



**'Manifesto for Action' for those
young people who are not in
education, employment or
training (NEET)**

**Skills Guernsey
Implementation Group**

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NEET* Summary

Throughout this document we have used the term 'NEET' as shorthand for young people who are not in education, employment or training. A key principle of the strategy is that being NEET is a temporary state that people are in, not a definition of who they are.

Introduction

'A whole generation of disadvantaged young people is losing out and the problem is getting worse.' A paraphrased statement from the 'Private Equity Foundation' in the UK but a problem that every country, jurisdiction or island faces and Guernsey is no different.

It is important to recognise that not all young people who are NEET are from a low socio-economic background; some are middle-class young people who have 'opted out' for various reasons. Many have little local context with their community; some engage in anti-social behaviour for a sense of belonging and many struggle with multiple disadvantages, but they often have aspirations even if they don't know how best to achieve them.

However there are common characteristics that have been identified elsewhere and we assume that a similar profile applies in Guernsey:

- The 'NEET' group is getting older
- The gender gap is widening as more males than females are unemployed
- Those young people who are NEET have few qualifications and have left school at the earliest opportunity
- Young people with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities are twice as likely to be 'NEET'.

How much are young people who are NEET an issue for Guernsey?

In relative terms, the number of local young people who are NEET, as a percentage of the working population, is very small. However, the NEET problem globally is getting worse with a prediction that 20% could be the new norm for the UK youth unemployment rate. Whether it is quantified as the economic opportunity lost or a drain on budgets supporting those young people who are NEET, it is an expensive problem and one that Guernsey cannot afford to ignore.

We should also be aware that this is not just an economic or financial issue; it is a complex social one as well. Young people who are NEET are more likely than their peers to:

- Have low skills;
- Go on to be unemployed in the future;
- Earn less;
- Suffer from poor health or depression; and
- Have a poor diet

None of these are desirable features, and they carry negative long term consequences for families, the community and public expenditure on both income and health support.

The future job market

We know that the job market will become more difficult in the future. There will be an expectation that young people will have a higher skill set when they enter the workplace as jobs are becoming more demanding. There is a shift away from low-skilled jobs which were often seen as the way in to employment for low-skilled young people.

Recruitment processes are also becoming more arduous and those on the margins of unemployment may struggle to persuade employers to offer them jobs. Basically the situation for those not in education, employment and training is likely to deteriorate further.

Therefore it is essential that young people leaving education and preparing for work have the right mix of skills, experience and confidence to compete in the job market and avoid long term unemployment. And that requires focus, attention and support from a wide group of stakeholders.

Some 'NEET' young people will require little support to move from negative to positive destinations after they have left school. Others will require a huge amount of support to make a successful transition into employment or further training.

"It is important to recognise that not all young people who are NEET are from a low socio-economic background; some are middle-class young people who have 'opted out' for various reasons."

What needs to be done

In the UK, evidence suggests that focused initiatives can make a difference and have reduced the risk of young people becoming NEET or alternatively they have helped them reduce the time they are NEET.

Locally, there is experience and expertise across the island in supporting young people who are NEET. That expertise can be found in the public sector, for example in the Departments of Social Security, Education or Health and Social Services. The voluntary sector has also played a key role in supporting young people who are NEET – Action for Children is a particular example through the well-established Karabiner programme. Increasingly we are seeing support from employers and employer organisations and this is a key area to expand.

There is also a shared commitment from all these services and agencies to making a difference for every young person who is NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. Informally they are working together to support those who need it on an individual basis.

However, we believe that the time has come to look at a more formal, co-ordinated approach to the NEET problem.

Therefore the Skills Guernsey Policy Group (SGPG) has created a Manifesto for Action, by developing a set of deliverable activities, set around core principles that will focus on achieving a reduction in numbers of young people who are NEET in Guernsey.

Three core principles:

1) Supporting those who are NEET is a shared community responsibility

Every young person who is NEET is a young person who can make a contribution to the island. Every sector of the community has a responsibility to assist those who are NEET. It is not the responsibility of the public sector alone. Any effective response to supporting young people who are NEET will require the input from all those who touch the lives of young people. Employers, in particular, can play a significant role in helping young people to help themselves out of their situation.

2) Early intervention is key

The best way to prevent a young person becoming long-term 'NEET' is to intervene at an early stage including through preventative work before they actually become NEET. That is why Skills Guernsey has identified that initiatives to support young people whilst still at school are key. If we can raise aspirations and help young people to demonstrate that they have the skills to be successful in employment then we believe that we can reduce the threat of becoming NEET. Equally we endorse the need for co-ordinated intensive support when young people first become NEET.

3) There is already NEET activity happening.

The Skills Guernsey Policy Group (SGPG) acknowledges that there is support for young people who are NEET already happening in Guernsey and a fundamental rethink is not required. The focus should be more about providing a framework, encouraging further participation, co-ordinating activities and re-directing resources so the opportunity is maximised.

Skills Guernsey is committed to supporting the community in addressing the NEET issue and sees this as being a key response to meeting one of our overall stated aims:

“To increase workforce participation i.e. to enable everyone who is willing and able to work to find employment.”

Definition of young people who are NEET

The starting point in working with those who are NEET is to define who we are targeting. We propose that the following definition should be applied:

“those 16-25 year olds who are classified as jobseekers with no earnings.”

Skills Guernsey believes that the count of young people who are NEET should exclude those with part-time earnings and also exclude young people with a severe disability. Single parents and the long-term sick are also excluded. Figure 1 below shows the number of individuals classified by this definition from November 2010 to October 2013.

Note: It is important to recognise that not every NEET individual is included in the figures. For example there is a group of school leavers who do not register as unemployed but who are not in education, employment or training. Some young people who are NEET will be self-funded. Tracking a group like this would be very difficult so they remain outside of the definition and of trackable statistics but should be acknowledged to avoid confusion.

Figure 1: Number of people aged 16 -25 not in employment, education or training who have not worked during the snapshot week



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Manifesto for action

Overall Aim:

Recommend the establishment of a sustainable and actionable strategic plan aimed at reducing NEET numbers in Guernsey.

Objectives:

- To increase the opportunities available for young people who are NEET.
- To deliver school accountability for early intervention in the identification of young people who are NEET.
- To encourage or incentivise employers to engage in delivering solutions to the NEET issue.
- To explore ways to improve attitudes towards young people who are NEET and educate the community about them.

Audiences / Key Stakeholders to include or influence:

- Young people who are NEET.
- Social Security, Education, Health and Social Services and Commerce and & Employment Departments.
- Schools and Education Services including Careers Service and Youth Service (YPGA).
- Home Department services including Prison.
- Health and Social Service Department services e.g. Youth Justice.
- Employers – Employer bodies e.g. Institute of Directors, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Chamber of Commerce.
- Voluntary sector.

The following six point plan, with actions, is designed to deliver a reduction in NEET numbers in Guernsey.

1) Creating ownership for individual cases

A young person who is NEET may have contact with a wide range of services. There are known cases where an individual has been supported by a youth worker, the Careers Service, Social Security Department, Action For Children, the Sports Commission, and two employers. This demonstrates levels of support and commitment to the young person which are impressive. However there is scope for a more coordinated approach.

In particular Skills Guernsey believes that there is scope for the creation of a 'NEET team' (or existing individuals with re-defined roles) where key professionals will work together to:

- Target personalised support for young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming so.
- Track trends in young people at risk of being NEET.
- Share good practice.
- Identify areas of shared training.
- Review current provision and consider areas of duplication.

The purpose of a team concept is to ensure there is a unified approach to taking responsibility for young people who are NEET in relevant Departments and services. However, Skills Guernsey also believes that it is crucial that each NEET individual is dealt with by a 'case manager' who takes ownership for the individual and guides them through the time that they are NEET.

The proposals of the States Report, Modernisation of the Supplementary Benefit scheme, which were discussed in the States of Deliberation in March 2012 include a section entitled 'Putting work first'. The proposals under the section would, if implemented, do much to alleviate the numbers who are NEET. The proposal to establish a number of case managers is especially encouraged as this will allow clients to be supported more effectively, quickly and sustainably.

Actions for point one

- Skills Guernsey to facilitate a workshop for all those key stakeholders who work with young people who are NEET on how we can work together more effectively.
- Identify specific resources where a NEET area of responsibility can be redefined or added to the remit of support services.
- Explore how to structure and resource individual case managers through the Social Security Department and other services and agencies.

2) Create pre-employment training opportunities

There is a large number of training opportunities available to young people who are NEET but not all are accessed on a regular basis. This suggests that the full list is not 'front of mind' and not being considered on a regular basis. Skills Guernsey believes that an easily accessible list of training opportunities should be developed and circulated.

Initially it will be important to review the current training provision's effectiveness and decide:

- a) What works and needs expanding?
- b) What is ineffective and should stop?
- c) What is missing and needs adding?

What is important is efficient use of resources and their appropriate allocation. It is also important to ensure that the right training is available at the right time. For example, industry training should be in line with sectors that reflect the future of the island's prosperity. Skills Guernsey has a role to play in ensuring that is the case.

Appendix 2 shows an example list of initiatives currently available which we have categorised into 3 different types; pre-employment, supported employment and transition into work. Young people who are NEET should be able to access different opportunities, dependent on their 'readiness to work' and this categorisation may help to sift through what is available and what is most appropriate for an individual.

Action for point 2

- Review list of available NEET training opportunities and advise on future priorities and allocated resources.
- Review communication arrangements to ensure ease of access to employment/ training opportunities.

3) Engaging with the voluntary sector

Skills Guernsey believes that working with the voluntary sector will be key in helping young people who are NEET into the workplace. Whether this takes the form of mentoring/coaching in the workplace or providing regular advice and guidance, the sector could be hugely beneficial in using their wealth of experience in a positive way.

There is a body of work being undertaken already to look at the possibility of creating a social enterprise, particularly with the Guernsey Community Foundation. Skills Guernsey recommends that these investigations should be continued, supported and endorsed. Canada, Australia and the UK all have 'social enterprise models' we can learn from and it is our belief that an enterprise that provides a centralised function can be used to support NEET activity.

Action for point 3

- Work with and support the Guernsey Community Foundation to explore the opportunity of creating an Employment Trust (as a social enterprise)

4) Early indication plan for schools

Poor attainment and engagement at school and a background of socio-economic disadvantage are the main reasons for being a NEET risk by 16. Skills Guernsey believes that early intervention at all ages will have a positive effect on young people at risk of being NEET. There are 2 elements to consider:

a) Early interventions to support families and early childhood development

There is increasing evidence that properly funded and managed investment in a young person's childhood will lead to significant improvements in their skill levels when they enter the workplace. These interventions are especially effective in getting young people to engage positively at school which result in the necessary skills and attitudes that are required in the workplace.

Interventions are especially effective in addressing the habit of worklessness that can develop across generations of families. The role of the family is crucial to the formation of skills and attitudes of young people who are seeking to gain and retain employment. Involvement at an early age that helps to address the issues created by dysfunctional families has proven to be highly effective.

Skills Guernsey is aware of cross-departmental initiatives to support Guernsey families at an early age. We are keen to support those initiatives by harnessing the involvement of the business community.

b) Early interventions at school

We recognise that there are many activities and initiatives in schools that help young people avoid becoming NEET. These include:

- The development of the curriculum so that it caters for a variety of needs such as vocational education
- The opportunity for young people to be 'work-ready' through the schools' careers education programmes, an extensive work experience programme and the provision of information, advice and guidance
- The drive to increase post-16 participation in education and training

However we are also aware that some youngsters require additional support to ensure that young people can be supported at all stages of their education. We are aware that the island's schools and services seek to support every child and to maximise their opportunities to prosper in school. However we would advocate some additional support for students at risk of becoming NEET.

Action for point 4

- Create a NEET indicator programme. An indicator programme would analyse local information to establish the factors associated with those young people who disengage post-16. This enables schools and other services to target their support more effectively at pupils who are most likely to disengage and to prepare them for a more successful transition into education, employment or training.
- Encourage vocational/ employability related education opportunities. Skills Guernsey sees vocational/ employability-related education as a key element in any response to the NEET issue in Guernsey and will encourage the use of vocational learning to inspire confidence and provide alternative qualifications for those that would most benefit.

5) Provide support mechanisms to encourage employer participation.

The role of committed, proactive employers is crucial to addressing the issue of young people who are NEET in Guernsey. Locally there are many examples of employers being compassionate and supportive of young people who are struggling to find and retain employment but we believe that incentives and access to information is critical as well as understanding 'what is in it for employers' if those employer numbers are to be increased.

There are a number of existing schemes and initiatives that employers can access, however, wide spread knowledge of these options is limited. It would also be prudent to review whether the incentives are compelling enough and whether that has a bearing on uptake.

A recurring experience for employers who have considered the recruitment of young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET is that they require personalised, individual support so that they can improve their employability and ultimately bring them closer to remaining in the labour market. Skills Guernsey believes that there should be investigation into the establishment of an employer-led mentoring project. We have initiated discussions with various employer bodies about the establishment of such a project in 2013.

Further opportunities also exist to provide a co-ordinated agency approach (including the job centre, the careers service and GWEX work experience) towards the ongoing encouragement of employer participation and the concept of a mentoring scheme.

Action for point 5

- Find innovative ways to promote information and incentives that are available to employers actively supporting young people who are NEET into work.
- Support agencies such as the job centre, the careers service and GWEX work experience in their drive to co-ordinate their approach to employer engagement.
- Investigate the concept of an employer-led mentoring project.

6) Creating interaction with NEETS to break down barriers

Another issue highlighted by all NEET practitioners is the divide that has emerged between young people who are NEET and potential employers.

Skills Guernsey firmly believes that creating interaction between young people who are NEET and employers would be a mutually beneficial process. For the NEET individual, they get a chance to interact with business employers, members of the community and key influencers so they can understand what is expected of them and start to role model behaviours. Conversely, members of the community and employers would

start to get an appreciation of the issues that young people who are NEET face in the modern world which will help to break down barriers and dispel misconceptions.

Action for point 6

- Work with the Guernsey Youth Partnership and other bodies to organise a series of events (e.g open day, visits to schools, and presentations from young people who are NEET) designed to bring dialogue between employers and young people who are NEET.

Six Point Plan - Key Performance Indicators

Specific number-based targets need to be set once the strategic approach and NEET definition has been agreed. Until that time, below is an outline of the two measures that we believe are strong indicators of success:

- A reduction in the number of individuals that are defined as NEET, measured from a defined baseline figure.
- A financial cost avoidance measure can also be adopted which is based on a calculation of the cost of supporting young people who are NEET and therefore the saving from that number

reducing. By way of example, a young person aged 18+ living at home could cost SSD (and the community) around £5k per annum. A young person aged 18+ living in shared accommodation (i.e a boarding house) could cost around £15k per annum. Not all NEETs moving into work would come off benefit altogether as this depends on rate of pay and outgoings (particularly rent), but these figures do demonstrate that there is a significant financial saving/ cost avoidance to be achieved by investing in activation of some NEETs

- These targets will be set once the overall approach is adopted.

Six Point Plan - Summary of action points

Action	Action points	Responsible organisation
Creating ownership for individual cases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills Guernsey to facilitate a workshop for all those key stakeholders who work with young people who are NEET on how we can work together more effectively. 	Education
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify specific resources where a NEET area of responsibility can be redefined or added to the remit of support services. 	Education/ Social Security Department
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore how to structure and resource individual case managers through Social Security Department and other services and agencies. 	Education / Social Security Department
Create pre-employment training opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review list of available NEET training opportunities and decide on future priorities and allocated resources. 	Social Security Department
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review communication arrangements to ensure ease of access to employment / training opportunities. 	Social Security Department
Engaging with the voluntary sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with and support the Community Foundation to explore the opportunity of creating and Employment Trust (as a social enterprise) 	Skills Guernsey
Early indication plan for schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a NEET indicator programme. • Encourage vocational /employability related education opportunities. 	Education
Provide support mechanisms to encourage employer participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find innovative ways to promote information and incentives that are available to employers actively supporting young people who are NEET into work. 	Skills Guernsey
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support agencies such as the Job Centre, the Careers Service and GWEx work experience in their drive to co-ordinate their approach to employer engagement. 	Education / Social Security Department
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigate the concept of an employer- led mentoring project. 	Skills Guernsey
Creating interaction with NEETS to break down barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the Guernsey Youth Partnership and other bodies to organise a series of events designed to bring dialogue between employers and young people who are NEET. 	Guernsey Youth Partnership

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Conclusion

There is a requirement to establish a strategic approach to supporting those young people who are NEET. This manifesto for action is intended to be the starting point for such a strategic approach and Skills Guernsey is committed to incorporating a response to the NEET issue within the island's skills strategy.

However we would also advise that supporting those who are NEET should be a feature of many of the States Strategies that are being developed. This includes the strategies listed below:

- Economic Development Strategy,
- Bailiwick of Guernsey Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy,
- Supported Living and Ageing Well Strategy,
- Education Vision Strategy,
- Children and Young People's Plan,
- Disability and Inclusion Strategy.

In summary, Skills Guernsey advocates a co-ordinated and focused approach to delivering a reduction in NEET numbers in the island. By identifying individuals with direct responsibility for young people who are NEET, combined with better employer participation and greater access to re-defined incentives and initiatives, we believe there is scope to make a real difference in a relatively short period of time.

Note: Appendix 2 which details specific work implications for Departments and employers.

Appendix 1

Current Initiatives

This is provided to highlight how current initiatives (although not exhaustive) can be packaged under 3 different headings to help segmentation and referral.

Pre employment

- GOALS
- Short courses
 - Access to Literacy
 - Communication skills
 - IT
 - CV skills
- Retail Skills (multiple)
- Karabiner



Supported employment

- CEPS
- Kick start
- Get into...
- Communicate / Interworks / Grow



Transition into work

- Work Experience
- Work Trial
- Back to work bonus
- Recruitment grants
- Support contract
- Mind / Communicate / Interworks

Appendix 2

Specific implications for Departments/Employers:

Commerce & Employment

Develop relationships and engage with a wider group of employers by supporting, communicating and providing related information to businesses of all sizes in Guernsey. Promote opportunities and knowledge of available grants.

Education

Commit to early indication programme, focus on employability and vocational education (11 to 19 years old), provide business case for early intervention, support voluntary sector developments and focus attention on creating NEET responsibility in educational support areas such as the Youth Partnership and Careers Service.

Social Security Department

Identify resource implication for the case management approach to managing young people who are NEET (whether new or re-focused existing resources), develop guide for voluntary/third sector on work rehabilitation grant application process, review training initiatives to ensure that the participation of young people who are NEET is maximised, modify current statistic reports to incorporate specific NEET figure based on agreed definition and review working practices to ensure that, where appropriate, young people who are NEET are fast tracked to support.

Employers

Support voluntary sector schemes to encourage young people who are NEET into work, share successful examples and encourage others to participate, work in collaboration with the voluntary sector, engage with Skills Guernsey and actively engage with grants available to enable initial integration of young people who are NEET.