaged in the illegal economy, and the choices available to young people. A typology of those who are NEET is also being developed, with the research due to be published in early 2009.

2.2.12 Whilst it is clearly important to be able to understand the profile of NEETs and to set clear targets to reduce their numbers, some commentators (Rathbone/Nuffield, 2008) have argued that the pervading influence of the PSA 2010 target means that, 'the focus of practitioners can too easily be fixed on reducing the numbers of NEET in an area, rather than being concerned with ensuring they are making sustainable transitions into education, training and employment'.

2.2.13 They similarly argue that, 'because policy for this group is set centrally, it tends to take too little account of important local differences both in the composition of the NEET group and in the structure of the local labour market', including work that can be undertaken in specific 'NEET hot spots'.

2.2.14 In summary, the composition of the NEET cohort 16-18 is constantly changing. It is made up of young people with very varying needs (from the simple to the deeply complex), and young people so identified can come from backgrounds and live in areas which in turn frequently shape their expectations and offer varying levels of ETE opportunities.

2.3 Ten key areas of work

2.3.1 HOST's review for this project of the evidence base for 'what works' in regard to tackling NEETs (HOST, 2008) identified 10 key areas of work that needed to be addressed in respect to tackling NEETs, which were as follows:

1. Outreach and engagement

Schemes seeking to engage NEETs require an intensive outreach strategy which, as well as using a range of referral agencies (including the community and voluntary sector), maximizes self-referral.

A key element of an effective approach is the forensic use of client data. In particular, in localities, that held on Connexions' Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) is vital in supporting this process and has been identified as a key feature of DCSF's NEET strategy (DCSF, 2008c).

Hoggarth and Smith (2004) reported for DfES on the impact of Connexions on young people at risk, including work undertaken with those that were NEET. They commented that many of the NEET group are in 'temporary transition' and found that a number in their research group were coping with caring or parental responsibilities. In terms of effective work with NEETs, they indicated the importance of:

- 'an intensive outreach strategy'
- building links with referral agencies (including Jobcentre Plus)

- the importance of individual advocacy by Personal Advisers (PAs) to ensure that appropriate provision is made available
- the need to avoid a too early and exclusive focus on education, training and employment outcomes for young people who may have other more important needs and priorities which require resolution
- Personal Advisers (PAs) providing continuity of 'contact and availability'.

2. Diagnosis of need

As indicated, the needs of the NEET group vary extensively. Identifying an individual's abilities, career goals/aspirations and motivations, alongside key barriers and enablers (including access to, and support being provided by, helping agencies), is crucial on an ongoing basis, as well as at the outset of programmes.

For example, the research undertaken by Popham (2003) for Connexions Service National Unit (CSNU) reviewed the range of work that Connexions Services were undertaking in tackling NEETs. It provided a checklist of actions that Connexions Services could take, including: the intelligent use of data in targeting resources; taking preventative action in schools; diagnosing needs and mapping interventions against these; and developing links with other agencies.

3. Relevant offer

The DfES NEET strategy paper (DfES, 2006) states that, 'we know from the Youth Cohort Study that most young people who are NEET say that it is because the right provision is not available (our italics) or that they do not have the qualifications to progress.'

The provision for the group must be both initially attractive (including the use of appropriate 'hooks'), and have sufficient flexibility to be adapted to the needs of individual young people and to move them on at a sustainable pace. In regard to initial attractiveness, Bentley and Gurumurthy (1999) use the term 'magnets' to describe the aspects of projects that initially attract young people to engage in them. They distinguished them as:

- 'cultural magnets' (centred around arts, music, or sport)
- 'financial magnets' (using cash or vouchers as incentives)
- work and income (offering access to employment)
- quality services (such as free advice and access to ICT facilities).

An important consideration in making the offer relevant is not just what is offered, but how and where. For example, research for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Green and Winter, 2007) has highlighted the crucial role of where young people live, and the social networks they have, in that, 'they shape the way young people see the world'.

They indicate that, 'place-specific factors, such as geographical location, community norms, historical and current patterns of employment are crucial in understanding how and whether interventions work, alongside who is involved in delivery'. This, they indicate, calls for 'local flexibility'.

4. Engaging partners to provide a comprehensive service

To provide the 'holistic' service required by many young people who are NEET requires the active engagement and co-ordination of a range of support agencies and opportunity providers. The role of peers and parents in providing complementary support must also not be under-estimated.

For example, research undertaken by NFER (Spielhofer, 2006), on behalf of Scottish Enterprise, indicated that, 'several studies found that successful outcomes could often not be achieved without establishing strong links with other local programmes and other agencies which could support young people in transition. Strong links were seen as important to address issues that went beyond the experience of project workers, such as housing, drug and alcohol issues'.

5. Advocacy and brokerage

The role of PAs and 'significant' others (such as tutors) is crucial in providing necessary advocacy and brokerage so that 'personalised' programmes can be developed and agreed.

For example, Spielhofer (2006) found that factors such as learning in a different environment, receiving one-to-one support, and having the opportunity to build positive relationships with adults were perceived to facilitate successful outcomes for young people.

6. Pre-transition and post-transition support

Support is required both pre-transition and post-transition to ensure both adequate preparation for transitions and that, once made, they are sustainable.

For example, Golden et al (2004) indicated that to support transitions (and reduce drop-out) there was a need to provide both 'pre-transition' and 'post-transition' support. They concluded that maintaining contact with the young person once they had left the project, including supporting them if they chose to change destination, was the key to helping young people to sustain their transition.

7. Incentives and rewards

Appropriate rewards and incentives need to be included. These can include financial incentives, but need to contain rewards including the attainment of relevant awards and qualifications that reinforce self-worth and achievement.

For example, recent research (Ofsted, 2008) highlighted that, 'rewards such as opportunities to go on trips or to gain awards, were powerful incentives' and (Mayor of London, 2007) highlighted the positive role that the offer of Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) can have on continued participation in employment for young people eligible for EMA payments.

However, the research also highlighted certain difficulties that have been experienced with the eligibility criteria for EMA, with some students on shorter

courses, or alternative education programmes, not being eligible to receive the incentive.

8. Involvement of young people

Involving young people can engender not just a sense of ownership, but also feelings of confidence in respect to their ability to manage transitions, both now and in the future.

For example, Steer (2000) found that approaches were particularly successful where project workers had an understanding of the community where young people came from. The research indicated, too, that most evaluations suggest that disaffected young people particularly benefit from the kind of, 'individual attention and support that all too often is unavailable at school'. It recommended that, 'achievements are celebrated and assessment is undertaken primarily as a process that can be used to aid the development of young people'. The research also stressed the importance of participation being, '...completely voluntary where young people themselves are entrusted with making choices', thereby, 'gaining a sense of ownership over it'.

9. Effective staffing

Staff who are effective in working with the NEET client group have particular attributes and competences.

For example, recently published research (Ofsted, 2008) into good practice in re-engaging disaffected and reluctant pre-16 learners noted that successful institutions, 'chose staff from a wide range of backgrounds. They look for key attributes such as patience, willingness not to pre-judge children, firmness, consistent approaches, high thresholds of tolerance and willingness to give students a second chance'.

Although rarely highlighted, the importance of supporting these staff, including preventing 'burn-out' should be noted. This can be achieved through effective management and leadership, but also through practitioners having appropriate continuous professional development (CPD), including opportunities to network with others and to review and develop their own practice.

10. Evaluation and review

Similarly, service development needs to be informed by ongoing monitoring and evaluation to identify gaps in provision, the effectiveness of the delivery process (what is working well and why), and to capture both the learner experience and progression outcomes.

For example, alongside highlighting the need to develop individualized approaches and to provide holistic support mechanisms, Kendall and Kinder (2005) in reviewing wider European experience in reclaiming the disengaged, indicated the need through evaluation and review to 'future proof' initiatives to ensure that successful interventions are sustained.

2.4 Summary

2.4.1 Previous reviews have shown that there are broadly two types of policy and practice interventions (Mayor of London, 2007) in this area: those taken to prevent NEET status being attained by young people (preventative), and those which divert young people out of NEET status (remedial or re-engaging).

2.4.2 Many of the messages about what works in preventative work are clear and mirror those in respect to re-engagement. For example, Ofsted's review (Ofsted, 2007) of pupil referral units and alternative provision made a number of recommendations regarding successful practice. These included: the need to use information about prior attainment to ensure a smooth transition and to match work to needs; use of clear and rigorous systems to track and evaluate academic, social, emotional and behavioural progress; and the use of local facilities.

2.4.3 It is clear that both forms of work (ie that undertaken pre-16 as well as that undertaken post-16) are important and not mutually exclusive. Indeed, the review of the evidence base shows that success at working with disengaged young people at both stages comes from optimizing the combination of appropriate provision and personal support.

2.4.4 As indicated, whilst the generic messages about 'what works' in tackling NEETs are important, it is vital that any intervention is planned and focused on the individual young person (including their aspirations and needs), and takes account of their wider circumstances/context.

Section 3: Tackling NEETs: E2E and Flexible Start Provision in West Yorkshire

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 In this section we consider:

- the background to delivering E2E and flexible start provision
- the E2E delivery model in West Yorkshire and current performance data
- flexible start provision in West Yorkshire, with performance data for 2007 and 2008.

3.1.2 This section is supported by a bibliography presented at Annex A.

3.2 Background

3.2.1 The 'NEET Toolkit' (DCSF, 2008c), which was designed to help different partners explore their role in tackling NEETs, emphasizes that tackling NEET is about:

- **prevention** - stopping young people becoming NEET: motivating and engaging them while they are still at school and offering attractive and relevant provision post-16
- **intervention** - knowing what young people are doing, having the resource to contact or be contacted by them, challenging their expectations and being able to offer opportunities and support when they need them, ensuring securing transition
- **sustainability** - helping young people, especially those who have a habit of 'dropping-out', to tackle any obstacles to their engagement so that they remain engaged.

3.2.2 Responding to the national agenda, tackling NEETs is a key challenge identified in Local Area Agreements 2008/2011. Table 3.1 indicates the plans for Local Authorities in West Yorkshire, published in summer 2008 covering the period 2008/2010.

3.2.3 As recent research has demonstrated (Nuffield, 2008), the challenge across areas in tackling NEETs is not homogeneous. The volatile nature of the cohort is emphasized by the fact there are significant disparities between local and national data on NEET numbers depending on how, and when, the data is collected. In commenting on this disparity, DCSF note (DCSF, 2008c) that, 'Connexions figures show a lower proportion of young people to be NEET than the DCSF estimates', adding, 'it is important that CCIS is maintained rigorously so that the two sets of data show a similar trend'.

Table 3:1: West Yorkshire Local Authority NEET Targets – 2008/2010.

Area	Baseline % NEET	Target 2008/2009	Target 2009/2010	Target 2010/2011
Bradford	9.60%	9.00%	8.60%	8.10%
Calderdale	8.25%	7.67%	7.00%	6.40%
Kirklees	10.10%	7.90%	7.30%	6.50%
Leeds	10.00%	8.90%	7.80%	6.80%
Wakefield	9.80%	8.70%	7.50%	6.90%

Source: *i&DeA LAA database, July 2008*

3.2.4 E2E

E2E is a programme which has been available to young people in England since August 2003. Current funding guidance (LSC, 2008) indicates it is for young people aged 16-18 who have yet to attain Level 2 qualifications and is, 'aimed at young people who are not yet ready or able to access a Level 2 Learning Programme, Apprenticeship or employment'.

Its roots (Rudd, 2008) lie in the Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee (chaired by Sir John Cassels), whose report 'Modern Apprenticeships: The Way to Work' concluded that programmes aimed at preparing young people for employment required 'a clearer identity'.

Following the 'end-to-end' review of Modern Apprenticeships (DfES, LSC 2004), E2E was identified (LSC, LSDA 2004) as a key part of the 'apprenticeship family' with the LSC/LSDA review indicating that many of the issues identified in the 'end-to-end' review were addressed in the planning and delivery of E2E.

This is not to say that all learning from predecessor programmes (for example, Learning Gateway/Life Skills) was taken on board. For example, it could be said that the involvement of Careers Companies/Connexions was assumed rather than fully planned as it had been in the 'front-end' of the predecessor Learning Gateway programme (Bysshe and Hughes, 2002).

Early LSC guidance (LSC, 2006a) made it clear that, 'E2E is not time bound and is based on the needs of each individual', adding, 'it is recognized that there can be no 'quick fix' for many of the young people who will enter E2E', and that, 'the LSC does not want to replicate the situation of the Life Skills programme, where it was seen, wrongly in many areas, as a fixed length programme'.

Current guidance (LSC, 2008) indicates that there is no limit to the number of times that a young person (up to the age of 25) can enter E2E, although their initial and ongoing suitability must be confirmed by a PA. The guidance does, however, go on

to say that, 'if a learner remains on E2E for 22 weeks, the provider must organize a full review', involving the learner, provider, PA and key worker (if any), which will establish, 'whether the learner's best interests are being served by continuing on E2E', with further reviews to be conducted 'every four weeks thereafter' and the number of 'planned weeks' (see Table 3.1) is used by LSC/Partnerships as a performance measure.

In terms of future provision, in their autumn 2008 policy statement on 14-19 reform (DCSF, 2008), the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) set out, 'an entitlement to the right learning opportunities and support for all young people aged 14-19', which includes, 'Apprenticeships, Diplomas, General Qualifications and the Foundation Learning Tier'.

In respect to the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT), it is indicated that E2E falls, 'under the FLT qualification route' although (at time of writing) how this is to happen is unclear and it is acknowledged that, 'some young people will study informal unaccredited provision to re-engage them'.

Building on the lessons learnt in the Activity Agreement Pilots (DCSF, 2008e), one example of such provision is the new Entry to Learning (E2L) programme, which is being piloted in four LA areas from autumn 2008 and which, 'will support young people to progress from this re-engagement provision back into formal learning'.

LSC guidance (LSC, 2008) indicates that the Progression Pathways, which are being developed as part of the FLT, 'will in time replace the E2E programme'. Although details are uncertain, it is clear that following re-commissioning in early 2009, E2E provision as currently badged and delivered is only likely to continue until 2010.

3.2.5 Flexible start provision

The 'NEET Toolkit' (DCSF, 2008c) indicates that, 'young people do not become NEET by choice - the majority simply cannot find a learning opportunity or job that meets their needs'. It highlights that, 'the majority of young people NEET have been involved in some form of post-16 learning, but have dropped out', thus emphasizing the need for, 'more flexible start dates and 'roll-on' provision to enable young people to remain in learning and so reduce the risk of them taking low quality employment and finding themselves NEET again later'.

The Department's recent guide to promoting flexible provision for NEETs (DCSF, 2008a) indicates that, 'flexible, responsive provision', means, 'young people being able to access full-time, mainstream provision at different entry points during the year', adding that, 'provision should lead to accredited qualifications that have clear progression routes from Entry Level to Level 3 and above' and that these should be publicised through, 'college prospectuses and on-line in the 14-19 area prospectus'.

The Guide indicates that two main types of flexible provision are currently available - that delivered through offering courses in January, and 'truly flexible courses' (that is, 'roll-on roll-off' provision), 'which are dictated by demand throughout the year'. However, it is unclear from the Guide the extent to which appropriate flexible provision has actually been developed to date (particularly in respect to 'roll-on, roll-

off' provision) and, to address the issue of NEETs, research (Maguire, 2006) has indicated that there is a clear and pressing need to do so.

To extend and develop the flexible start provision, using Local Initiative Funding (LIF), LSC West Yorkshire invited colleges to bid to develop, and deliver, flexible start provision from January 2008. The colleges that were successful were: Bowling College; Bradford College (who had commenced provision in 2007); Dewsbury College (now Kirklees College, Dewsbury); Huddersfield Technical College (now Kirklees College, Huddersfield); Joseph Priestley College; Leeds College of Building; Leeds College of Technology; Shipley College; and Wakefield College. A baseline review conducted by HOST with all the colleges (including those that did not proceed to be case studies) is included as Annex D.

Although the lead time to develop appropriate programmes was restricted, programmes commenced at various times from January to April 2008 with varying levels of success, as set out in section 3.4.

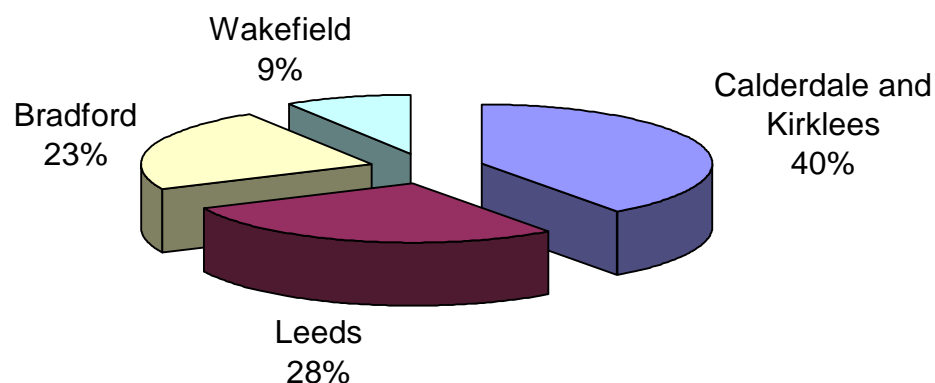
3.3 E2E provision in West Yorkshire

3.3.1 Delivery model

E2E is delivered in West Yorkshire by four E2E Partnerships, covering respectively Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. Full details of the Partnerships, covering issues including their governance, size and nature (including recent changes) and information about throughput and outcomes provided by the Partnerships, are set out in a common format at Annex C. There is a considerable variation in the size and complexity of the Partnerships. Based on E2E start data, there were 3,338 starters in West Yorkshire in 2007/2008. In terms of overall delivery, just under 40 per cent was in Calderdale and Kirklees, 28 per cent in Leeds, 23 per cent in Bradford and 9 per cent in Wakefield.

A clear example of effective practice in E2E delivery is the way that the Partnerships currently work with the LSC. Regular Partnership meetings are held at which operational and strategic issues arising are openly and freely discussed. The Partnerships are encouraged to share experience, plan and review West Yorkshire-wide activities (Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1: E2E delivery within delivery partnerships in 2007/2008.



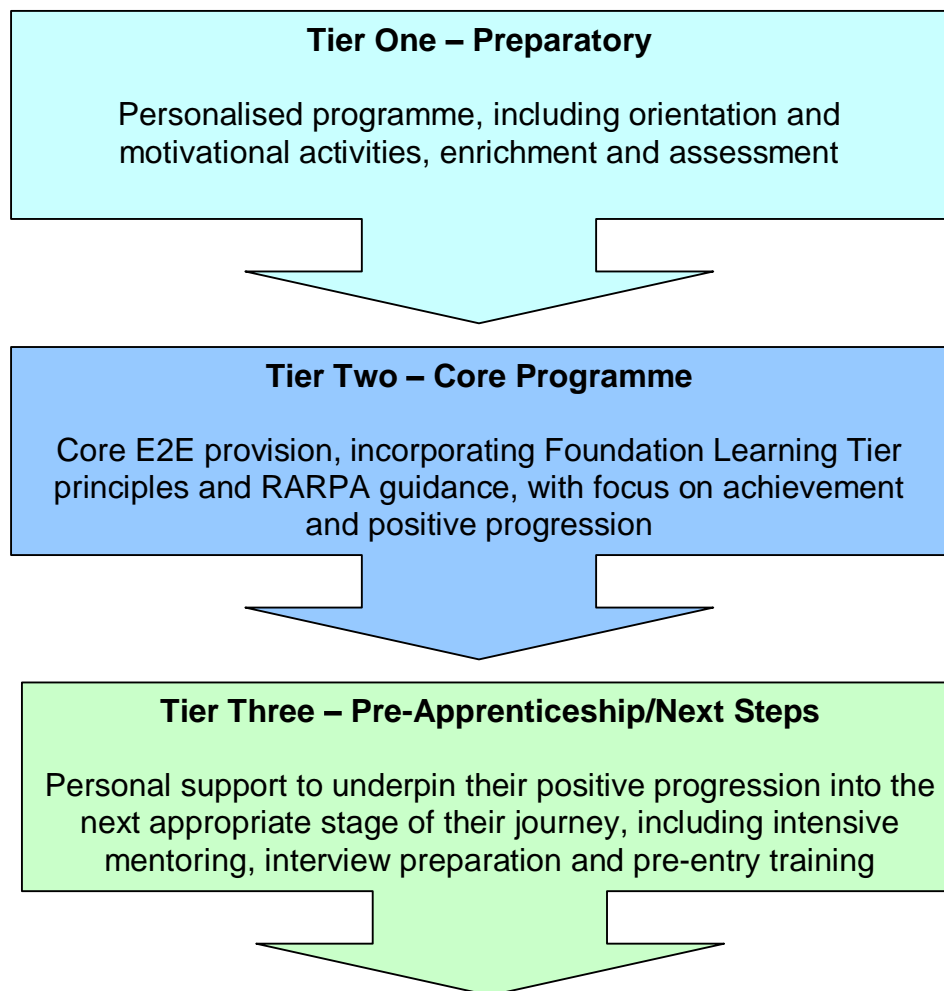
Source: HOST Policy Research, 'Best Practice in Tackling NEETs' research for LSC West Yorkshire, 2008

The exemplar learning cycle developed for E2E (LSC, 2006b) is set out at Annex B. Whilst this has proved a useful generic model, it was felt not to be adequate to describe some of the different levels and types of support that were required.

For example, West Yorkshire has benefited from undertaking area-wide ESF-funded programmes, such as Slipstream to Upstream (and more local programmes, such as Entry to Vocational Learning (E2V) (Looney, 2007), which have helped explore preparatory work that some young people need to help engage them prior to entering E2E. Similarly, local practice has illustrated the importance of short ‘top-up’ programmes to facilitate entry to Apprenticeship programmes.

Following on this development work in the area, the E2E delivery model was re-engineered in 2007 (Figure 3.2) and was reported to have both led to an extension of learning choices and contributed to an increase in participation in the programme.

Figure 3.2: West Yorkshire E2E three-tier approach.



Source: HOST Policy Research, ‘Best Practice in Tackling NEETs’ research for LSC West Yorkshire, 2008

It is true to say that, over the past year of operation, the ‘Three Tier’ model has developed in different ways in the four E2E Partnership areas in West Yorkshire. For

example, as can be seen at Annex D, 'Tier Three' provision is under development in two areas at present (although it was said 'Tier Three-like' provision was available).

Similarly, various approaches have been taken to 'Tier One' provision, with most commonality being in the more established area of Tier Two provision (the Core Programme). One Partnership expressed the view that, 'Tier Three is barely distinguishable from the later weeks of Tier Two', that the sort of provision envisaged in Tier Three can be readily delivered under Tier Two and, 'students can simply progress onto further training or work when they are ready'.

In respect to different forms of delivery, in Calderdale and Kirklees, for example, it was reported earlier in the year that of the 13 delivery partners, five deliver 'Gateway' (Tier One provision), one exclusively, with four also delivering 'Hub' (Tier Two) and 'Transition' (Tier Three provision). Additionally, three pilot providers were delivering 'Gateway' exclusively. Seven partners deliver 'Hub' and 'Transition', with three currently delivering 'Hub' provision only.

In general, it was indicated by the Partnership that the delivery partners work well together. Where necessary, young people are able to transfer between delivery partners into more appropriate provision, often using short 'tasters' as an opportunity to enable them to sample new provision prior to transferring on a permanent basis.

In terms of coverage, it was indicated from the outset that the Partnership was diverse and, with the possible exception of South Kirklees, had extensive coverage. It was also indicated that provision had been added, including most recently a workshop to cover a gap in South Kirklees in respect to construction skills, with an important development being the introduction of floating provision to be targeted at NEET 'hot spots'.

In Leeds, Future Pathways have developed their delivery model, in collaboration with their 13 delivery partners, 'to acknowledge, monitor and support the varying cohorts within the eligibility scope for E2E'.

They operate what they describe in their operational guidance as a three 'feature' model in which all Partners deliver 'Starting off' (Tier One) and 'On programme' (Tier Two) features, with providers of Apprenticeship, and/or Learning Agreement Pilot (LAP) provision, delivering the 'Moving on' (Tier Three) feature. In regard to each of these in turn:

- **'Starting off'** – All learners move onto 'Starting off' provision at each Partner after completing the Partnership's induction which is undertaken at Future Pathways (see Section 5 for further details). Learners continue on this 'feature' until their programme is agreed.

At this point, based on the information gathered through the initial assessment period, a decision will be made regarding moving to another feature ('On Programme' or 'Moving on'), or whether to remain on 'Starting off' to develop further core skills and access additional support as recorded on the learner's programme and review documents.

Learners' development is reviewed on an ongoing basis to assess whether progression to another feature is appropriate. If a learner continues on the 'Starting off' feature for 12 weeks after their programme has been agreed, a comprehensive review takes place (as specified in LSC guidance).

- **'On programme'** – This is considered to be core E2E provision, focusing on overcoming learners' barriers to progression. A key focus (particularly on 'Feature One and Two') is on personal and social development through employability, including the development of transferable and 'soft' (wider) Key Skills, including team work and time-keeping. The development of Literacy and Numeracy is a key focus of both Feature One and Two.
- **'Moving on'** – This provides support for those who are ready to move on but need extra help to achieve a positive progression (for example, specific preparation for an Apprenticeship programme or other positive destination).

Future Pathways stressed that the delivery model aims to, 'support achievement and progression with provision monitored to meet the needs of the varying cohorts'. They feel what is created is a framework/pathway for progression, 'not a hierarchy of provision' which they feel the 'Three Tier' model suggests.

Future Pathways also stressed that all the features are 'roll-on/roll-off', as they believe this is crucial to meet the needs of individual learners by ensuring flexibility. They emphasized, too, that partners are encouraged to continue to forge links with organizations to develop additional Progression Pathways, particularly in respect to Apprenticeship provision.

3.3.2 E2E performance data

West Yorkshire performance data 2007/2008 (Table 3.2) indicates that 3,338 young people commenced E2E (101 per cent of full year target), an increase on the 2006/2007 outturn of just over 3,000 starters. No data is collected centrally by the LSC in respect to the breakdown of starters and completers within the 'Three Tiers', although the LSC indicated that individual Partnerships are likely to have their own records.

For example, an analysis at the mid-year point 2008 indicated in the Leeds Partnership that, as a percentage of training weeks, over four fifths (88 per cent) had been spent by learners on 'On programme' (Tier 2), under one tenth (9.6 per cent) in 'Starting off' (Tier One) and the balance (2.4 per cent) in 'Moving on' (Tier 3) provision.

In terms of planned weeks, the overall performance was that 97 per cent of the planned weeks were delivered (up from 94 per cent in 2006/2007), with the range being from 99 per cent in the case of Calderdale and Kirklees to 87 per cent in the case of the Wakefield E2E Partnership.

In respect to positive destinations (that is, into education, employment, with or without accredited training, and training), of the 3,172 leavers in the period 2007/2008, 57 per cent were indicated to have had positive destinations, which is at the same level as the national , and slightly above the Yorkshire and Humberside (54 per cent), average (Table 3.3).

Table 3.2: E2E performance data – 2006/2007 and 2007/2008 starts.

Area	2006/2007			2007/2008		
	Planned	Actual	% Full year target versus actual	Planned	Actual	% Full year target versus actual
West Yorkshire	2,320	3,038	131%	3,320	3,338	101%
Bradford	526	736	136%	675	779	115%
Calderdale and Kirklees	950	1,028	108%	1,450	1,308	90%
Leeds	582	1,056	181%	925	937	101%
Wakefield	262	238	91%	270	314	116%

Source: LSC West Yorkshire, E2E Performance Data, December 2008

Table 3.3: E2E performance data – leavers into positive destinations.

Area	2006/2007 All leavers	% Positive destinations against leavers	2007/2008 All leavers	% Positive destinations against leavers
National	47,585	51%	51,709	54%
Yorkshire and the Humber	6,006	48%	7,242	54%
West Yorkshire	2,761	51%	3,172	57%
Bradford	676	49%	689	56%
Calderdale and Kirklees	1,032	49%	1,127	53%
Leeds	851	54%	1,083	61%
Wakefield	202	51%	273	55%

Source: LSC West Yorkshire, E2E performance data, December 2008

Some additional commentary on the performance of the respective E2E Partnerships has been provided by them at Annex D.

The breakdown of leavers' positive destinations (Table 3.4) reveals some interesting variations across the different E2E Partnerships.

Table 3.4: E2E performance data: breakdown of 2007/2008 leavers entering positive destinations.

Area	% Leavers into FE	% Leavers Into WBL	% Leavers into jobs with training	% Leavers into jobs without training
National	21%	10%	7%	15%
Yorkshire and the Humber	18%	11%	7%	19%
West Yorkshire	21%	11%	7%	18%
Bradford	22%	16%	4%	14%
Calderdale and Kirklees	16%	11%	9%	17%
Leeds	26%	8%	8%	19%
Wakefield	18%	5%	3%	28%

Source: LSC West Yorkshire, E2E performance data, December 2008

For example, in 2007/2008, LSC data provided (December 2008) shows just over a quarter (26 per cent) of E2E leavers in Leeds enter Further Education, whereas 18 and 16 per cent are recorded as doing so respectively in Wakefield and Calderdale and Kirklees. Similarly, 14 per cent of leavers in Bradford are recorded as entering 'jobs without training' (JWT) as opposed to well over a quarter (28 per cent) in Wakefield.

Clearly such variations could be caused by a whole variety of factors, including the interests and capabilities of the individuals concerned and opportunities open to them on exit in local labour and learning markets they were entering.

In seeking to implement best practice in tackling NEETs, it will be important for assessments to be made of how best both to improve the supply of appropriate opportunities (for example, in respect to increasing the availability of appropriate Apprenticeships and flexible start provision in FE) as well as how best to stimulate demand (for example, in terms of both young people being encouraged, and through their employers supported, to take up accredited training opportunities).

3.4 Flexible start provision

3.4.1 In this section, we consider delivery in 2007 and 2008 in respect to flexible start provision.

3.4.2 Delivery in 2007

Development work in respect to flexible start provision was undertaken, with LSC support, at Bradford College, in 2007. As indicated, early messages were disseminated about progress (including impact and outcomes) at a well-attended dissemination workshop at LSC West Yorkshire in February 2008, which indicated the importance of partnership working in connection with Careers Bradford.

Data provided by Bradford College concerning the 156 young people who commenced flexible start learning in, or after, January 2007, indicated that just under half (47 per cent) were aged 17 and that over four in five (81 per cent) held pre-Level 1 (39 per cent) or Level 1 (42 per cent) qualifications on entry. The College commented on the difficulty of being precise about the pre-entry status of learners, but indicated that whilst just under a third (31 per cent) were NEET on entry, over half (51 per cent) were known to be entering from education, employment or training (ETE), although it was believed this was 'menial or insecure work', and the status of the balance was unknown. It was indicated that a third (33 per cent) of learners discontinued, although positive outcomes are recorded for half of them (including transfers to other FE provision).

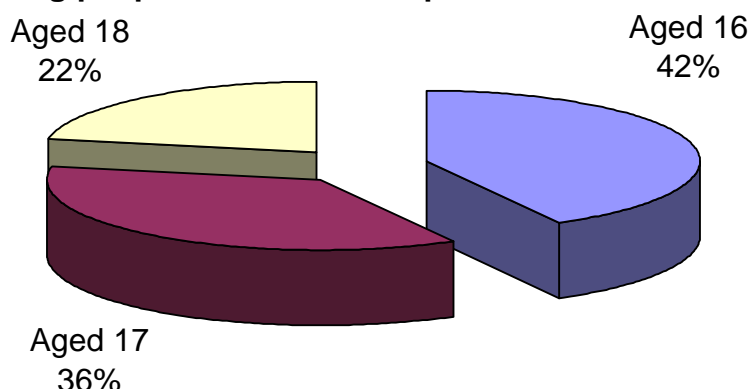
In regard to completers, the data indicates that the progression rates were high. Over six in ten (61 per cent) continued in FE at Bradford College, with a further 16 per cent doing so elsewhere, with a few entering employment. Overall, Bradford College indicated that there has been a very significant increase in their provision in terms of Level 1 and Level 2, and that full-time equivalent (FTE) numbers overall have risen by some 20 per cent over the past two years.

3.4.3 Delivery in 2008

In terms of 2008 flexible start entrants, a survey of the nine colleges that received funding to pilot flexible starts undertaken for this research (including Bradford College), indicated that a total of 314 young people started on provision funded under the initiative, 202 (64 per cent) of whom were male and 112 (36 per cent) female. Just under two thirds (60 per cent) of these learners were recorded as being NEET on entry, with others coming direct from some other form of education, employment, or training (EET). The age of 256 of these young people (82 per cent) is recorded in survey responses. Figure 3.3 shows that of these, on entry, just under a half (42 per cent) were aged 16, just over a third (36 per cent) were aged 17, and the balance (22 per cent) were 18 years old.

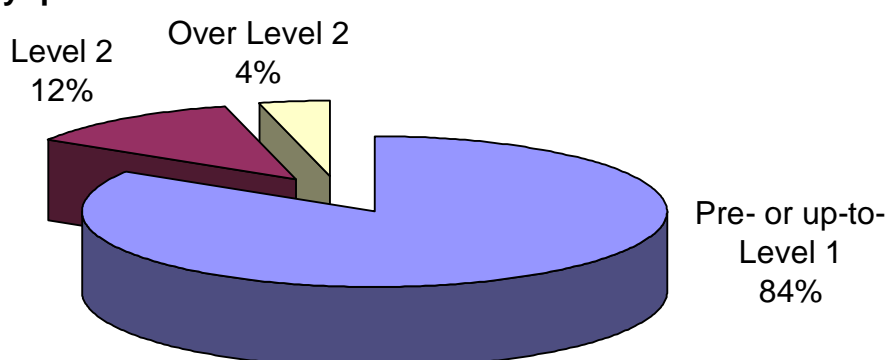
Colleges provided an assessment of the highest level of pre-entry qualifications gained for 240 (76 per cent) of the cohort. Figure 3.4 shows that of these, over 4 in 10 (84 per cent) were pre- or up-to-Level 1, 12 per cent were up to Level 2, and the balance (4 per cent) held qualifications over Level 2.

Figure 3.3: Age of young people in flexible start provision.



Source: HOST Policy Research, survey of colleges, October 2008

Figure 3.4: Pre-entry qualifications of learners.

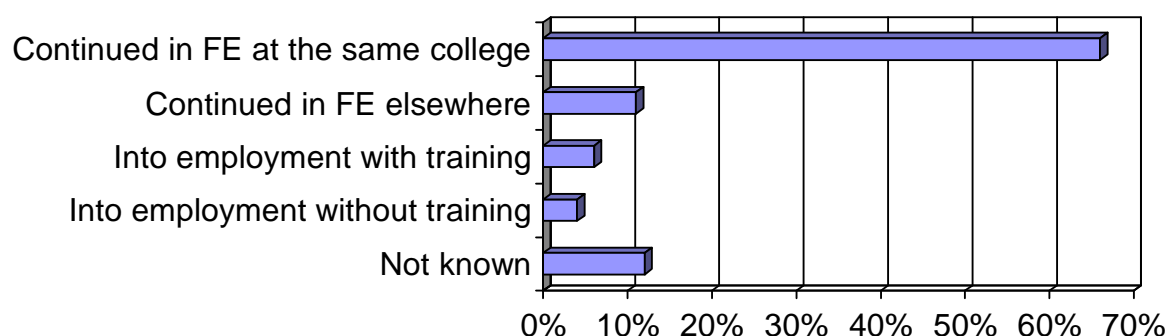


Source: HOST Policy Research, survey of colleges, October 2008

Overall, the survey data shows that just over a third (36 per cent) of those who started on flexible learning courses discontinued. Of these, just under three quarters (71 per cent) were male and the balance (29 per cent) were female. Most of the destinations of these non-completers were recorded as unknown, although a few were indicated as having entered employment without training (5), employment with training (4) and FE (21). Of the completers, the destinations of 161 leavers (80 per cent of the total) are recorded in the survey, with no information having been provided for the balance (20 per cent). Figure 3.5 shows that of those for whom a destination was provided:

- Two thirds (66 per cent) continued in FE at the college where they undertook the flexible start provision and a further 11 per cent joined an FE course elsewhere.
- A further 10 (6 per cent) went into employment with training.
- A further seven (4 per cent) entered employment without training, and 20 (12 per cent) were given as 'not known'.

Figure 3.5: Learner destinations.



N=161

Source: HOST Policy Research, survey of colleges, October 2008

3.5 Summary

3.5.1 Due to its economic and social heritage, West Yorkshire faces particular challenges in regard to the number of 16-18 year old young people who are NEET.

3.5.2 In this context, the development of flexible and responsive FE, and E2E provision, is crucial in enabling those who are NEET to progress into available opportunities in what will be an increasingly tight labour market.

3.5.3 In regard to flexible starts provision, the outcome data from participating colleges shows some encouraging outcomes for young people, including progressions into FE. In Section 4, we explore effective practice emerging from the case studies which has contributed to these outcomes and seek to identify what was 'best practice'.

3.5.4 The E2E model in West Yorkshire has benefited from local innovation and development activity and has increased its effectiveness and responsiveness at point of entry (through Tier One) and at point of progression at Tiers Two and Three. Again, the outcomes delivered (which are at or above national averages) have been achieved through effective practices, such as those identified and illustrated through the case studies in Section 5.

Section 4: Flexible Start Provision: Developing Best Practice – Evidence from the Case Studies

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 In this section, we consider key issues in regard to developing best practice in flexible start provision at different stages of the learner journey, including:

- engaging and recruiting young people into learning
- providing effective induction and initial assessment
- offering an appropriate curriculum
- providing appropriate support
- enabling progression
- supporting best practice.

4.1.2 Further details about identified best practice from the case studies will be set out in the best practice guide covering flexible start provision due in February 2009.

4.2 Engagement/recruitment

4.2.1 It is clear from the best practice case studies that engaging and recruiting young people onto provision requires considerable planning and work with other agencies, in particular Connexions, but also (where relevant), as at Leeds College of Building, agencies such as the Youth Offending Team (YOT). It can also be assisted by the use of good publicity materials (for example, as for the Shuffle programme at Dewsbury College).

4.2.2 For example, Bradford College holds fortnightly, and sometimes weekly, meetings to discuss widening participation, recruitment and retention, and progress. These meetings are attended by the college's 14-19 Co-ordinator, the Assistant Director (Young People), Learner Services, Marketing, Admissions, Enrichment staff and Careers Bradford. (Although the college's main partner in relation to their NEET provision is Careers Bradford, they indicated they have also made links with other agencies such as those dealing with youth offenders and care leavers, the YMCA and Youth Service.)

4.2.3 Information is exchanged about planned events (including careers events such as 'Getting Sorted') and the College provides detailed information about programmes and mail-shots for PAs. Careers Bradford sends out information to young people about vacancies, identifying those who might be interested from their database. Careers Bradford also influences the provision that is put in place because, drawing on their CCIS database, they provide information about what young people want and about the level at which they are working.

4.2.4 The College indicated that the marketing of flexible starts had both raised the profile of FE opportunities and the awareness that potential learners did not have to wait until September to start a course.

4.2.5 They had about 190 applications for full-time flexible start provision by early 2008, and the conversion rate for turning applications into starts was said to be 50 per cent. All applicants received a reminder phone-call about their interviews and Admissions staff followed-up non-attendees to whom further dates were offered.

4.3 Induction/assessment

4.3.1 Each of the colleges undertook different forms of induction and learner assessment for young people undertaking flexible start provision, and these clearly differed depending on the length and type of provision offered and the needs of young people. For example, Bradford College indicated that they felt it was crucial to identify any literacy or numeracy problems, and the need for additional language support pre-entry. This they felt should be undertaken either during induction, or in summer school, with support being put in right at the start of the programme for those who needed it.

4.3.2 At Wakefield College, the three pilot courses offered (Construction, Floristry and Information Technology) shared a common two-day induction element. This comprised: a general introduction; 'ice breaking' activities and getting to know each other, tutors and the College; skills tasters; an assessment of Key Skills, personal and social skill needs conducted by the college Key Skills specialist tutors; and an assessment by the tutors to ensure the learners were adequately motivated and committed.

4.3.3 The introduction period provided a gentle start (this being a sensitive period for students who are unused to meeting firm attendance times), but progressively they 'picked up speed and attendance'. Of the 22 attending the induction days, 20 started the courses.

4.4 Curriculum

4.4.1 The curriculum offers varied considerably across the provision. Baseline reviews, compiled in consultation with colleges, setting out the differences in provision are included at Annex D.

4.4.2 Bradford College built on their 2007 offer by including a range of programmes that were offered at different start dates in 2008, including a summer school programme. The colleges that were new to flexible starts delivery chose to offer the following provision.

- Dewsbury College developed a 'Shuffle Programme' which was designed for 20 hours over 25 weeks which enabled learners to undertake a range of specialist pathways and gain an Entry Level BTEC Certificate in Skills in Working Life.
- Huddersfield Technical College set up a new 20-week 'Xplorer' programme, which enabled learners (amongst other qualifications) to gain the Asdan Certificate in Career Planning.

- Joseph Priestley College's flexible start provision comprised two courses in Construction and in Hair and Beauty. Both were for a total of 450 hours and were delivered over 24 weeks. Construction was block entry and started on 15 January 2008. Hair and Beauty was 'roll-on/roll-off provision' with the learners integrated into the mainstream college programme.
- Leeds College of Building developed an eight-week programme in Construction delivered over two and a half days a week.
- Wakefield College developed three 12-week programmes, for between 12-18 hours per week, in Construction, Information Technology (IT), and Floristry.

4.4.3 The reasons for the selection of the different curriculum offers are complex and individual to the institutions concerned. For example, at Huddersfield Technical College (HTC), it was decided that a new 'Xplorer' programme that was not foundation provision should be developed, to be led and delivered by the Huddersfield College Training Partnership (HCTP) team. The aim of this was to draw on HCTP's experience of managing E2E and related provision which was directly modelled on Progression Pathways within the developing FLT, of which the Unit has some experience.

4.4.4 In terms of delivery, a number of providers highlighted the importance of the pace and timing of course provision. For example, in the Construction provision at Joseph Priestley College, the slow start and gradual increase in learning time in the first month was felt to be a valuable innovation that, 'broke learners in gradually' to the routines of attendance and learning (and in some ways mirrored successful approaches in E2E).

4.4.5 Despite the gentle start, the daily programme was designed to be compact and full with a good pace. For example, they kept lunch breaks short - half an hour - so students had no time to get distracted and fail to return. Using the Easter and May breaks, too, to access mainstream workshop accommodation and run week-long practical sessions proved both effective and popular.

4.4.6 Dewsbury College emphasized the use of importance of enrichment activities in developing a 'group ethos', 'being able to relax a bit with students' and, 'getting to know them outside the classroom' (for example, through trips/visits). They felt that the confidence/trust developed was important and through this process some of the underlying problems that young people had started coming 'out of the woodwork'. The caution was mentioned that outside trips and other 'fun' activities 'need to be budgeted for'.

4.5 Support

4.5.1 It is clear from the case studies that some of the learners recruited (for example, at Leeds College of Building) were very challenging, although in other instances (for example, Huddersfield Technical College (HTC)), some staff were surprised by the ability and willingness of some of the NEET group that they recruited, emphasizing the varied nature of the cohort.

4.5.2 The issue of learner support proved crucial to the success of all the provision and was an area where some particularly effective practice was evident. It should be noted here that support can come from a range of sources: formally from staff (either internal or external, such as Connexions), but also importantly, informally (especially through facilitating and enabling peer support). In terms of the latter, for example, HTC indicated that one of the significant features of their programme had been the effective use and encouragement of peer group support, which was notable in other provision.

4.5.3 In terms of formal support, at Joseph Priestley College, for example, in addition to the 450 hours of vocational provision, each learner was allocated two hours' individual advice and guidance (IAG), four hours' mentoring and three hours' progression guidance.

4.5.4 A specialist mentor was attached to each group of learners and covered these additional course elements. The College took considerable care with the selection of these two mentors. Key characteristics sought were an ability to connect with this age group, a thorough understanding of the vocational sector they covered and an awareness of, and contacts in, other agencies that might be able to offer specialist advice and support.

4.5.5 The mentors operated through individual and group sessions. They spent time with each individual and tracked their progress, followed up absentees and explored the reasons for the absence. They provided support where learners had particular problems and acted as a conduit to other support agencies. For example, they found accommodation for a learner who had been ejected from home, brought in support from the Bereavement Unit for a learner suffering a family loss, and helped significantly to develop confidence in a number of shy and retiring learners. Most of the input was listening and talking on a one-to-one basis, with the aim of getting the best out of each individual.

4.5.6 The focus of the case study at Bradford College was on the extensive support system that the College have used in connection with flexible start programme provision, where stepping up the level of support for this project was seen as a way of 'pump-priming' the College's support services generally.

4.5.7 As part of the provision for the January starts, it was agreed with the Student Support Manager that there would be targeted, pre-emptive support for these learners. It was agreed that a general learning assistant would be placed in all Entry Level classes and in classes of Level 1 learners in particular vocational areas, on the basis that these were 'high risk'. This included Childcare, Catering, Travel and Tourism, Motor Vehicle and Hairdressing. The Student Support Manager explained that with the NEET group it was very important not to wait for self-referrals, as this could simply replicate their negative school experience.

4.5.8 One major change that they had recently made was to employ as many learning assistants as possible on permanent contracts, whether full-/or part-time, instead of paying them only for contact time with students. This had allowed the college to build time into their contracts for administration, recording and sharing information with other staff and liaison with tutors. They have also provided training

for this group and briefing for tutors on the role of these staff. It was indicated that every lesson plan must now specify a role for the Learning Assistant.

4.5.9 Similarly, it was said at Dewsbury College that a 'team teaching' approach was often adopted, where one member of staff might be dealing with higher-level achievers, with a Learning Assistant, 'dropping in and out of certain sessions to support students' and a Learning Mentor available, 'to explain tasks clearly to those who needed the help'.

4.5.10 Bradford College also has well-developed systems in respect to young people who might be considering withdrawing from learning. Any student who withdraws, or is at risk of doing so, through poor attendance, for example, is picked up by the PAs and by the College's retention staff. The 'live' information that Careers Bradford were able to provide was crucial for this.

4.5.11 The Retention Officers at Bradford College are now called Student Progress Coaches; there are six in the College and they are allocated to different departments. Their role has evolved out of good practice elsewhere in the College, for example, in the Aim Higher programme. They explain to the students at induction how they work and the help they can provide. Learners can refer themselves, but are often referred by tutors because of concern about attendance or progress.

4.5.12 Their role with learners is much more than telephoning those who are absent. They draw up an action plan with the learner if they have fallen behind and can offer help with assignments and study skills, as well as dealing with family issues, financial, accommodation and other issues. An important aspect of their role is to direct or refer students to other services in the College.

4.5.13 The Student Progress Coaches provided somebody other than tutors for learners to talk to. All of them were young and several of them had been through the College themselves. They worked closely with tutors to discuss how a learner could be helped back into college and/or supported tutors in working out how to tackle course-related issues. In some cases, they mediated between tutors and learners as well as making referrals to PAs where complex personal issues were involved.

4.5.14 They could also focus on monitoring and addressing attendance issues at particular pressure points such as Key Skills classes. A system of linking coaches with tutors for specific 'at risk' courses in order to provide a preventative service was working well, in Hairdressing in particular. They themselves reported that one of the key success factors was that they were very persistent: they continually chased students and kept in touch with them. It was very important that these learners felt that somebody cared that they were in college. They also had to work hard at getting them into a routine, and used wake-up calls and texting to assist with this.

4.6 Progression

4.6.1 One of the principle aims of flexible start provision was to encourage progression and (as indicated in Section 3) it is clear that a number of young people not only benefited from undertaking the programmes themselves, but were also able to progress, most frequently onto further FE provision.

4.6.2 In this, the role of summer schools, and other provision (for example, as offered at Bradford and Dewsbury College this year) which enabled young people to sample courses, needs also to be stressed, both as a way of recruiting young people onto provision and as acting as a 'bridge' to provision commencing after the flexible provision ends.

4.7 Support for best practice

4.7.1 The role of staff training was stressed in case studies (for example, Bradford College, Leeds College of Building) as a way of supporting best practice, which was felt to be particularly important for those staff who had had limited experience of working with disengaged learners.

4.7.2 Additionally, staff at Dewsbury College identified a number of key features of their working practice which they felt contributed to the success of their programme. These included the following:

- The programme had involved extensive joint planning between tutors and managers, as well as with some, '15-20 tutors and lecturers' and that stress was, 'put from the start on working together as a whole team'.
- There was regular communication on matters such as learner progress, with regular e-mails to staff involved regarding progress and issues/problems that had arisen, so that staff could provide, 'continuity of support' and it could be, 'a combined effort'.
- The importance of having, 'good internal and external networks' and of knowing who to contact for, 'help or to make things happen'.

4.8 Summary

4.8.1 The experience gained during the year encouraged a number of colleges who were piloting flexible starts provision for the first time, including Dewsbury and Huddersfield Technical College (now Kirklees College) to expand provision in 2008. A number of colleges are still reviewing provision and plans are less certain, although the general need to expand provision is clear.

4.8.2 However, whilst much of the experience was positive, the flexible starts initiative in 2008 in West Yorkshire was (with the exception of Bradford College) relatively small-scale and developmental in nature. For most of the colleges, this was the first time that they had recruited 16-18 year olds other than in September. As a consequence, there was, and remains, much to be learned about the most effective ways and areas into which to expand provision.

Section 5: E2E: Developing Best Practice – Evidence from the Case Studies

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 In this section, building on the effective practice messages emerging from the literature review in Section 2, we consider the evidence arising from the case studies about best practice at different stages of the E2E learner journey in respect to:

- learner engagement and recruitment
- induction and assessment practices
- curriculum development in Tiers One, Two and Three
- learner IAG/support
- progression
- ways of supporting best practice.

5.1.2 Further details about identified best practice from the case studies, including advice/prompts to providers based on this, are set out in the best practice guide covering E2E provision which will be available in February 2009.

5.2 Learner engagement and recruitment

5.2.1 A key task for E2E providers is to engage, recruit and retain learners. A consistent finding in respect to recruitment is that best practice involves providers working closely with both Connexions (and other youth support agencies) and local schools regarding recruitment to E2E. This includes (as with Flexible Starts) the importance of Connexions identifying and subsequently tracking young people through the Client Caseload Information System (CCIS).

5.2.2 In terms of raising awareness of E2E, A&R Training Services Ltd found it useful to take display stands into schools and to speak to both individuals and groups at events. To overcome the 'lack of identity' that a number of consultees feel E2E has, they market provision as a 'Pre-Apprenticeship' programme and emphasize success stories such as identifying past E2E learners who have been selected as 'Learner of the Year' in West Yorkshire.

5.2.3 In regard to engagement, Future Pathways stressed that considerable work has been undertaken to market E2E provision to referral agencies. For example, links have been made with housing groups (such as Archway) and community groups serving disadvantaged areas (for example, Barca in Leeds 13). As a result of a slight under-representation of females on E2E programmes (including from South Asian backgrounds), marketing has been targeted at them, including work through community centres. In addition, the Learning Co-ordinators (whose role is described later) undertake regular presentations to PAs (for example, through Knowledge Network meetings). As a consequence of work undertaken, it was generally felt that

E2E is seen by PAs as, 'a credible option' and was contrasted with, 'other shorter or fixed-term funded provision'.

5.2.4 Best practice also involves effective recruitment processes, including ensuring they are responsive and non-discriminatory, and that opportunities are available as soon as possible after interviews. For example, Connexions commented on good practice at Project Challenge where it was said, 'appointments for young people to visit are available in a timely and flexible way, with lots of second chances given if circumstances mean they can't turn up first time'.

5.3 Induction/assessment

5.3.1 Two different approaches are taken in West Yorkshire to learner induction. In the first model (Wakefield and Leeds), the E2E Partnership (through the Lead Provider) operates a centralized induction as part of which learners explore which type of provision/providers they may want to progress onto at the end of the week. The alternate model (Bradford and Calderdale and Kirklees) involves learners being recruited by delivery partners and, within agreed guidelines, receiving induction and initial assessment from them. For example, within the Bradford E2E Partnership initial assessment work undertaken with learners at Bradford Foyer includes:

- diagnostic assessments (including Basic Skills)
- risk assessments (looking at a range of personal, medical and other risk factors emerging through the Foyer's and other professionals' assessments)
- learning styles questionnaires (as with other assessments, a range of instruments are available and learners are asked to, 'help choose assessment tools which most suit them')
- Rickter Scale (following a baseline screening, this is undertaken at regular intervals to enable the learner and staff to measure 'distance travelled').

5.3.2 In both models, the E2E Partnership fulfils an important role in terms of ongoing support and in enabling individual learners to take up opportunities with another provider if, for whatever reason, the selected provision proves inappropriate.

5.3.3 In regard to the first model, the induction programme operated by Future Pathways on behalf of the Leeds E2E Partnership was selected by them for detailed review as a case study. The programme is delivered by a small team every week with around 20 participants, with relevant PA and other support. The programme (which runs for 16 hours) includes initial assessment, skills mapping, rights and responsibilities, policies and procedures, equality/diversity and health and safety.

5.3.4 The advantage of this approach was said to be that it reinforces a feeling of inclusion, in that learners, 'have been recruited by the Partnership and not a single provider'. Furthermore, it was argued, 'the week's induction gives learners a chance for some stability and we (the Lead Provider) get a feel by the end of the week where they have got to'. It was recognized that some young people with particular support needs (for example, those who find it difficult to cope in groups) are not suitable for

centralized induction and are 'fast-tracked' by Future Pathways to appropriate provision.

5.3.5 Proponents of the alternate model might well argue that the advantage of the delivery partner providing the induction is that it gives staff a chance to build relationships with, and to assess, learners from the outset rather than them feeling they had been 'double-handled'.

5.3.6 In the first model, the induction clearly has to be followed up by partners. For example, learners at BTCV join the E2E Programme following an induction week at Wakefield College. During that week, those who show an interest visit BTCV on the Wednesday. The first half of this day is a general introduction to the programme, with the afternoon being on site.

5.3.7 For those subsequently recruited by BTCV, there is an induction period of approximately one week, although this also involves introductory visits to sites and some initial site working. It includes general introductions, 'getting to know who's who and the way around', and also involves sessions on health and safety, equal opportunities, and an assessment of their literacy/numeracy, personal and social skills.

5.4 Curriculum

5.4.1 In this section, we consider the curriculum available in respect to recommended provision looked at through the case studies in the three tiers/features of delivery:

5.4.2 Tier One

A range of Tier One provision was recommended by E2E Partnerships to be considered through case study research. These included:

- ACTIV8 (an activity-based programme) and the longer, more established Project Challenge (expedition-based programme) operated by Project Challenge
- the programme at A&R Training Services Ltd in Huddersfield, which focuses on healthy eating/living, gym/sports-based and confidence-building activities
- the individually tailored programmes operated at Bradford Foyer.

5.4.3 ACTIV8 is a 12-week 'roll-on/roll-off' programme which is run over three four-hour sessions a week, 36 sessions in all. The programme is activity-based and examples of activities from the programme include:

- community project: for example, environmental work and accredited activity linked to the 'V' Involved Volunteering Programme (previously Millennium Volunteers)
- skills development: for example, cooking on a budget; first aid; map reading; computer sessions, including e-mail; money management

- health and fitness: for example, bike-riding; healthy eating/cultural awareness, including trying new foods; outdoor sports activities
- work preparation: for example, looking at volunteering and planning next steps
- other personal and social development: for example, how to book a holiday; how to buy things needed for a flat; drug awareness; DIY/decorating
- visits: for example, Liverpool: European City of Culture/Albert Docks; Media Museum in Bradford; coal mine; Manchester Airport.

5.4.4 The programme (and the well-established Project Challenge expedition-based programme) engages young people, many of whom are in the ‘hardest-to-reach’ categories. Project Challenge’s analysis of the 96 young people who undertook ACTIV8 from January 2007 to August 2008 indicated that just under half (41 per cent) were YOT clients, just under 4 in 10 (38 per cent) were estranged from their parents, and just over a quarter (27 per cent) were care leavers (with a number falling into more than one of these categories).

5.4.5 The ACTIV8 programme is based on effective youth work approaches (Young, 2008). It is built around developing effective relationships with young people, a group identity, and facilitating related peer support. The programme adopts a pragmatic and responsive approach. For example, it has been recognized that, ‘different activities suit different people’ and that young people, ‘always want to know what’s coming up next’. However, to maintain motivation, and, ‘to ensure that they don’t opt out on the basis that they may not think they will like the next activity, young people are told to turn up and they will then find out’.

5.4.6 A number of young people progress on from the ACTIV8 programme to the expedition-based Project Challenge. This 26-week training programme combines classroom learning with tough physical challenges. The programme includes three residentials in the UK, including a two-day Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award expedition. These are followed by a ‘main journey’, with past expeditions having included going to Norway and to Mont Blanc. A key feature of the programme was said to be the intensive nature of the work undertaken with individuals and ‘building trusting relationships’. These are developed (and tested) as part of the expeditions, which it was said, ‘show the depth of the bonds that have developed between all members of the group’.

5.4.7 A key element of all the best practice in all ‘Tier One’ provision considered was that it provided both opportunities to engage young people, but also to assess and challenge them (although the challenge does not have to be a physical one). For example, at Bradford Foyer the focus is on ‘getting to know the young person’ and working, as appropriate, ‘on attitude and behaviour’. It was indicated that a lot of work is undertaken, ‘on the little things’ (picking up quickly on issues of attendance and whether agreements have been followed (for example, ‘that they ring up if they are going to be absent’).

5.4.8 As indicated, in some instances, 'Tier One' provision (particularly that which focuses on engagement) is run separately to other provision, where a key challenge can be to assess when the appropriate time is for them to progress (and to stop learners becoming 'too comfortable' particularly in leisure/activity-based programmes).

5.4.9 Those delivery partners operating both 'Tier One' and 'Tier Two' provision (particularly at Bradford Foyer and A&R Training Services Ltd) can deliver effective seamless transitions by simply changing the mix and nature of activities and associated support. Well conducted, and for appropriate learners, this can be an effective approach. However, it requires delivery partners to be very aware of learners' developing needs and available opportunities to integrate into their personalized programme, and to be willing and able to arrange transfers to other providers if/when appropriate, facilitated (as in the Calderdale and Kirklees model) by 'tasters' and placements to facilitate smooth transitions.

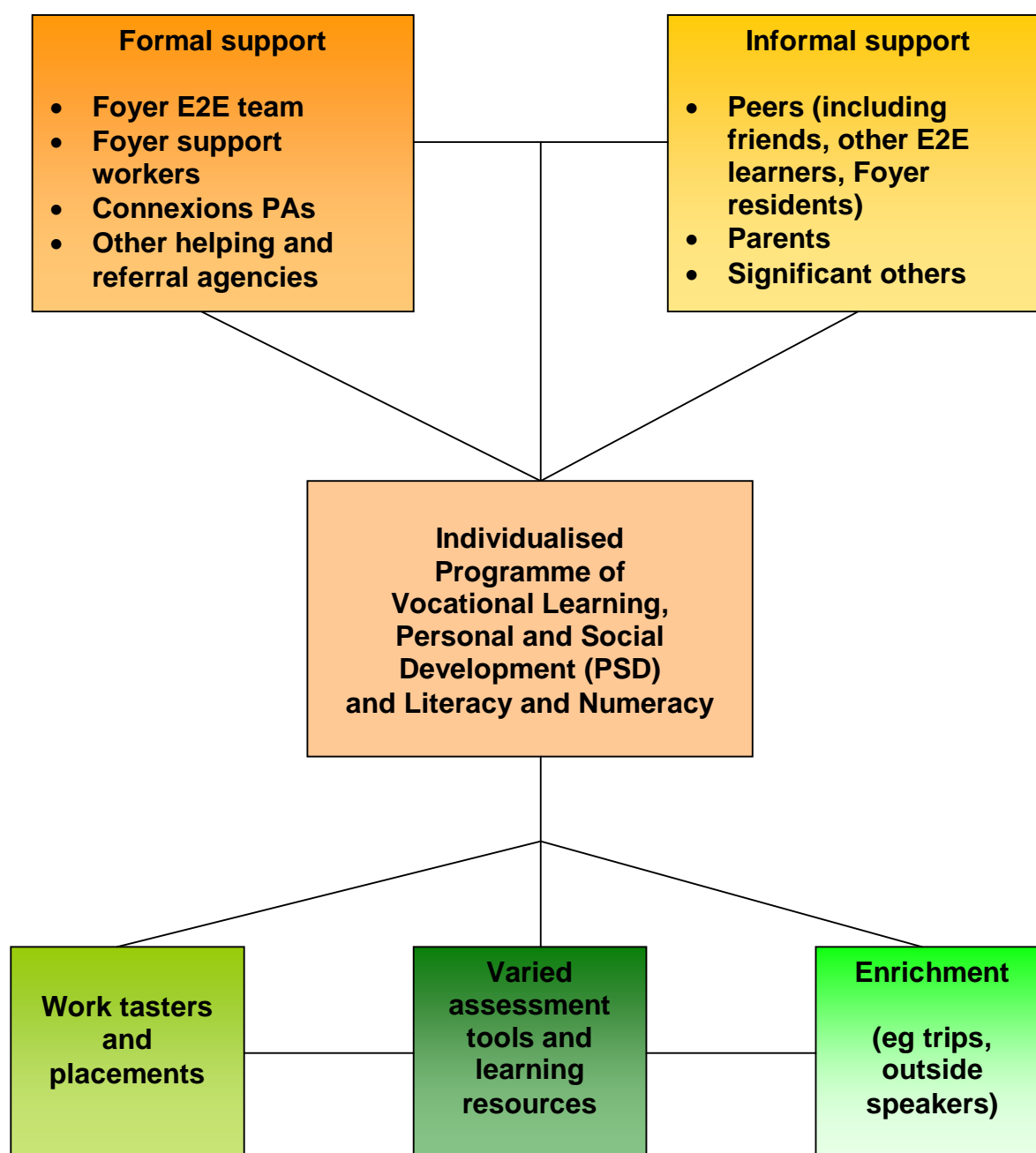
5.4.10 Tier Two

As with 'Tier One', it is very difficult to generalize about the range of provision that is available through the Core Programme (Tier Two). Recommended provision considered was delivered by:

- BTCV, a national charitable organization, which undertakes a variety of environmental and conservation work, much of which is funded by government or through the European Social Fund (ESF)
- Bradford Distributive Training Services Ltd (BDTS), a private training and Apprenticeship provider. The company offers a range of training, including administration, customer service and retail and hairdressing (in connection with Christopher Paul)
- Bradford Foyer, a social business and accredited member of the Foyer Federation which provides accommodation and services for young people aged 16-25 years. Its E2E provision is generic, and its programmes are differentiated and personalized with a view to enabling young people to build their skills and explore vocational interests (see Figure 5.1)
- MPC North, a work-based training provider which specialises in military preparation courses. The programme undertaken by the young people has three main components: administration and Key Skills, common military syllabus (CMS), and fitness.

5.4.11 In regard to each of these in turn, the learning programme at BTCV is planned and designed to be supportive and structured, and was felt to be particularly effective for those who wanted and needed a physical/outdoor challenge. The provision is highly personalized. It involves mapping individual needs and preferences against opportunities and incorporating appropriate learning provision. The E2E Co-ordinator plans each week's activities for individual learners who each receive a copy of their weekly activity plan. It was indicated, as a consequence, for the learners, 'no two days are the same'. Site work is mainly programmed on Tuesday to Thursday, with learning activities incorporated on Mondays and Friday mornings.

Figure 5.1: Bradford Foyer: operational model for provision.



Source: HOST Policy Research, 'Best Practice in Tackling NEETs' research for LSC West Yorkshire, 2008

5.4.12 At BDTS, following induction, the emphasis is on motivating learners by getting them out as soon as possible onto well-matched placements in companies on a three-days-a-week basis, with one day a week off-the-job training at their centre. The four-day programme of 30 hours per week provides opportunities for learners to work part-time, and it was indicated that a number of their companies will pay their E2E learners to come in for this fifth day. Off-the-job training consists of vocational training, Basic Skills sessions and Key Skills sessions. Usually all of the learners undertake a 'Working with Others' module in their first two weeks to assist them with working in teams and with their inter-personal skills.

5.4.13 As indicated, Bradford Foyer 'Tier Two' E2E learning opportunities are highly personalized and differentiated, and are aimed at, 'vocational development' and, 'preparing learners for the realities of the workplace'. Provision here is gradually increased up to between 22 and 28 hours per week (frequently involving attendance on a Thursday or sometimes a Friday).

5.4.14 Unlike at BDTS, provision is largely generic and learners are given, 'a chance to really research what they want to go into and work out if it is really for them'. In terms of accreditation, learners work towards the Open College Network (OCN) 30-hour learning modules in areas including: Preparation for Work; Working Environment; and Job Preparation. Work can also be undertaken with a tutor in the media resource centre in recording music, DJ-ing, photography and sound production.

5.4.15 Bradford Foyer, in both 'Tier One' and 'Tier Two' provision, uses a variety of approaches which, 'are set at the learner's level'. Alongside individual work, they are also enabled to have experience of working in groups. Tutors said that they, 'have developed a wide range of interesting things for them to do', and that as well as trying to challenge and stretch them, said, 'it's always important to have fun doing it!'

5.4.16 Amongst what could be called specialist 'Tier Two' provision is the military preparation course delivered by MPC North in Wakefield, which may be offered soon in other parts of West Yorkshire. This is a 22-week programme which is offered on a 'roll-on, roll-off' basis. The average length of stay was indicated to be 17 weeks. The programme consists of the following.

- a) Fitness: about a third of the course is devoted to building-up learners' physical fitness. This consists of: four, and one and a half mile runs; line sessions (circuit training); free gym sessions; sports afternoons; and multi-stage fitness ('bleep') tests. The runs and 'bleep' tests are timed and progress is charted towards reaching differentiated Army entry standards for male and female recruits.
- b) Common Military Syllabus (CMS): a further third of the course is dedicated to working on aspects of the CMS which is undertaken by new recruits during basic training. Areas covered include: drill; first-aid; map and compass exercises/field-craft.
- c) Administration and Key Skills: the final third of the course includes a range of elements, some of which are classroom-based. These include: work on Key Skills (which as far as possible are integrated ('hidden away') in other work (for example, calculating bearings through map reading); writing up activities in 'best books'; money management; disability awareness; CV preparation; and giving presentations.

5.4.17 The programme of work includes the majority of lessons that a new recruit to the Army would undertake in Phase One Training. An integral part of the programme undertaken after 14 weeks is a five-day expedition to North Wales. The expedition involves: walking; wild country camping; navigation; team working (including

command tasks). The expedition is preceded by a Test Day to ensure necessary fitness levels have been achieved and skills have been learned.

5.4.18 Readiness is a key concept in career planning and vocational development (Arthur, 1989). A vital element of best practice in all the 'Tier Two' provision looked at was that it matched the vocational stage of development of the learner, including those who were undecided (as many were at Bradford Foyer) to those who were clearer about their career aims (and in some cases more job ready), as at MPC North.

5.4.19 Tier Three

Arguably, 'Tier Three' is the least developed part of the 'Three Tier' model and there were consequently few opportunities to explore its effectiveness through the case studies. In some ways, it could be argued that 'Tier Three' is an extension to 'Tier Two', although some providers (such as A&R Training Services Ltd) indicated that they said it gave learners a boost (and added motivation) knowing they were going to be attending a specific 'top-up' programme that would enable them to enter an Apprenticeship. As indicated at that provider, there is a major emphasis on, 'preparing them for Level 2 Units' and for progression onto Apprenticeships.

5.4.20 If at the end of 'Tier Two' provision, learners want to undertake an Apprenticeship, but they have not been able to secure an appropriate opportunity, then, as part of 'Tier Three', a one-to-one interview is undertaken to discuss a programme which will assess their abilities in terms of progressing onto a Level 2 programme. Work is then undertaken in-house, 'introducing them to concepts, language and jargon' they will face at the next level, having necessary support from lecturers and tutors 'upstairs' who provide 'off the job' training in occupational areas. They also gain practical experience through appropriate placements.

5.5 Support

5.5.1 A crucial part of the best practice mix in E2E delivery is the form in which ongoing support to the learner is managed and provided. This is available usually through a mix of internal (for example, trainers and tutors) and external staff (notably PAs), whose role in review processes is set out clearly in LSC guidance (LSC, 2008).

5.5.2 To secure necessary support services are available in some cases the services of PAs are 'bought in'. For example, in Calderdale and Kirklees, the lead provider has three full-time seconded/dedicated E2E Personal Advisers from Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Ltd. In other cases, arrangements are subject to Service Level Agreements (SLAs), or other arrangements, and concerns were expressed in some instances that multiply-tasked PAs found other operational demands (for example, from schools) left E2E providers concerned that they were not getting adequate PA support.

5.5.3 Emphasizing Partnerships' role in monitoring and facilitating transitions, Leeds and Wakefield E2E Partnerships have respectively appointed Learning Co-ordinators and a Transition Mentor to oversee learner progression. Learning Co-ordinators work on behalf of Future Pathways and have the key role of:

- a) placing learners after the centralized induction into delivery partners' programmes
- b) handling partners'/learners' queries, and facilitating transfers where there are problems, including where the learner is making insufficient progress.

5.5.4 Within Leeds, there was said to be about, '400-450 young people on E2E at any one time, around 5 to 10 of whom have issues/problems which mean that transfers have to be made'. Often these were said to be, 'due to personal issues and/or young people falling out with each other which necessitates a move to another provider so they can have a fresh start'.

5.5.5 Due to the perceived success of the approach, and increased workload, a further two members of staff have been appointed to undertake this work during 2008/2009 (bringing the team to three) and a visit schedule has been agreed with each Partner to assist learner support and management.

5.5.6 In Wakefield, the Transition Mentor's role was originally introduced to support 'Tier Two' learners during the first six-week period, and then to help them into one of the three positive outcomes identified jointly by the learner and provider.

5.5.7 However, with the advent of 'Tier One', most of their time has been spent engaging, working intensively with, and supporting 'Tier One' learners on their programmes and providing transition support into 'Tier Two'.

5.5.8 More recently, they have been providing an introduction week similar to the model used at 'Tier Two', so that many of the issues around learner support are addressed before starting with the 'Tier One' provider. They meet learners individually and privately, or in groups if there are common issues to discuss, and help to resolve issues that will adversely affect a learner's progress, for example, EMA issues brought about by absence, housing issues, depression, and/or illness.

5.5.9 Like the Partnership Provider Co-ordinator, they are often a first port of call for a request for help or advice and may refer the learner to other specialist help and advice using the Connexions PAs, housing agency, specialist counselling, drugs support agencies, and/or other agencies as appropriate.

5.5.10 Going forward, it is Wakefield Partnership's intention to use the mentor to mainly support 'Tier One' and to re-focus on 'Tier Two' transition through further links with employers and partner providers directly supporting learners during their progress on-course, and in their transitions between courses or into work.

5.6 Progression

5.6.1 The aim of E2E is to enable young people to make effective transitions into appropriate provision, including from 'Tier Three' into Apprenticeship provision. Transition rates to positive outcomes from effective E2E provision can be high. For example, through their work with young people and well-established links with employers, BDTs in Bradford reported that recent data showed just under two thirds (64 per cent) of E2E learners were making positive progressions, and this may be exceeded elsewhere.

5.6.2 A number of interesting approaches were seen in the case studies in respect to taking this forward. Many of these involve the use of placements and/or taster assignments frequently working with employers. Both Leeds and Wakefield Partnerships have tried to develop specific links with employers. In the first case, this was with a major call centre, and in the second in regard to the developing logistics industry. In both cases, and for different reasons, the initiatives did not progress as hoped. However, the intention was laudable and further efforts could and should be made.

5.6.3 A number of examples of good practice were identified. For example, towards the end of, and as part of, their programme, learners at BTCV Wakefield may be placed with a local company (for example, a joinery company or builders' merchants) and it found that placements, 'often lead to job offers'. Positive outcomes for learners for the year ending July 2008 were said by BTCV to be very encouraging with (at October 2008) 62 per cent having gone into work or further training, numbers of which it was estimated may rise to about 65 per cent as late placements are followed up.

5.6.4 Similarly, in April 2008, graduates from Project Challenge were invited to attend voluntarily an intensive two-week Employability Programme which culminated in a week's placement at Pennine Housing, with tasters in the various skills offered by a social housing landlord. An immediate outcome of the project was that two of the young people were offered temporary contracts that have now become 12-month contracts with Pennine Housing 2000. The programme was developed with Calderdale Cares, Pennine 2000 Housing, HBOS, Marshalls, and Royal and Sun Alliance, which has won a local award as 'Charity and Business Partnership of the Year'.

5.6.5 For learners at MPC North, the main progression route for learners is to go forward to Army selection. This is run at the Army Development Selection Centre (ADSC), where up to four selection programmes are run every week. The selection consists of: full medical, presentations; fitness tests; individual interviews; and assessment tests.

5.6.6 It was indicated that when MPC North staff believe a learner is ready for selection, they prepare a 'frank and honest testimony' which includes a report on the learner's physical abilities, teamwork, leadership, discipline, communication skills and enthusiasm. Submissions to ADSC are made in close liaison with the Army Careers Information Office (ACIO).

5.6.7 Data provided by MPC North indicated that just under two thirds (63 per cent) of their 60 leavers since April 2007 made positive progressions, with exactly half of them (26 males and four females) having entered directly into the Army at the end of the programme.

5.7 Support for best practice

5.7.1 It is clear that E2E Partnerships play a crucial role in the delivery of responsive and quality-assured E2E provision. When this is at its most effective, they do this through providing clear leadership, identifying with Connexions and other youth support services the specific needs of NEET young people (individually and collectively), and by altering the balance of provision to accommodate this, communicating what the key deliverables are to their Partners, increasing Partner capacity (through training and development), and sharing good practice.

5.7.2 For example, in Bradford, a sum of money is top sliced with the agreement of providers from Careers Bradford's allocation for E2E. It can be used for a range of purposes such as residential development days for the Partnership, or training activities for providers. At the moment, the Partnership is producing a DVD on young people in Bradford and drugs, and they will buy in media expertise for this using some of this money.

5.7.3 Effective contract management by Partnerships is clearly vital, too. For example, in Leeds, a contract manager is responsible for monitoring the performance of Partners. He conducts quarterly reviews against a standard format agreed by the Partnership and an Action Plan is devised which is reviewed (more frequently with those whose performance is unsatisfactory). The role of 'real time' feedback from young people (and referral agencies) was stressed to complement other performance data which is 'time lagged'.

5.7.4 Similarly, in the Partnership, a dedicated auditor from the igen audit team conducts systems and financial checks at intervals again determined by the assessed risk of the contract and sub-contractors. It was reported that the quality of provision is comprehensively assessed through the use of the Funding Effectiveness and Evaluation (FEET) tool, developed in-house by the qualified internal auditor, and that a revised version is being introduced.

5.8 Summary

5.8.1 E2E is an established programme that has had considerable success (LSDA/LSC, 2004) in engaging a challenging client group. As indicated, in the context of West Yorkshire, the re-engineered delivery model has provided welcome flexibility and opportunities to explore (through Tier One) what pre-entry engagement provision should look like prior to young people entering the Core Programme (Tier Two) and how transition, particularly to Apprenticeships (through Tier Three), can best be effected.

5.8.2 The collaborative research undertaken with the selected case studies has focused on exploring effective practice through different elements of the learner journey (and in regard to developing effective links with employers), rather than having been a more traditional external evaluation.

5.8.3 However, evidence gathered over the nine months of the research has enabled us to comment on the current operation of the 'Three Tier' E2E model and, in the context of other developments, to suggest how it could be taken forward in 2009/2010 to encourage the wider use and deployment of the best practice elements identified.

Section 6: Conclusions and Recommendations – Developing and Implementing Best Practice

6.1 Introduction

6.6.1 In this concluding section, we:

- set out the key findings and messages that have emerged from the research
- explore how the E2E delivery model could be taken forward
- provide recommendations for policy-makers and practitioners arising from the research.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 The research has sought to identify, from an extensive review of the evidence base and of practice in West Yorkshire, what constitutes 'best practice' in tackling young people who are NEET. Since its commencement in February 2008, its findings have been reported back progressively to LSC West Yorkshire. The formative evidence gained on possible barriers to effective service development was detailed in the second interim report, a summary of which was widely circulated. For brevity the evidence is not restated here, although it has informed both the conclusions and recommendations of this summative report.

6.2.2 Similarly, in terms of scope, the focus of research work has clearly been on remedial/re-engagement rather than preventative work in West Yorkshire. The latter, which mainly takes place in schools and in pre-16 alternative education provision, was not within the research's remit, although this is not to under-estimate its importance or the need to explore, in the context of Local Authority NEET strategies, how coherent pre- and post-16 provision is for the target group, particularly in the light of the '21st Century Schools' Consultation Paper the Government has just launched (DCSF, 2008g). However, in terms of learning from this work, as has been argued, research by Ofsted and other bodies has demonstrated that many of the practices and approaches outlined in this report are effective in both contexts.

6.2.3 Key messages

The key messages that have come from the research are as follows.

6.2.4 **The target group:** the issue of young people aged 16-18 who are NEET has been a long-standing focus of public policy concern. Despite work to date, the level of NEET nationally remains stubbornly high. Current year-end data shows that the NEET level stands at 9.4 per cent nationally, down from a 9.6 per cent baseline, which means that a significant reduction is required to meet the 2010 target, a task made more challenging by the current economic downturn.

Previous research has highlighted that those who are NEET are not a homogeneous group and have very varied characteristics. Often stereotyped as being the least able and most disadvantaged 'school leavers', it is increasingly recognized that the 16-18 NEET cohort also includes increasing numbers of 17-18 year olds, some of whom have achieved Level 2 qualifications or above.

There is an argument that the term NEET is unhelpful in so far as it concentrates on what young people are not rather than what they are, and that the pervasive nature of the PSA 2010 NEET target distracts services from focusing on facilitating young people's transitions effectively.

It is certainly true to say, in an increasingly flexible labour and learning market, that the distinctions between different groups of young people are increasingly unclear, and under-researched. In practice, many have a 'portfolio of activities', which (by choice or necessity) can include periods of inactivity, and/or a changing mix of paid employment, learning and other activities (LSN, 2008).

Furthermore, research would indicate that whatever solutions are devised for tackling NEETs must take account of the wider context in which young people so categorized operate. This should include taking adequate account of the influence of families and neighbourhoods on individual choice, and both identify and, in the wider context of social and economic development, tackle the distinct needs of particular areas (that is, 'NEET hotspots').

Although not explored in this research, this can include successful approaches in working in workless families and neighbourhoods, rather than just seeking to support individuals alone (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2008).

6.2.5 Provision

Flexible start provision: the majority of current full-time FE provision aimed at 16-18 young people starts in September. The need for increased flexibility, both in terms of different starting dates (for example, January) and more flexible delivery (for example, 'roll-on' provision) has been strongly advocated by DCSF. Indeed, the Minister for Children and Young People said recently (December 2008), in commenting on the near 20 per cent shortfall in regard to the Government's September Guarantee for 17 year olds that, 'we can still do more and need to ensure that flexible education and training provision is available in every area so young people can engage when they are ready'.

The LSC in West Yorkshire invited local colleges to bid for Local Initiative Funding (LIF) in 2007/2008 and nine colleges successfully did so, including Bradford College which, with LSC support, had previously developed flexible start provision in 2007. Survey data provided by all participating colleges indicated that a total of 314 young people started on provision funded under the initiative, just under two thirds (60 per cent) of whom were recorded as being NEET on entry. Just over a third (36 per cent) of those who started on flexible learning courses discontinued, some of whom in turn will have subsequently entered positive destinations.

The case study research (which included focus group work with learners) indicated that many participants had gained a range of 'soft' outcomes from participation, including increases in confidence, career focus and self-esteem. In terms of 'hard outcomes', of the completers, the destinations of 161 leavers (80 per cent of the total) are recorded in the survey, of whom two thirds (66 per cent) continued in FE at the college where they undertook the flexible start provision, with a further 11 per cent joining an FE course elsewhere.

A range of effective practice was identified through the research. This included the development of wholly new provision (such as the Shuffle and Xplorer programmes respectively at what are now the Dewsbury and Huddersfield sites of Kirklees College), as well as offering existing provision more flexibly (as at Bradford College). However, much of the development work was small-scale and developmental in nature, and in some colleges a number of elements of its delivery were problematic. Despite problems encountered, it is clear that a number of providers (including Kirklees College) have now mainstreamed piloted provision in 2008/2009.

Evidence of best practice was probably most apparent in the support systems, and to a lesser extent the curriculum offer, that will be explored further in the 'best practice' guide for flexible start provision. A key issue for colleges is now both how best to develop provision (including as Bradford College have done by enabling learners to enter mainstream provision at points in the year other than September) and how to fund/develop the support structures necessary to engage these learners.

E2E: this is a programme which has been available to young people in England since August 2003. Current funding guidance (LSC, 2008) indicates it is for young people aged 16-18 who have yet to attain Level 2 qualifications and is, 'aimed at young people who are not yet ready or able to access a Level 2 Learning Programme, Apprenticeship or employment'.

LSC guidance (LSC, 2008) indicates that the Progression Pathways, which are being developed as part of the FLT, 'will in time replace the E2E programme'. Although details are uncertain, it is clear that following re-commissioning in early 2009, E2E provision, as currently badged and delivered, is likely only to continue until 2010. However, that being said, it is clearly vital that the good practice that has been developed within E2E, building on earlier work through the Learning Gateway (DfES, 2001), is incorporated into FLT.

E2E is delivered in West Yorkshire by four E2E Partnerships, covering respectively Bradford, Calderdale and Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield. There is a considerable variation in the size and complexity of the Partnerships. Based on E2E start data for West Yorkshire in 2007/2008, 40 per cent of the delivery is in Calderdale and Kirklees, 28 per cent in Leeds, 23 per cent in Bradford and 9 per cent in Wakefield.

A clear example of effective practice in E2E delivery is the way that the Partnerships currently work with the LSC in respect to holding regular Partnership meetings at which operational and strategic issues arising are openly and freely discussed, and the Partnerships encouraged to share experience, plan and review jointly West Yorkshire-wide activities.

The focus of most of the case studies was on the day-to-day delivery of E2E rather than on its leadership and management. However, it is clear that the pattern of co-operation and support seen at the West Yorkshire level was mirrored strongly in the way that the E2E Partnerships operate on the ground (as detailed in the Partnership reports at Annex C).

Clear evidence was given through the case studies of how local delivery partners feel supported by the Partnerships and, in turn, how they work with each other (for

example, in organizing tasters and transfers), all of which is essential to delivering responsive services which are closely in touch with local needs and opportunities.

Effective Partnerships in turn are able, through reviewing the capacity and capabilities of the providers they have working locally, to be able to ensure that an appropriate range of learning opportunities (including enrichment activities) is provided, including those able to deliver provision flexibly in 'NEET hot spots'.

In terms of delivery of services, a range of effective practice was seen at different stages of the learner journey. As indicated, in the best of these, learners' needs were identified and effectively assessed at an early stage, appropriate activities/learning were arranged (including drawing down resources from within the Partnership), learners' support needs were regularly reviewed (with appropriate external support from Connexions and other agencies), progression opportunities explored and sustainable transitions made. Again, what is being undertaken (including how and why it is effective) will be explored further in the 'best practice' guide for E2E.

However, clearly there are operational pressures and issues in E2E delivery. For example, the question was raised by LSC about whether the flexibility that is felt to be in the LSC guidance is being fully applied by Partnerships. At an operational level, it was clear that young people were typically spending up to 12 weeks on Tier One and up 22 weeks on Tier Two. The concern expressed was whether these averages were becoming norms, to the possible detriment of learners on the programme who might require more time.

Conversely there is a pressure on Partnerships for learners to achieve particular outcomes and progression routes, with some (particularly entry into JWT) being seen as less 'positive' than entry into accredited learning.

For E2E to thrive, there needs to be clear understanding about how best to manage the flexibility and diversity that is crucial to the programme, whilst clearly being able to agree what the key success criteria are for the provision in general, and learners undertaking it in particular.

6.3 Delivery model

6.3.1 The E2E delivery model in West Yorkshire has been re-engineered. It includes not just the Core Programme, (Tier Two) but also, in 'Tier One' and 'Tier Three', additional opportunities to facilitate access and progression. However, the research would suggest that a range of issues remain to be addressed to enhance the model and its operation. We have highlighted, under the six headings below, what the Key Issues are, and under Way Forward, how they could be addressed, as follows.

- E2E – who is it for?
- Distance from the labour/learning market – what are their needs?
- Facilitating transitions – how can barriers best be overcome?
- Progression to Apprenticeships – a missing link?

- Employer engagement – whose responsibility?
- IAG and support – who should do what?

6.3.2 In addition, we have set out suggested enhancements to the E2E delivery model in Figure 6.1.

6.3.3 E2E – who is it for?

Key issues

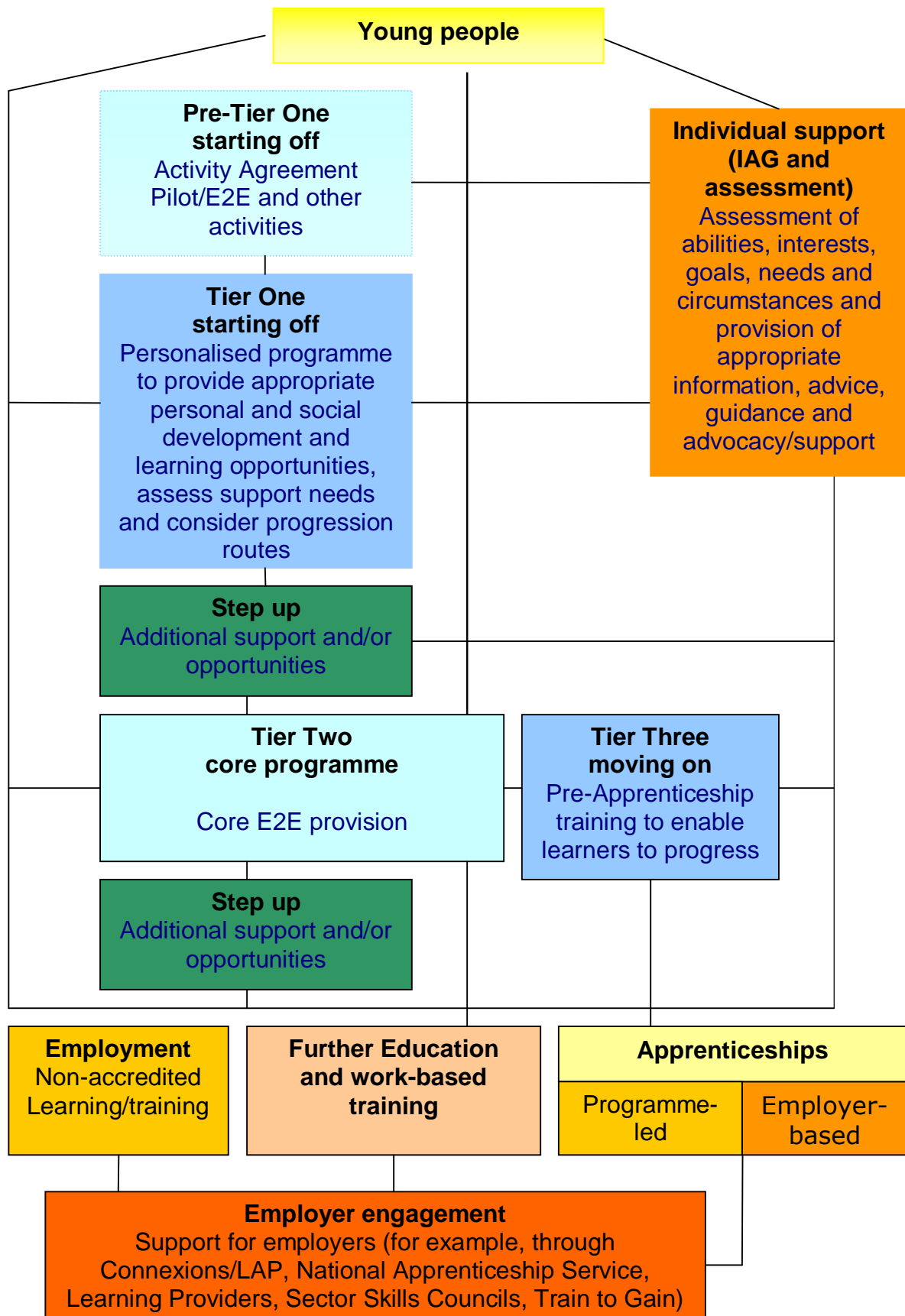
Early guidance on E2E would suggest that it was thought of as a programme which, through the flexibility implicit in its design, could be adapted to meet the needs of most disengaged young people.

However, it has never been the only provision. For example, in recent years, a wide range of other provision has been, and continues to be, funded with co-financing support through the European Social Fund (ESF). Local projects have included 'Entry to Vocational Learning' (E2v) (Looney, 2007) and the wider West Yorkshire 'Slipstream to Upstream' programme that was completed in March 2008. Similarly, Activity Agreement (AA) pilots (DCSF, 2008e) have, since 2006, been operated in three variant versions in eight LSC areas (including West Yorkshire), targeted originally at young people aged 16 and 17 who have been continuously NEET for 20 weeks.

As indicated, the focus of E2E is (as described in LSC guidance) on, 'young people who are not yet ready or able to access a Level 2 Learning Programme, Apprenticeship or employment', with the clear implication that its task is therefore to make them ready to access such provision. The timescale for this is not set and learners can, and do, leave and re-enter the programme. However, those managing the provision, knowing the policy goals of increasing entry particularly to Apprenticeships and/or Level 2 qualifications, are bound to have to consider what resource is needed (and available) to achieve the funder's desired outcomes. This is underscored by the fact that management information, on areas such as learner outcomes, has to be collected by E2E Partnerships and is clearly used for contract management purposes.

The relationship between different forms of provision aimed at the NEET target group (as in the case of AA and E2E) is often poorly developed, frequently because they are separately funded and/or contracted. To adequately specify and commission the provision, this issue needs to be addressed.

Figure 6.1: Enhancing the E2E delivery model.



Source: HOST Policy Research, 'Best Practice in Tackling NEETs' research for LSC West Yorkshire, 2008

Way forward

The default point of entry for most young people onto E2E provision is onto the Core Programme (Tier Two). However, the research would suggest that there is a clear need for preparatory provision (through Tier One) for young people who need more flexible and tailored provision to enable them to enter into the programme. It is suggested that this could either be discrete (as the in the case of Project Challenge), or integrated with Tier Two provision (as in the case of Bradford Foyer), depending on needs and circumstances.

However, if the focus on E2E is to be on securing employment and related learning outcomes within a realistic and achievable timescale, then those young people who enter will need to be in the 'right place' in the sense of their own personal and social situation to take advantage of it.

This would suggest that the delivery model needs to include the concept of 'Pre-E2E' provision, whose principal roles are engagement (including befriending/relationship building and developing accessible and relevant activities and provision) and assessment. The latter needs to be 'holistic', taking a wider range of personal, social and motivational factors into account including assessing, with other support agencies, issues young people may be facing (for example, homelessness, drugs).

It is suggested in any future commissioning that, in the context of specific LA areas, attention is given as to how different elements of provision should work together, including the development of appropriate Service Level Agreements (SLAs) and referral protocols. Furthermore, consideration needs to be given locally to how the needs of groups who do have specific funding/support are integrated (for example, young offenders with Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme (ISSP) support). This would require discussions at an LA level between Youth Offending Teams (YOT) and E2E/learning providers to ensure that available resources are used appropriately to support their learning and progression.

6.3.4 Distance from the labour/learning market – what are their needs?

Key issues

As well as engaging young people, there is a clear need to assess their readiness to undertake formalised learning and work. A number of the case studies reflected on the key attitudes and capabilities which underpin wider employability skills (Martin et al, 2008) but which are not clearly articulated in the literature at present. These include a range of personal and social skills, including:

- being comfortable being with adults, including accepting discipline
- understanding and agreeing boundaries of behaviour
- being comfortable in small groups and being prepared to contribute appropriately
- taking responsibility for themselves and their actions

- conforming to workplace disciplines (including attending agreed provision and being punctual)
- being prepared to change, learn and try new things
- being willing and able to make appropriate journeys on public transport
- being able to maintain acceptable levels of personal hygiene.

Some use is rightly being made currently of distance-travelled tools, such as the Rickter Scale, to measure crucial so-called 'soft outcomes'. These include vital outcomes of work with disengaged groups, such as building confidence and self-esteem (and so increasingly resilience), increasing motivation, flexibility and adaptability (leading to an enhanced ability and willingness to cope with change).

However, these are (by definition) subjective measures and are restricted in their ability to specify (and then measure more precisely) the relationship between activities planned in a personalized programme, and how this is contributing to increased readiness to enter more formalized learning and work.

Way forward

In many ways, successful 'Tier One/Tier Two' provision is already working on these issues, as was clearly demonstrated through a number of the best practice studies. However, what is lacking is a more formalized and rigorous way of demonstrating increased readiness, alongside evidencing what activities/interventions are likely to help young people address these, and what related support is required.

It is suggested that work to take this forward is led by local E2E Partnerships, possibly through the creation of a Task/Finish Group, and that this be funded (alongside other development work) through LEA/LSC development funding, as part of a West Yorkshire-wide Innovation and Development Project (IDP). The aim of the IDP would be not only to support E2E delivery in 2009/2010, but also to ensure that key local development work is taken forward to help the integration of E2E best practice into FLT developments.

6.3.5 Facilitating transitions – how can barriers best be overcome?

Key issues

Best practice in E2E provision includes enabling young people to make effective transitions between different types of provision.

It is clear that Partnerships view the 'Three Tier' model differently. Given individuals' different personal development/skills needs and career interests, one way of conceptualizing the model is to consider what learning opportunities are most appropriate, and how support needs can best be met, at different stages of the E2E learner journey.

Currently, a number of consultees commented on the present difficulty that some young people had in making transitions, particularly from 'Tier One' to 'Tier Two',

with some indeed referring to the need for a 'Tier One and a Half'. The reasons for this were complex and, in settings where separate provision was provided, sometimes related to young people 'getting comfortable' where they were (including with staff and activities) and not feeling confident (or willing) about moving on to the 'next level'.

Way forward

A suggested way forward is that additional 'tester and taster' opportunities (Step Ups) are developed which allow learners to explore the challenges in progression opportunities.

Identified best practice here includes, for example, the work that is happening at A&R Training Services Ltd in facilitating transition between 'Tier Two' and 'Tier Three' and the employability programme that Project Challenge has developed with local partners.

Again, practice here needs to be developed on a West Yorkshire basis, and could usefully be considered as an element of the IDP if taken forward.

6.3.6 Progressions to Apprenticeships – a missing link?

Key issues

E2E has been described as part of the 'Apprenticeship family' and is viewed by a number of providers as a 'Pre-Apprenticeship' programme, although in practice it is by far the only outcome.

Apprenticeships are a major focus of attention at present, and 2009 will see the launch of the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS).

However, it is clear from feedback from consultees that there is a range of issues in relation to maximizing the number of E2E learners who take up Apprenticeships. This was felt in part to be due to increased hesitancy by Apprenticeship providers caused by the minimum level of performance requirements. This concern is validated by Ofsted, who reported (Ofsted, 2008b) that there is, 'evidence from institutional inspections of E2E that, nationally, some Apprenticeship providers avoid taking E2E learners as they are perceived as being less likely to successfully complete their Apprenticeship programme'.

The House of Commons Innovation, Universities, Science and Skills Committee has, in its November 2008 pre-legislative scrutiny of the Draft Apprenticeships Bill (House of Commons, 2008), raised a range of questions about the future operation of the National Apprenticeship Service. In particular, in the light of the current economic downturn, it has asked that the Government seek to ensure an adequate supply of opportunities, and, in the light of the anticipated growth in Apprentice numbers, their quality.

Way forward

Ofsted (Ofsted, 2008b) have argued that insufficient use is made of Programme-Led Apprenticeships (PLAs) as a progression route from E2E, and that survey evidence showed that successful transition to Apprenticeships could be made where this is well supported.

The example of Rathbone Training was given, who indicated that they saw PLAs as being particularly helpful for E2E learners who needed additional skills and confidence. They also found that there was no difference in the retention and success rates of those learners who had progressed from E2E via PLAs into employer-led Apprenticeship compared with the rates for other Apprentices.

Furthermore, Ofsted indicate in the research that learners on PLAs were better prepared for the Apprenticeship and more likely to achieve their Apprenticeship framework where PLAs were well designed and provided an initial period of planned training which included elements of the Apprenticeship framework. They also found that PLAs were particularly successful in attracting small employers to take on Apprentices as, 'they already had many of the work-related skills that were needed'.

It seems, on the basis of this evidence, that the issue of increasing the number of young people able to access Apprenticeships having undertaken a PLA to provide an alternative initial phase should be actively explored, possibly as a development of the current concept of 'Tier Three' provision. Indeed, the Select Committee report (House of Commons, 2008a) endorsed the need for continuing 'Pre-Apprenticeship' and other access-style provision and urged that PLAs should be seen in this light.

6.3.7 Employer engagement – whose responsibility?

Key issues

The primary goal of many young people on E2E (as is indicated in the title) is to tackle any deficits they have so that they can, in the longer or shorter term, gain employment. If those transitions are going to be effective, in many instances they are going to need to be brokered, particularly if employers are to be assisted to provide appropriate training.

In recent years, work-based learning providers have made considerable progress in brokering arrangements with local employers (including small and micro-businesses). Indeed, one of the case studies, BDTs, demonstrated how effective this can be and emphasized the requirement to build trust and confidence so, over time, employers feel supported in taking 'calculated risks' in taking on young people who they would not have engaged in open recruitment.

It has been recognized in a succession of reports that there is a need to simplify the over-complex nature of business support and enhance employer engagement (UKCES, 2008). Furthermore, in respect to young people entering the labour market, it is important that the lessons learned through the Learning Agreement Pilot (LAP) are not lost (DCSF, 2008b), particularly in terms of the need to develop practitioner capacity and competence in this area, and to ensure that clear roles between respective parties, including Skills Brokers and others, are clarified. This is

particularly the case as the DCSF/DIUS White Paper (2008f) on 'Raising Expectations' gives the Train to Gain service/Business Link responsibility, 'to encompass those in employment under 19 who are not on Apprenticeships to ensure they have access to necessary training'.

Way forward

Early information on the role of the National Apprenticeship Service (through web-based systems and a field force) would suggest that it will take the lead role in seeking to assist young people (and adults) to enter Apprenticeships, including through operating vacancy matching systems. However, if this is not to complicate an already complex situation, and cut across long-standing relationships (including those developed by Connexions, Education Business Partnerships, FE and work-based learning bodies), considerable care is going to need to be taken.

Furthermore, assuming there is no successor programme to LAP in April 2008, a gap will need to be filled in terms of building relationships with those employers who are happy to offer 'jobs without training' (JWT) particularly in the context that recent studies have found (Maguire, 2008) that many of the young people interviewed about their experience of being in 'JWT' were positive about their post-16 choices and in some cases were receiving 'good quality' (non-accredited) training in-house. As a consequence, many were said not to recognize the label 'JWT' or the associations which have been assigned to it.

6.3.8 IAG and support – who should do what?

Key issues

The need for effective IAG provision has been increasingly recognized by public policy in recent years. Delivering services to young people who are NEET became a major focus of activity for Connexions Partnerships, with concerns that other areas of activity may have suffered as a consequence (Skills Commission, 2008).

Responsibility for the delivery of IAG services has now passed to LAs, and the Skills Commission (Skills Commission, 2008) has recommended that, 'scrutiny bodies in Parliament and at an LA level must review LA delivery of Connexions and review whether sufficient levels of funding are being invested in the service'.

In identified best practice in the area (for example, as in Bradford), there is very close partnership working between Connexions and providers including Bradford College, with forensic use of the CCIS database and individual PAs' knowledge of young people's needs and requirements to ensure effective matching. Furthermore, as seen through a number of the case studies, PAs consulted through the research indicated that they had developed highly effective working arrangements with individual providers, based on trust and mutual respect, and a clear sense of mutual roles and responsibilities in supporting learners at different stages of their journey, including providing timely support at times of crisis, and/or at key decision points.

A risk in the current review arrangements built into the current LSC guidance is that it pre-supposes a level of PA involvement in review and other work, which is largely funded from within mainstream Connexions budgets. Tensions were indicated by

some providers who reported that allocated PAs were coming under pressure to deliver other services (for example, to schools) and could not maintain the support anticipated in SLAs. In a situation where demand is only likely to increase, this is likely to be a continuing difficulty.

Way forward

As recommended by the Skills Commission, it is clearly going to be crucial to ensure that an adequate level of funding is made available by LAs for Careers Education and IAG (CEIAG) services (particularly in the 14-19 phase) to support young people.

It is likely that available resources are going to have to be prioritised. In the context of supporting young people who are NEET, it would be timely to review the way that Connexions services are expected to support the E2E programme, and the level of resource and funding that is given to Partnerships direct. Particular attention should be given to:

- ensuring that the Partnerships are clear about the role they, and their delivery partners, have in delivering services themselves
- seeking to undertake more ‘needs-based’ rather than formulaic and time-determined reviews (and minimising those that are merely ‘ticking a contractual box’)
- focusing available PA time and resource on what they can uniquely do, particularly in respect to facilitating access to provision; supporting those who have temporarily withdrawn from provision; and providing transition support to those as they enter new opportunities (including brokerage work with employers offering JWT for specific young people where this would be helpful).

The Skills Commission also called on Government to reassess its decision not to introduce an ‘all-age service’ for the delivery of IAG, but if it continued to rule this out, then to develop an all-age strategy. It is clearly important to think both of how best to support young adults as they move between ‘youth’ and ‘adult’ services, but to think, too, of ‘inter-generational work’, particularly in the context of a young person who is NEET living in a family and/or an area of high worklessness (House of Commons, 2008b).

6.4 Summary – what next?

6.4.1 Much of what has been covered in this report in regard to ‘best practice’ in tackling NEETs will be very familiar to those who have been working in the field for some time.

6.4.2 Developing excellence in this area requires effective strategic planning, commissioning and management of services, as well as practitioners ‘working smart’ by optimizing their practice across all areas of the learner journey, from initial engagement to progression, and ‘being brilliant at the basics’, including:

- identifying and assessing the individual young person's holistic needs and goals and the best ways of engaging them
- using partnership resources to choreograph/develop a flexible programme of learning opportunities which, through a mix of internal and external support, builds learner confidence and ability to achieve agreed employability goals (including building self-esteem and ability to learn)
- enabling progression onto appropriate opportunities that help the learner fulfil their goals, with ongoing support/brokerage as required.

6.4.3 The challenge of this task varies depending on the individual young person concerned, and their changing needs and circumstances, and it is clear that there is no 'magic bullet'. Rather, as the Synthesis Report on Activities Agreements (AA) (DCSF, 2008) has concluded, the 'hard to reach are hard to reach' and, given the nature of the client group, progress for many will not be linear. A level of 'churn' is inevitable for many of the group and mirrors lengthening transitional patterns for young people in the wider cohort.

6.4.4 Again, as the Synthesis Report emphasizes, policy-makers need to be clear that effective work in this area is resource-intensive, and a key learning point identified from the AA evaluation was that, 'working with the long-term NEET population requires the gradual establishment of expertise and systems, which requires long-term ring-fenced funding and a clear consensus of objectives among the agencies involved'.

6.4.5 The coming two operational years will see the gradual phasing out of E2E and the introduction of FLT and its associated Progression Pathways. Much remains to be made clear about how these will operate.

6.4.6 Furthermore, following the work undertaken through the LAP, attention will need to be given to the continuing issue as to how best to support young people in JWT (and their employers) to take up accredited training.

6.4.7 Clearly, LAs now have the major challenge of identifying, with partners, how best pre- and post-16 services can be delivered in their areas to meet local needs and circumstances. As new systems are introduced, it is crucial that the best of what has been developed over the past five years in E2E is preserved and enhanced, and the developing experience in delivering flexible start provision is built on.

6.5 Recommendations

6.5.1 In light of these findings, HOST makes the following recommendations respectively to the LSC, LAs and Learning/E2E providers.

6.5.2 The LSC should:

- a) Ensure that the results of this research and subsequent best practice guides and summary reports) are distributed widely both locally and nationally, to help inform the planning, development and commissioning of relevant services.

- b) Take the outcomes of this research into account in commissioning E2E provision in 2009/2010. This should include recognizing and valuing the E2E Partnership model and making necessary changes and adaptations to the 'Three Tier'/Feature model. It should also include considering: who E2E is for and what the key success criteria are (including qualification outcomes); the need to integrate 'Pre-E2E' provision to engage young people; the need to test and pilot 'Step Up' provision; how best to link E2E and Apprenticeship provision, including testing and piloting in selected cases the integration of Tier Three and Programme-Led Apprenticeships; roles/responsibilities regarding what support delivery partners and Connexions are respectively to provide to E2E learners; and roles and responsibilities in employer engagement.
- c) Consider, with local partners, establishing an Innovation and Development Project (IDP) to take forward, trial and pilot, with necessary external evaluation, agreed aspects of the proposed E2E delivery model, including:
- the development of new ways of assessing the personal and social development and wider Key Skills of young people. As indicated, this could include supporting the West Yorkshire E2E Partnership to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider, with necessary support, what factors should be taken into account; how they could be assessed; and how assessments might link to the provisions of the E2E commissioning specification
 - the development of 'Step Up' provision to enable more effective transitions from 'Tier One' to 'Tier Two', and for appropriate young people from 'Tier Two' into learning or employment opportunities
 - development work in respect to exploring the integration of E2E into FLT Progression Pathways, with particular emphasis on ensuring that 'best practice' identified through this research is retained and enhanced in all elements of the learner journey, from engagement to progression.
- d) Explore with FE colleges their experience of flexible start provision. Publicise the success and lessons learned through the case study work and encourage, and as appropriate support, both them and colleges that did not participate to plan and develop provision and learn from experience elsewhere (for example, practice collected by DCSF, 2008a).
- e) Seek, where possible, to extend flexible start provision in 2008/2009 in West Yorkshire to enable young people who are NEET, or who may become so in the current economic downturn, to be able to take up appropriate learning and training opportunities.
- f) In developing the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) consider the issues raised by the Select Committee regarding ensuring the availability and quality of Apprentice opportunities and ensure that the Service is made coherent with others seeking to engage employers.

6.5.3 LAs in West Yorkshire should:

- a) Develop a clear understanding of the profile, aspirations and needs of young people who are NEET in their areas (particularly in 'NEET hot spots'), particularly through Connexions making forensic use of CCIS, and consider how best to make appropriate provision available.
- b) To maximize coherence, review links between ESF and other funded provision aimed at tackling NEETs and continue to work actively with other LAs on a sub-regional basis so that particular 'travel to work' and/or 'travel to learn' issues are taken into account in commissioning learning provision and support services.
- c) Consider work they are undertaking with NEETs in the context of their wider responses to economic and social issues such as worklessness, so the potential for area, family and inter-generational-based work is fully explored.
- d) Ensure they have adequate capacity and the right balance of skills amongst Connexions staff (especially PAs) to work with both young people who are NEET and also opportunity providers (especially employers) to assist in transition.
- e) Through their developing NEET strategies, and in consultation with key local partners, consider the best balance of preventative and remedial work that is being undertaken in respect to NEET and consider the best practice messages in this research in the future commissioning and management of services.
- f) Liaise with Youth Offending Team (YOT) to discuss how best to integrate support for young offenders who are subject to ISSPs, including considering issues to do with roles, responsibilities and resources in respect to meeting their needs.
- g) Listen to the voice of young people in commissioning new services, including considering undertaking tracking studies, particularly with young people who are NEET, or at risk of becoming NEET, to learn from their experience and to help identify real-time barriers and issues they face.
- h) Review and evaluate externally the ongoing work they are undertaking in this area to ensure that it is meeting its objectives and building on effective practice highlighted in this report.

6.5.4 Learning/E2E providers should:

- a) Seek to develop more flexible start provision that is suitable for 16-18 young people who are NEET, or at risk of being NEET, and ensure that satisfactory progression routes are available.
- b) Develop opportunities to ease the transitions between different types and levels of provision (for example, through setting up 'testers' and 'tasters' in E2E and summer school provision in colleges).

- c) Consider what support they are able to provide to learners (for example, in E2E through looking at Partnership-wide support arrangements, such as Learning Co-ordinators, and in flexible start provision through Learning Assistants and Student Progress Coaches).

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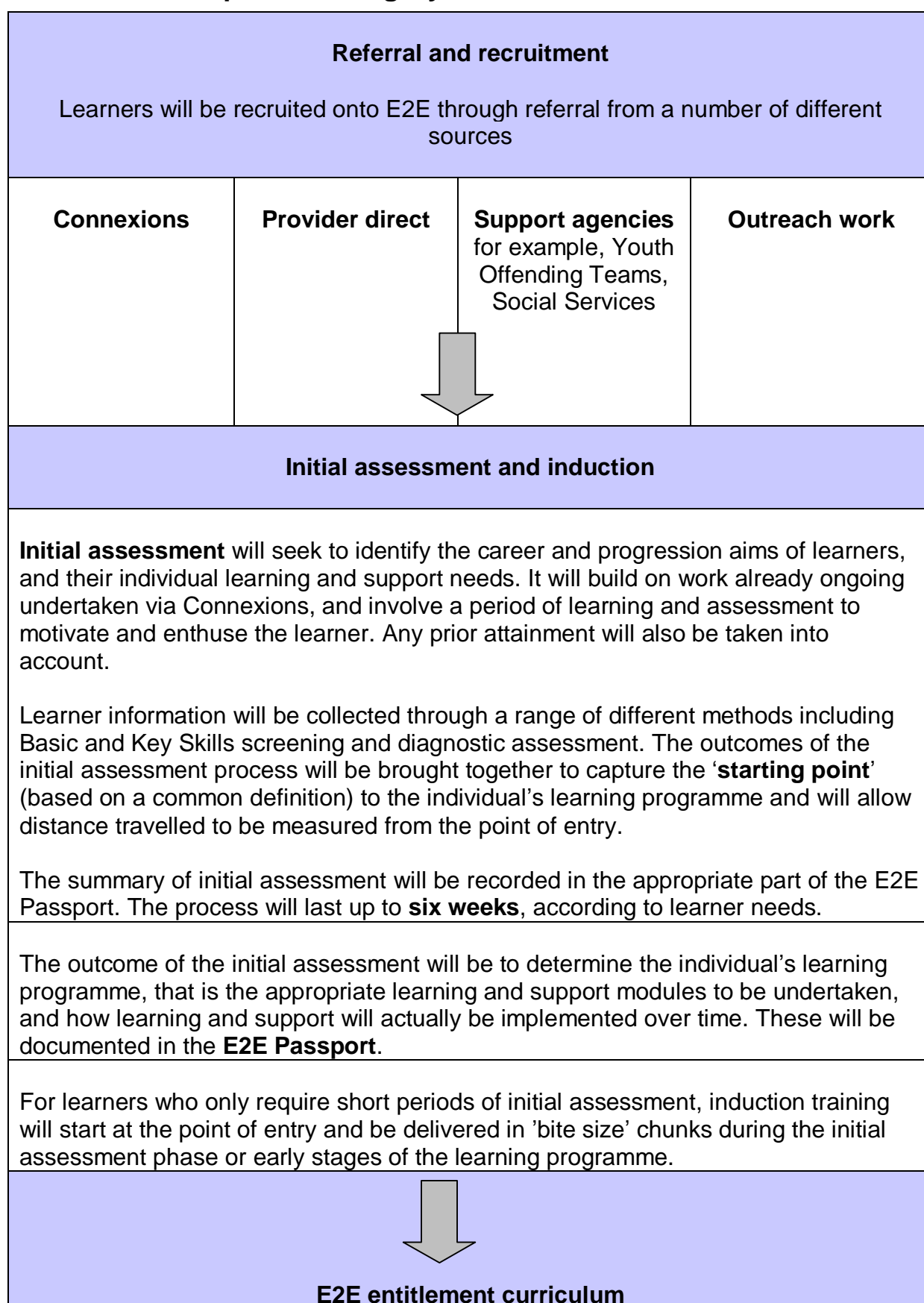
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Annex B: Exemplar Learning Cycle for E2E



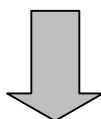
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The E2E entitlement curriculum will comprise of **three core strands**: Basic and/or Key Skills, vocational skills and development, personal and social development. It is envisaged that all learners will require some element of each. Learners may develop a clearer idea about their choice of progression route during the time they spend on E2E. In some instances, their initial progression route may evolve into something quite different as they learn and gain new experiences. For others, the entitlement curriculum, and the learning programme underpinning it, will be a more confirmatory model and may consist of intensive activities in one strand (vocational skills and development, for example, building up progression to a Foundation Modern Apprenticeship).

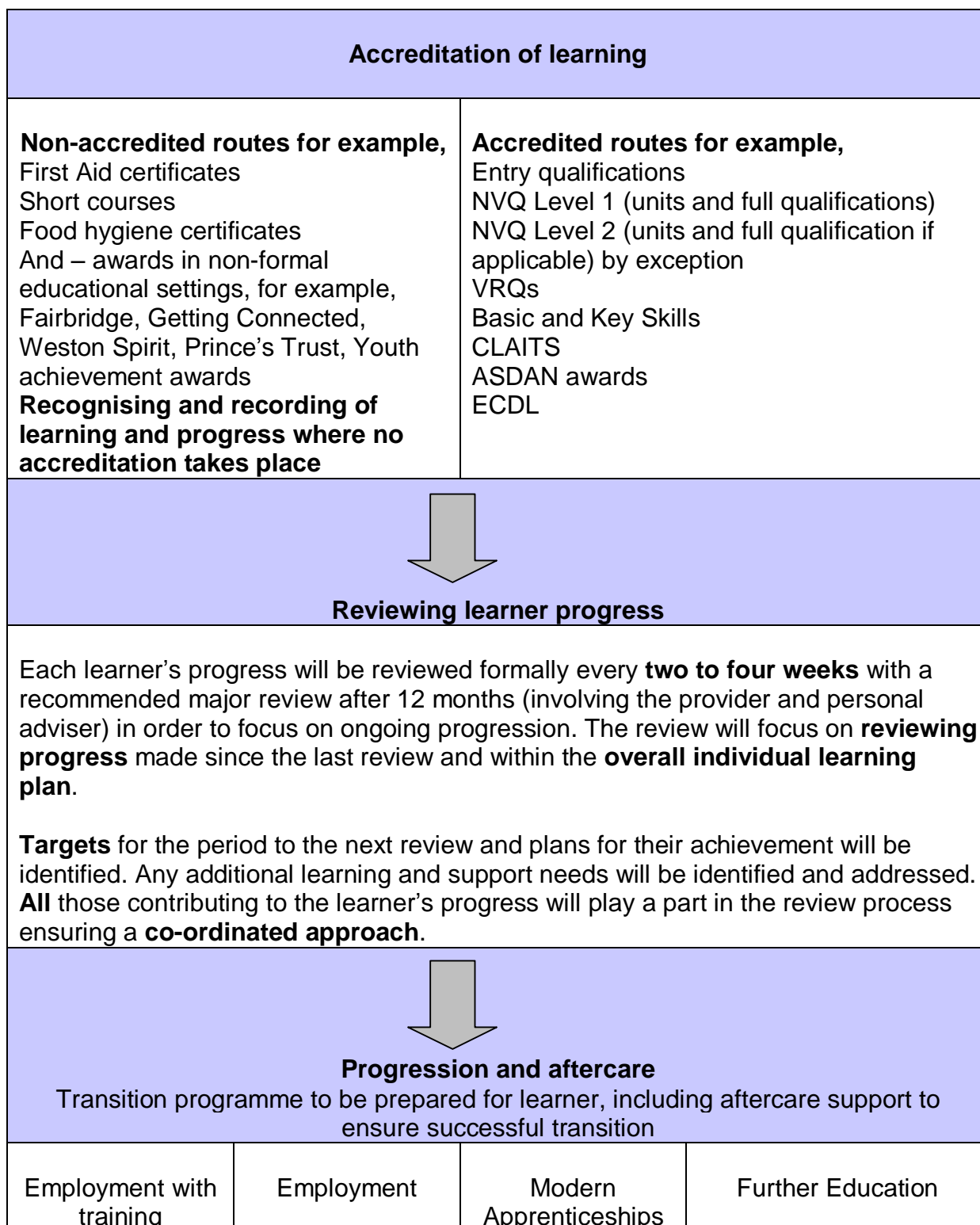
There will be flexibility in the design of the strands and their configuration in order to meet different learner needs. Together, these core strands will aim to develop a learner’s motivation and confidence, Basic and/or Key Skills, personal effectiveness, and to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding through opportunities to sample different work and learning contexts. Within each core strand there will be a range of appropriate **learning activities**, which will be selected according to learners’ needs. These will form the learner’s programme and be introduced at appropriate points in the learner’s programme.

Delivery will be in appropriate settings using innovative methods and resources. Each learning activity will provide **a range of schemes of work** appropriate to learners working at different levels. Strands will have clear learning outcomes and may, where appropriate lead to accreditation.

Basic Skills and Key Skills	Vocational development	Personal and social development		
Numeracy/ application of number	Work placements	ESOL	Outward Bound	Anger management
Literacy/ communication	Job search	Independent living skills	Drug and alcohol counselling	Community projects
ICT	Work tasters/ trials	Budgeting	Citizenship	
Working with others	Employability skills			



Continued/



Source: Learning and Skills Council, *E2E Entitlement Curriculum*, August 2006

Annex C: E2E partnership reports

Name of Partnership and lead contractor	Name of Partner organizations	Governance and organization	Training and development	Comments
<p>Bradford E2E Partnership</p> <p>Careers Bradford Limited</p>	<p>A&R Training, Accent Community Partnerships, Accent Womenzone, Age Concern Training, Barnardo's BDTs, BMDC KTG, BMDC WorkAble, Bradford College, Bradford Foyer, Bradford Motor Education Project, Bradford Youth Service, Christopher Paul Training, Dance United, Forster Community College, Groundwork, Keighley Furniture Project, LEAP, The Lighthouse Group, Park Lane College Keighley, Rathbone Training, Rathbone Training (Keighley), Shipley College, SJK Auto Body Repairs Centre, City of Bradford YMCA</p>	<p>The partnership operates a full programme of meetings including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Partnership meetings which occur monthly • Quality Group Meetings which occur bi-monthly • Cluster Group Meetings which occur quarterly and are offered to assist operational staff to share best practice • Strategic Group meetings which occur quarterly 	<p>A training needs analysis is undertaken annually. This feeds into a training calendar, which is updated on a half-yearly basis to ensure any new staff are fully briefed on operational and documentation requirements. Quarterly reports and monthly GH1 claims are used to inform CBL of any other training and development requirements</p>	<p>6 new partners for 2008-2009. One provider left the Partnership</p> <p>Contract management changes have made provision more effective in terms of structure and approach</p> <p>Over-performed on recruitment of learners and learner weeks</p> <p>The Clearing House has engaged with a number of young people to realise their ambition of a place on a vocational course and ensured that a key vulnerable group received offers in line with the September Guarantee</p>

Name of Partnership and lead contractor	Name of Partner organizations	Governance and organization	Training and development	Comments
<p>Calderdale & Kirklees E2E Partnership</p> <p>Kirklees College</p>	<p>A&R Training Services, Accent Community Partnerships, BTCV, Calderdale MBC (Workwise), Calderdale Training, CMS Vocational Training Ltd, Community Bike Train, General Physics Corporation (UK) Ltd, JHP Training, Kirklees Youth Training (including KEY Training), Kirklees College, Dewsbury Centre Huddersfield Centre, Mark Betts Hair Education Ltd, MPC North, National Childrens' Centre, Phoenix Radio, Project Challenge, Rathbone Training Ltd, S&S Training Services Ltd, YH Training Services Ltd</p>	<p>An annual business plan identifies strategic priorities, environment, demand for services and operational tactics</p> <p>A Steering Group considers the strategic direction and plans of the Partnership. Membership of the Steering Group is drawn from the Management Group which is made up of managerial representatives from all partners, representatives from Calderdale and Kirklees Careers Ltd and a representative from the local LSC</p> <p>The Entitlement Curriculum Working Group meets every six weeks and is responsible for delivery of staff training, resource development and good practice dissemination</p> <p>A Health and Safety Group with representatives from all providers meet regularly to share good practice and develop safe learner concepts and practice</p>	<p>Individual Partner development needs are identified through the annual SAR; quarterly reviews held by the lead contractor with each provider and SARs completed to address specific innovation/development (for example, FLT, EMA changes)</p> <p>Identified whole Partnership training/development needs are addressed through Partnership Development Days; Six-weekly delivery staff development sessions and discrete outside provision</p> <p>Individual organizational needs are met through coaching and specific support sessions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadening E2E offer by increasing the extent and variety of provision for example, construction workshop (Huddersfield) • Development of 'three tier' delivery model • 20 per cent increased participation • Introduction of college-based flexible start course, 'Xplorer'

Name of Partnership and lead contractor	Name of Partner organizations	Governance and organization	Training and development	Comments
<p>Leeds E2E Partnership</p> <p>Future Pathways</p>	<p>Ache, BEST, Dimensions, Groundwork, Future Pathways - delivery, Hargreaves, ICFDS, JHP, Lifeskills Solutions, MVUF, Nacro, Rathbone, YMCA</p>	<p>Partnership group – role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To oversee the management of the E2E framework within the Leeds district • To review and promote the dissemination of good practice and innovation across the Partnership utilising feedback from the Quality Improvement and Curriculum Practitioners groups • To develop a cohesive flexible and responsive learning programme encompassing the needs and requirements of individual learners • To promote equality of opportunity, inclusivity and learner representation from all groups • To ensure that the E2E programme provides diversity, flexibility and breadth of opportunities for progression, which reflects the needs and requirements of all young people 	<p>Curriculum Practitioners group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote improvement and development of the E2E curriculum • To monitor and review the effectiveness of the curriculum across the partnership • To agree, develop, implement and review new curriculum development initiatives • To share experience, ideas and examples of good practice • To encourage, develop and support effective cross-partnership working • To provide feedback to the E2E Partnership and Quality Improvement Groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two new partners have joined the Leeds partnership this year; Ache and Dimensions • Final 2007/2008 progression rate stands at 61.6 per cent. Year on year increase • Extremely positive Ofsted inspection • Trial site for FLT and Framework for Excellence • Continued search for additional innovative ways to support and engage client group

Name of Partnership and lead contractor	Name of Partner organizations	Governance and organization	Training and development	Comments
<p>Leeds E2E Partnership</p> <p>Future Pathways (continued)</p>		<p>Partnership group – role (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all organizations involved in the E2E programme conform to the Common Inspection Framework, Every Child Matters, RARPA, the partner handbook, and to their own individual quality assurance policy • To renew and monitor reports on equality and diversity to ensure that all young people are provided opportunities for access to the full range of provision • To ensure that all learners are provided with a safe working environment in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act • To promote collaborative partnerships between the organizations involved in the implementation and delivery of the E2E programme • To manage the planning and development of new E2E initiatives 		

Name of Partnership and lead contractor	Name of Partner organizations	Governance and organization	Training and development	Comments
<p>Leeds E2E Partnership</p> <p>Future Pathways (continued)</p>		<p>Partnership group – role (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To commit to a promotional and marketing strategy • Ongoing evaluation and review processes of the E2E programme, in accordance with LSC and Ofsted audit and inspection requirements • To ensure that all personnel have the opportunity to update their occupational competence and continuing personal development portfolio, in order to enhance and to continue to develop the E2E programme <p>Quality Improvement group – role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To promote quality improvement, good practice and value for money • To agree, develop, implement and review quality initiatives • To share experience, ideas and examples of good practice • To monitor and review the quality of partnership performance • To encourage, develop and support effective cross-partnership working 		

Name of Partnership and lead contractor	Name of Partner organizations	Governance and organization	Training and development	Comments
<p>Leeds E2E Partnership</p> <p>Future Pathways (continued)</p>		<p>Quality Improvement group – role (continued)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To review and validate the Partnership SAR • To provide feedback to the E2E Partnership and Curriculum development groups 		

Name of Partnership and lead contractor	Name of Partner organizations	Governance and organization	Training and development	Comments
<p>Wakefield E2E Partnership</p> <p>Lead contractor: Wakefield College</p>	<p>Fundamental, West Yorkshire Youth Association, BEST, Rathbone, A&R Training, Wakefield College (delivery arm), MPC North, BTCV, Dimensions Hair, Solutions and Princes Trust joins this group for 2008/2009</p>	<p>The partnership is overseen by a Partnership Management Group comprising the E2E Contract Manager (Skills Academy Director), the E2E Partnership Unit Manager, partner providers, Connexions and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC)</p> <p>It is underpinned by a Quality Sub-Group and a Practitioners' Focus Group</p> <p>It is further supported by the Partnership Manager through an E2E Partnership Unit in Wakefield College</p>	<p>All referrals onto E2E were made by Connexions and vetted by the Partnership Unit</p> <p>Tier One training was specialized and delivered by Fundamental and West Yorkshire Youth Association. Potential outcomes were progression onto Tier Two, college provision or work</p> <p>Tier Two provision was delivered by the other delivery partners with learners selecting a suitable organization during their initial week on E2E</p> <p>No discrete Tier 3 provision as economies of scale prevented specialization</p>	<p>Two new delivery partners joined to offer Tier One training during the year</p> <p>A summer school was offered for potential NEETs on leaving school, and identified by Connexions</p> <p>A warehousing option using College facilities was made available on a part-time basis to Tier Two learners</p> <p>Provider support, development, and training was taken forward through regular meetings of the Practitioners' Focus Group and other sessions were identified for dedicated Connexions training</p>

Name of Partnership and lead contractor	Name of Partner organizations	Governance and organization	Training and development	Comments
<p>Wakefield E2E Partnership</p> <p>Lead contractor: Wakefield College (continued)</p>			<p>However, Tier Three-type provision is offered through existing Tier Two providers with links to Apprenticeship programmes where relevant</p> <p>Learners are supported by two dedicated Connexions PAs and by a Transitions Mentor located in the Partnership Unit</p>	<p>Positive outcomes were 53 per cent in 2007/2008 (at period 12) matching the previous year; compared with West Yorkshire 52 per cent and nationally 52 per cent</p> <p>For 2008/2009 starts are up 30 per cent on the equivalent point in the previous year</p> <p>Multi-partner delivery initiatives are being planned for 2008/2009 to meet learner aspirations and manage Partnership capacity issues</p>

Annex D: Baseline reports (March/April 2008) for colleges involved in the flexible starts initiative

College	Service description		Programme details	
Bowling College	<p>Working in partnership with e:merge (a local church-based youth organization: www.emergeonline.org.uk), the College will deliver a flexible starts programme to support the recruitment and retention of an additional 30 16-18 year old learners to FE provision on a Level 1 programme based on the Open College Progression Awards Units</p> <p>The programme will run for 12 hours per week for 20 weeks in total</p>		<p>Literacy, Numeracy and IT, units in Social and Personal Development and either Sport or Child Care</p> <p>An enrichment programme offering additional learning experiences, such as rock climbing and cooking, has been designed to encourage and support the learners towards retention and achievement</p> <p>The opportunity to progress to other qualifications will be inbuilt to the programme</p>	
Case study	Current progress	Key enablers	Key barriers	Comments
Would be prepared to act as a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessed 24 young people. Around 16 young people recruited (10 boys and 6 girls) in separate groups Boys started in late January – girls in February 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have built on previous experience and developed outreach with e:merge Effective links have been developed with Connexions Young people have been recruited across a wide area 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruitment of girls has proved problematic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grown slowly Number of young people have made ‘false starts’ elsewhere, including at local colleges Looking to expand provision over next 12 months, including with girls in another venue Have started using ‘Rickter scale’ to record personal development (soft outcomes)

College	Service description		Programme details	
Bradford College	The College is delivering a flexible starts programme to support the recruitment and retention of an additional 150 16-18 year old learners to FE provision		The agreed work includes: the production and distribution of marketing materials both direct to 1,500 NEETs and through door-to-door leaflet drop, press, radio and billboard advertising; staffing at 'Getting Sorted' events; learner support on courses; additional support from behaviour management, Mental Well-Being Worker and a NEET IAG Adviser	
Case study	Current progress	Key enablers	Key barriers	Comments
Would be very interested in being a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Targeted marketing has been undertaken 190 applications received and 103 students started. Those who have not taken up places are being tracked Targeted support for students is being put in place and is being monitored by Assistant Director of Learner Services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partnership working (in particular with Careers Bradford/Connexions West Yorkshire, including forensic use of data about target groups to focus development work) Re-engineering the curriculum Clear leadership 	Areas for development include: enhancing links with other support agencies to increase information flows in support of transitions; further increasing entry-level provision as part of a developing Foundation Learning Tier; further developing pathways for students and building capacity in the College to support developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current development of flexible starts at College needs to be seen in context of wider changes to make it more customer focused (introducing introduction of the Assistant Director Young People as single focus in College for 14-19 work) There have been significant increases in targets for 16-18 recruitment agreed with LSC, including the development of an extended Entry-Level offer and introduction of Easter and summer starts

College	Service description		Programme details	
Dewsbury College	<p>There are two strands, one involving the development of a new curriculum offer to engage young people and the other to develop more flexible approaches to delivering full Level 2 or 3 programmes for adults. First strand - the aim is to develop a new, engaging and appropriate college offer in liaison with key stakeholders to identify potential learners, design and develop a suitable range of programmes</p>		<p>Activities will include: the development of promotional materials and open days; the development of outreach support and provision; the development of mentoring support</p> <p>A similar approach will be taken to investigate potential demand from adult learners for full Level 2 and 3 programmes, trialling new approaches to attract and retain these learners. The activity will also involve an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of both strands of the project, identifying good practice</p>	
Case study	Current progress	Key enablers	Key barriers	Comments
Would be interested in being a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Marketing materials have been developed Shuffle programme has been developed and around 48 young people have been recruited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very good working relations have been established with Connexions Curriculum offer is retaining young people Personalized support is helping identify and meet young people's needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of experience of working with the client group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme has hit a previously untapped market, particularly in North Kirklees Early success of the programme has been encouraging for staff and supported developments to date The wide range of ability of new learners who were previously NEET has come as a surprise to some staff

College	Service description		Programme details	
Huddersfield Technical College (HTC)	<p>The College is delivering a flexible starts programme (Xplorer) for an additional 20 16-18 year old learners over an average delivery period of three months</p> <p>Total project costs: Funding comes from a successful bid for £61,750 to deliver flexible start, and additional Levels 2 and 3, provision</p>		<p>Programme is a radically different offer. It has included an induction in Week One led by pastoral staff, including the opportunity to explore provision across the College's different sites and to present back to other learners in the group what they have found. Week Two included peer mentoring training, stress management and an Outward Bound day, with Week Three including learners undertaking a film project and career aspirations sessions</p>	
Case study	Current progress	Key enablers	Key barriers	Comments
Would be interested in being a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Xplorer Programme commenced on 3 March • 27 young people have been recruited to the programme. Young people vary in ability. Some are at Levels 2 or 3 (for example, have made 'false starts' in Sixth Forms); others have support needs in relation to Literacy/Numeracy at Entry 3/Level 1 • Initial assessment over a number of weeks will identify specific qualifications and levels to be achieved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on individual needs and circumstances • Exploration of career goals and motivation, including difficulties experienced in post-16 transition • Learners are gelling as a team and supporting each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenging and changing perceptions (for example, in regard to individuals' views of NEETs). • 'Bureaucracy' (for example, ensuring that students are registered for sufficient hours to enable them to gain subsidized travel at the beginning of the programme) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After Easter, learners will continue to explore future career and progression opportunities and begin to build the portfolios required for the qualifications 'Certificate of Personal Effectiveness' and wider Key Skills • Early evaluation feedback on Xplorer has been positive • The College will look to progress at least 16 learners into full-time Level 2 and 3 courses within the college

College	Service description		Programme details	
Joseph Priestley College	The college will deliver a flexible starts programme to an additional 24 16-18 year old learners in Construction and Hairdressing. In Construction, the aim is to achieve the BTEC Introductory Diploma in Construction. In Hairdressing, the aim is to achieve NVQ Level 1		The funding will provide additional: marketing (printing and distribution of materials); IAG/mentoring and progression support; Literacy, Numeracy and student support	
Case study	Current progress	Key enablers	Key barriers	Comments
The College would be interested in acting as a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good progress is being made towards the recruitment target, with greatest success in area of Construction, where 13 students have been recruited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement of two dedicated staff, including curriculum manager, to track developments, and additional support being provided • Additional hours have enabled new learners to have 'key worker support' which has made them 'feel valued' • Support from LSC contract manager in using funding (for example, to re-integrate specific learners who had become NEET, using the bid funding as additional support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too early to identify 	College has extensive experience within 14-19 and adult provision of designing and delivering courses aimed at the NEET target group

College	Service description		Programme details	
Leeds College of Building	<p>A flexible starts programme to support the recruitment and retention of four groups of 14 learners (56) across a range of disciplines in Construction. Two enrolment mornings were held on 12 and 13 March</p> <p>The programme will support the College in achieving its existing 16-18 participation target by developing the learners' Literacy and Numeracy skills through an integrated practical approach using Construction as the context for learning. Construction disciplines will include Carpentry and Joinery, Plastering and Plumbing</p>		<p>Learners will work towards one of the following qualifications: CIEH Health and Safety Certificate; City and Guilds 3792 in Literacy and Numeracy and/or Construction Developing Skills Courses (ASET) Developing appropriate progression routes for learners into Foundation Construction Awards or ASET (Level 1) on successful completion of the core Literacy and Numeracy programme, and ultimately into either Apprenticeships and/or further FE Level 2 provision through the Technical Certificate route</p>	
Case study	Current progress	Key enablers	Key barriers	Comments
Happy to act as a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking to recruit four groups commencing on April 7 and continuing for 9 to 10 weeks Planning is going well and numbers of young people have already been identified Has produced publicity material and is undertaking outreach work through organizations such as YOT and Connexions Staff training in respect to working with NEET 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close working with Connexions to identify possible learners, including cross-referencing those who may have contacted College direct Undertaking assessments to establish suitability for programme Ensure that learners have additional support such as bus passes, PPE and mentors 	<p>Problems may include maintaining levels of attendance (hope course design and support will help) and travel issues (considering issue of meeting expenses)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> College regularly meets, or exceeds, LSC delivery targets. Philosophy is to ensure that proper planning and training is undertaken prior to programme commencement Work of College has expanded to meet demands of developing sector Has experience of successfully delivering E2E and work in connection with Leeds City Council in respect to delivering New Deal for disadvantaged groups

College	Service description		Programme details	
Leeds College of Technology	<p>The College will market and deliver a flexible starts programme to support the recruitment and retention of 15-20 learners on Childcare City and Guilds 3177 Certificate in Children’s Care Learning and Development</p> <p>The College will also recruit one group of 15 NEET learners for a short programme (40-60 guided learning hours) to develop either their personal or employment skills</p>		The project costs cover the marketing of provision (including advertising); additional IAG costs; and ‘pattern breaking’ activities (including mentor-based support)	
Case study	Current progress	Key enablers	Key barriers	Comments
Not appropriate to offer themselves as a case study at this time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress to date has been limited, although the College has recruited a few additional young people into mainstream provision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff have been keen to try new approaches (for example, outreach work on a Saturday, providing leaflets to potential clients in the White Rose Shopping Centre) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Currently exploring how best to develop work with Connexions Need to continue building staff capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under-recruited in Childcare in September and was hoping that through flexible start provision would be able to address this shortfall Keen to explore new ways of engaging the NEET client group

College	Service description		Programme details	
Shipley College	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The college will deliver a flexible starts programme to support the recruitment and retention of an additional 44 16-18 year old learners to FE provision • The college will focus on three specific areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. BTEC entry qualification in Media (10 learners) 2. Entry to Employment NVQ Level 1 and Entry 3 (in five vocational areas (10 learners)) 3. Programme-led Apprenticeships in Children's Care Learning and Development (24 learners) 		Limited progress made to this point as contract details still being finalized.	
Case study	Current progress	Key enablers	Key barriers	Comments
Not appropriate to offer themselves as a case study at this time	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable

College	Service description		Programme details	
Wakefield College	<p>The College is developing and implementing a flexible starts strategy to recruit an additional up to 36 16-18 year old learners, and pilot it by offering the Construction, Information Technology and Floristry modules to learners</p> <p>The college has developed 12-week introductory modules in the areas of: Construction; Information Technology; Motor Vehicle; Care; Floristry; Retail; Hair and Beauty; Volunteering</p>		<p>These allow partial accreditation of Level 1 or 2 programmes and incorporate the development of communication, numeracy, confidence and employability skills</p> <p>The College will provide appropriate and additional learning support for each learner participating in the programmes</p>	
Case study	Current progress	Key enablers	Key barriers	Comments
Willing to be a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has recruited 19 learners to date: 10 in construction, 7 in IT, 2 in Floristry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior management backing Staff time and commitment to develop programme Strong links with Connexions in Wakefield (building on work undertaken in E2E) Running a common induction for learners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None identified to date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have achieved 16-18 funding and recruitment targets, and confident of doing so in respect to those aged 19 plus