

Understanding Young People in Jobs without Training

Andrew Anderson, Bee Brooke, Alex Doyle,
Dan Finn and Sean Moley

Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion

Research Report
No 736

Understanding Young People in Jobs without Training

*Andrew Anderson, Bee Brooke, Alex Doyle,
Dan Finn and Sean Moley*

Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion

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

© Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion 2006
ISBN 1 84478 718 4

Contents

1	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2	INTRODUCTION	7
	Background.....	7
	Research objectives	8
	Sample design and recruitment	9
	Data collection and analysis.....	13
	The research report.....	13
3	EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL	14
	Views on school.....	14
	Attendance and offending history	15
	Views on their qualifications	15
	Work while at school.....	16
	Career ambitions at school.....	16
5	MOVING ON FROM SCHOOL	18
	Further education or training	18
	Apprenticeships.....	19
	Advice and influence.....	20
	NEET	22
6	CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND EMPLOYMENT.....	24
	Domestic circumstances	24
	Description of current employment.....	24
	Pay	25
	Reasons for securing employment.....	25

Travel	26
Training received in work	26
Future work plans.....	27
7 VIEWS ON TRAINING AND PLANS TO TRAIN IN THE FUTURE	29
Views on training	29
Views on level 2 entitlement.....	30
Future training plans	30
Barriers to future education or training.....	31
What would encourage young people to train.....	33
Who would they seek advice from about future education or training	33
8 VIEWS FROM EMPLOYERS	34
Employment of young people	34
General policies on training	34
Attitudes towards employment of young people	36
Views of training young people.....	37
Level 2 entitlement	38
Views on the Learning Agreement pilot	41
Awareness and views of government supported training providers	42
Experience of working with business support agencies and training providers.	43
9 VIEWS FROM CONNEXIONS STAFF	45
Identifying eligible young people.....	45
Updating data.....	46
Knowledge of employers and promoting Connexions	47
Views on the Pilot.....	48
Possible Enhancements to IT systems	49

10	LESSONS FOR THE PILOT	50
	ANNEX 1 – TOPIC GUIDES	54

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank everyone who has participated in this research, particularly the young people, employers and Connexions staff who gave up their time to take part in interviews. We would also like to thank the Connexions partnerships who devoted their time to sourcing and collating contacts of young people to interview.

We would like to thank Sarah Jenkins and Nicola Smith for their contribution to the research and carrying out interviews with young people.

We would also like to thank Janette King at DfES and members of the steering group for their guidance and advice.

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report contains findings from qualitative research carried out between November 2005 and February 2006 with 68 young people in jobs without training (JWT) and who in the main were without a level 2 qualification. Fifteen employers and representatives from six Connexions Partnerships were also interviewed.

The research was designed to inform the development of the Learning Agreement pilot to run from April 2006, which will test methods of encouraging 16 and 17 year olds in JWT into accredited learning to level 2 or level 3. Connexions Personal Advisers will negotiate learning agreements with young people, identify participants and monitor their progress through the Connexions Customer Information System (CCIS).

The Young People

- Most of the young people were employed full time in a variety of routine jobs requiring few qualifications or little training. Some were paid the minimum wage but the average was £4.67 an hour.
- Most young people said they were in their current job because of the pay and the lifestyle it facilitated.
- Although the jobs were described as 'permanent' most young people viewed them as being a 'stopgap' before a 'better job' or a return to education/training.
- Almost a third (20) of the young people had participated in some form of education or training since leaving school. At least half of these young people reported not completing their courses or apprenticeships. Many of these young people had moved into education or training as a default option and the course had not met their expectations
- Few of those eligible knew that they were entitled to undertake level 2 training. Those who were eligible and interested thought their employer might be resistant to the idea and expressed a preference for third party intervention, especially if the proposed training was unrelated to their current job.
- Most of the young people had a positive view of training. Almost two thirds of the young people stressed that they intended to return to education or training in the future. Only five of the 68 young people interviewed felt that they had ruled out doing education or training at any point in the future. Few, however, had made plans for their future.

The Employers

- Most regarded young people as short-term employees. Small employers attributed this to limited opportunities for progression whilst others stressed that the young people themselves were not interested in staying long-term in often routine, low level jobs.

- Attitudes to training young people varied. Around a third of employers expressed some notion of corporate social responsibility in their general attitudes to training, though most provided induction and job-specific training only. Only one out of the fifteen employers interviewed knew of the statutory entitlement to level 2 training, and over three quarters were sceptical and concerned about the potential costs and disruption to their business.

Key Lessons

The research was designed to inform the development of the Learning Agreement pilot to run from April 2006, which will test methods of encouraging 16 and 17 year olds in JWT into accredited learning to level 2 or level 3. Key lessons have been drawn out of the research in order to inform the delivery of the pilots:

1. **The client group for the Learning Agreement pilot may be difficult to identify and contact.** Nearly one in five of the sample of young people provided by Connexions to the researchers, and almost a third of those contacted, were ineligible. Contact details were inaccurate or unavailable for another 14%. Contact was made with only half the sample provided. Connexions staff subsequently explained that until now young people in JWT have not been a priority group, such as the NEET or unknown group, and the currency period for updating contacts is one year. They also stressed that they knew less about this group than other groups of young people with whom they worked, especially those who moved from job to job. Significant resources may be required in the pilot areas to identify and keep up to date details on eligible young people.
2. **Young people in JWT are very diverse in background and character.** They are located in a variety of jobs and their plans or ambitions for employment or education vary substantially.

Pilot partnerships need to take account of this heterogeneity when developing delivery plans and approaching young people and employers to take part in the pilot. A 'one size fits all' approach will not be effective. Learning opportunities must be flexible and personalised to be attractive to the young person. Identifying appropriate flexible local provision is likely to be challenging.

3. **Most of the young people interviewed were generally positive about the value of education or training and had at least vague plans to resume some participation in the future.** Many felt that work based training was the most likely to be attractive to them. Some were interested in accreditation for training they had received in their existing jobs. Many would benefit from more information or advice about their options including learning agreements.
4. **Pilot partnerships are likely to encounter many young people wishing to train but unsure about what they want to do or how to access it.** Partnerships will need to approach each case sensitively as for some, such as those who do not want to stay in their job and would like to return to full-time education or training, a learning agreement may not be the most appropriate immediate option. In other cases a learning agreement may be a positive *transitional* phase into full-time provision. It will be important to capture this impact as otherwise the experience will be regarded

negatively as a non-completion.

- 5. A significant minority had no interest in education or training in the future.** These young people often had previously negative experiences of education or were content to stay in their job and receive a regular wage.

Pilot partnerships need to consider how they will approach and market the pilot to such young people. Marketing strategies such as 'it can help you earn more money' or 'it can help you get a better paid job' for example might prove more successful with this group.

- 6. The evidence from the employers demonstrated a likelihood to respond most positively to the wage compensation element of the Learning Agreement pilot.** Most reported that they would be happy to allow young people to take up their entitlement to train in return for full wage compensation. However, in the absence of such compensation, employers were more negative about the level 2 entitlement. Few saw any benefits to their business of allowing young people to train to level 2, particularly if the training was unrelated to the job. This attitude was strongest amongst smaller employers.

Partnerships without wage compensation need to consider how they will sell the learning agreement to employers and tackle the question of employer costs. This research has indicated that marketing messages around the positive effect of participation in terms of demonstrating corporate social responsibility and increasing staff retention and motivation might be effective.

- 7. Few of the employers offered apprenticeships or other government funded training so there appeared little risk of direct substitution.** The risk was more likely to be stronger among employers who were already planning to provide the young person with other structured training.

- 8. Connexions partnerships have only partial knowledge of the relevant employers in their areas and their staff have limited experience of working with such employers.**

Contacting employers for the research demonstrated the importance of identifying the person within the organisation responsible for training and with the authority to sign off the learning agreement. This is more complex in multi-branch organisations. Similarly the employers interviewed had limited experience in dealing with business support agencies or in the provision of government supported training.

Pilot Partnerships will need to allocate additional time and resources to establish and strengthen their contacts with local employers who employ young people without training. This could be assisted by working closely with Local Learning and Skills Councils to draw on their knowledge of local employers as well as working with other partners such as Business Link and Train to Gain brokers.

- 9. Despite the positive response of many employers and young people to the learning agreement, there are concerns that the employer/employee relationship might be strained if the training package is not brokered sensitively.** Partnerships will need to approach young people and their employers in ways that minimise potential

friction and that do not jeopardise the employment of the young person.

10. **The Connexions staff interviewed suggested that they need to collect more accurate data on young people in JWT.** Otherwise the only crucial addition required for CCIS to deliver the pilot is to introduce fields for tracking progress and financial payments. Some staff mentioned that increased data sharing between agencies, especially with the Inland Revenue, would help to increase the accuracy of data on young people in JWT. This could require enhancements to the CCIS

Young People in JWT

Most young people said they had a relatively 'normal' school experience, but few were 'motivated' learners. A significant minority described negative school experiences including exclusions, experience of bullying, and disruptive behaviour. Some were highly critical of their schools or the quality of some of the teaching they experienced.

Almost three quarters (50) of young people reported having GCSEs equivalent to level 1 and 11 young people reported having GCSEs equivalent to level 2. Only seven young people had no qualifications and most of these had left school without sitting their GCSE exams. Some of the young people did not regret their lack of such qualifications but many found that poor qualification levels had limited subsequent education and/or employment opportunities.

Almost a third (20) of the young people had continued in some form of education or training since leaving school. At least half had left early, regarding the course as inappropriate or unsuited to their expectations and many explained that they had moved into education or training as a default option. Some had planned to continue in education or training but had applied too late for college.

Almost all of the young people had been aware of apprenticeships but only a small number had applied. Common reasons cited for not applying for or not considering apprenticeship included the lack of suitable apprenticeships in their local area or chosen career; others had been deterred by the college element. Another reason repeatedly given was the low pay associated with apprenticeships.

Almost three quarters of young people (48) had moved into a job without training on leaving school. Most were employed full-time in a variety of routine jobs requiring few qualifications or little training. Some were paid the minimum wage but the average was £4.67 an hour. Although the jobs were described as 'permanent' most young people viewed them as being a 'stopgap' before a 'better job' or a return to education/training.

Almost a third (21) of the young people had had more than one job since leaving school and some had changed jobs several times. Others had experienced extended periods without work. Over two thirds of young people (48), however, had remained in the same job since school.

Most young people said they were in their current job because of the pay and the lifestyle it facilitated. A few of the young people said that they were in the job due to good promotion or training prospects. Some mentioned the location and working hours as attractive. A few explained that they had taken their job as an interim post before

entering an age restricted career or training option they aspired to, such as joining the Army.

The young employees reported their receipt of induction and basic health and safety training and specific for-the-job training. Most training involved learning on the job although several had received more extensive training. Few of those eligible knew that they were entitled to undertake level 2 training. Those who were eligible and interested thought their employer might be resistant to the idea and expressed a preference for third party intervention, especially if the proposed training was unrelated to their current job.

Despite a negative minority most of the young people had a positive view of training. Few, however, had made plans for their future.

Decision Influencers

Although almost all of the young people reported that they had received advice from Connexions, the amount of contact varied considerably. Few suggested that Connexions had a significant impact on their decisions on leaving school.

Parents and family networks appeared to have the most significant general influence on young people's decisions about work, education and/or training. Almost a third of the young people had got their job with help from a family member or friend. Many young people reported parental support to move into work but there was evidence also that parents would encourage the acquisition of training and provide support should they decide to return to college.

The Employers

The employers were selected from five Connexions areas. They were broadly representative of the employers of the young people surveyed. Most regarded young people as short-term employees. Small employers attributed this to limited opportunities for progression whilst others stressed that the young people themselves were not interested in staying long-term in often routine, low level jobs.

Attitudes to training young people varied. All provided induction and/or job-specific training, at least four employers were involved in government funded training programmes, and some of the larger employers had standardised training policies. Around a third of employers expressed some notion of corporate social responsibility in their general attitudes to training. Only one employer knew of the statutory entitlement to level 2 training. Almost a quarter expressed positive views about the entitlement and proposed learning agreements, stressing the positive benefits to the young person and to the wider society. The majority, however, were more sceptical and concerned about the potential costs and disruption to their business.

Methodology

The study was designed to update the existing qualitative knowledge base on the attitudes and experiences of young people in JWT who are without (or training towards) a level 2 (or higher) qualification, and their employers. The study consisted of face to face, in depth interviews with a sample of 68 young people and 15 qualitative telephone interviews with a sample of employers. Eleven of the young people interviewed had qualifications at level 2; the remaining young people had qualifications at or below level 1.

The survey was undertaken in seven Connexions areas representing diverse labour markets. The composition of the sample was broadly representative of the national characteristics of young people in JWT. Nearly one in five worked in construction and a further 7% in manufacturing. Most were employed in the service sector with just over 30% in wholesale and retail jobs and 10% in hotels and restaurants. Just over half the young people were men, nearly two thirds were aged 17, one in four lived in rural areas, and 3% were from minority ethnic backgrounds.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report contains findings from qualitative research with young people in JWT and their employers to inform the development of the Learning Agreement pilot. The research was carried out by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (*Inclusion*) on behalf of the Department of Education and Skills (DfES).
- 2.2 This chapter sets out the background to the research and the research aims and objectives, provides a summary of the research methodology and concludes by setting out the structure of the remainder of the report.

Background

- 2.3 The Government has stated a commitment to ensuring that as many young people as possible are engaged in education or training and achieve a level 2 qualification¹. The 2004 review of financial support for 16-19s² highlighted the need to look at further ways to encourage employers to support time off for training for young people. Following the review report, the Chancellor announced in his 2005 Budget the introduction of two pilot initiatives to help achieve their commitment:
- £60 million to pilot Activity Agreements and Allowances for 16-17 year old young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), to support and encourage them back into learning;
 - £80 million to pilot a learning agreement for 16-17 year olds in jobs with no training, to increase learning options for this group.
- 2.4 The Learning Agreement pilot will be introduced in April 2006. It has two aims. First, it will test the effectiveness of brokerage and learning agreements, with 16 and 17 year olds in JWT, as a tool for re-engaging them in accredited learning to level 2 or level 3. Second, it will test the effectiveness of financial incentives (through bonus payments to young people and employers and employer wage compensation) as a means of encouraging the JWT group and their employers to take up this offer.
- 2.5 Connexions Personal Advisers will negotiate learning agreements after undertaking a learning needs assessment with a young person. The Personal Advisers will also monitor progress in relation to the learning agreement and will use the Connexions Customer Information System (CCIS) to maintain a record of agreement content and progress in relation to it. It is anticipated that even where the learning is of no direct relevance, the employer will need to be engaged in the

¹ Equivalent to 5 A*-Cs at GCSE

² Supporting young people to achieve: towards a new deal for skills, March 2004

process. The Learning Agreement pilot will complement the existing legal entitlement to time off for study or training for young people which was introduced on 1st September 1999. It gives employees aged 16 or 17 an entitlement to reasonable time off from work to achieve a qualification at level 2 or equivalent unless they have already reached that standard of achievement.

2.6 This research was commissioned to inform the development of the Learning Agreement pilot and to update and build on research carried out in 1998³ on young people in JWT. This study had investigated the characteristics, circumstances, attitudes and employment details of 197 16 and 17 years olds in such jobs, finding that:

- Most of the young people were employed in un- or low skilled full-time permanent jobs, working 35 hours a week over 5 days. Their experience of job-related training was usually limited to induction training and/or demonstration of the tasks involved.
- Most were not against training and recognised its value. Half the sample agreed that they would like a different job but that they needed more qualifications to get it.

Research objectives

2.7 The primary purpose of this research was to address gaps and to update the knowledge base on young people in JWT and on their employers. Specific research objectives included:

- To provide a thorough and contemporary understanding of the characteristics, history, experiences, attitudes, barriers, perceptions and ambitions of young people aged 16-17 years who are both in a job without training and are without (or training towards) a level 2 (or higher) qualification;
- To provide a thorough understanding of the characteristics, experiences, attitudes and perceptions of their employers focusing in particular on attitudes to training and employment of this age group;
- To inform the policy implementation of the Learning Agreement pilot by drawing on an enhanced understanding of the client group and their employers generated by this research.

2.8 A secondary objective of the research was to use the field experience of contacting the sample of young people to inform DfES' assessment of the accuracy, completeness and currency of CCIS.

³ IFF Research Ltd, Young People in Jobs Without Training, August 1998 Research Report No 75

Sample design and recruitment

2.9 The research consisted of face to face, depth interviews with a sample of 68 young people in JWT and 15 qualitative telephone interviews with a sample of employers.

Young people

2.10 At an early stage in the research a definition of young people in JWT was agreed to inform recruitment of the sample. This definition ensured that the young people interviewed:

- were 16 or 17 at the time of interview;
- were employed more than 16 hours a week in a permanent or temporary job;
- were not engaged in any form of training in or out of work which led to nationally recognised qualifications at or above level 2;
- had qualifications below level 2.

2.11 The key study group were those young people who were covered by the statutory entitlement to 'Time off for Study or Training' although it was agreed that the sample should include a small number of young people with qualifications at level 2. It has been estimated that over 50% of the JWT group already have qualifications of at least level 2.

2.12 Areas where interviews were to be conducted were agreed at an early stage of the research. They were selected to represent the spread of geographical areas where there were large numbers of young people in JWT as well as to include a number of the Learning Agreement pilot areas.

2.13 The sample of young people was recruited using contact details provided by Connexions on individuals known to be in JWT. In some areas Connexions had written to young people prior to sharing contact details informing them of the research and offering them the opportunity to opt out.

2.14 Purposive sampling was used to recruit young people for interview. A short screening questionnaire was used which helped to ensure that the sample recruited met the agreed eligibility criteria. They were also selected to ensure that they had the range of characteristics found among young people in JWT nationally (specifically in relation to age, gender, ethnicity and the sector of their current job).

2.15 Interviews were carried out with the young people between November 2005 and January 2006. The young people were paid a £15 cash incentive for taking part

in the interview. Tables 1 and 2 provide a detailed breakdown of the characteristics of the sample.

Table 1: Characteristics of the sample of young people

		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	31	46
	Male	37	54
Age	16	24	35
	17	44	65
Ethnicity	Ethnic minority	2	3
	White British	66	97
Area	Rural	17	25
	Urban	51	75

Table 2: Employment sectors the young people were working in

Sector	Frequency	Percentage
Wholesale and retail trade	21	31
Real estate, renting and business activities	11	16
Construction	12	18
Hotels and restaurants	7	10
Manufacturing	5	7
Health and social work	5	7
Other community, social and personal service activities	5	7
Transport, storage and communication	1	2
Education	1	2

2.16 The gender, age and sectoral breakdown of the sample was broadly representative of the national picture of young people in JWT, indicated in a DfES analysis of the Labour Force Survey data carried out to inform the Learning Agreement pilot. The small number of ethnic minority young people was a consequence of both the areas selected for fieldwork and the small number of young people from an ethnic minority group included in contact information provided by Connexions.

2.17 Table 3 gives a breakdown of interviews by fieldwork area. The number of interviews conducted in each area reflected the number of contacts received from Connexions in each area (outlined in more detail below).

Table 3: Geographical composition of sample of young people

Areas	Number of Interviews
Leicestershire	9
Devon & Cornwall	12
Coventry & Warwickshire	9
Tees Valley	10
Essex, Southend and Thurrock	9
Central London	6
Surrey	13
Total	68

2.18 It is important at this stage to highlight the difficulties encountered in establishing initial contact with young people and in setting up interviews. Table 4 illustrates the problems experienced. Nearly one in five of the sample, and almost a third of those contacted, were actually ineligible. Contact details were inaccurate or unavailable for 14% of the sample. Contact was actually made with only half of the sample and interviews were completed with just 11% of the original sample. This experience suggests that improvements in data accuracy will be an important factor in implementing the Learning Agreement pilot.

Table 4: Breakdown of contact information

	Frequency	Percentage
Contact made	328	51
Interview completed	68	11
Interview arranged but failed to show	21	3
Not interested	70	11
Ineligible	109	17
Couldn't find time/location	51	8
No contact made	319	49
No contact (averaged 2 calls)	229	35
Unobtainable/wrong number	68	11
No number provided	22	3
Attempted contact	647	

Employers

2.19 It was initially agreed that interviews would be conducted with employers of the young people interviewed for the research. Written consent to contact employers was sought from each young person at the close of their interview and employers were only contacted where consent was given.

- 2.20 Employer details provided by the young people were boosted with contact details of employers for young people who had not turned up for an agreed interview.
- 2.21 Interviews with employers were conducted in January and February 2006. Of the 15 interviews conducted, 13 were with employers of the young people interviewed and two were with employers of young people who had not shown up for interview.
- 2.22 As far as possible employers were selected to represent the sector, size and location of employers of the young people interviewed. Table 5 provides a sectoral breakdown of the employers interviewed.

Table 5: Employer sample by area, size and sector

	Frequency	Percentage
Area		
Coventry and Warwickshire	4	27
Devon and Cornwall	3	20
Tees Valley	1	7
London	3	20
Surrey	4	27
Size		
1-50	5	33
50-199	2	13
200+	8	53
Sector		
Wholesale and retail	6	40
Real estate, renting and business activities	2	13
Community, social and personal service activities	2	13
Construction	2	13
Education	1	7
Manufacturing	1	7
Hotels and restaurants	1	7

Connexions staff

- 2.23 Telephone interviews were also conducted in January 2006 with a member of Connexions staff in each of the Partnership fieldwork areas who was responsible for collecting and maintaining data on young people. These interviews were to inform the sub-objective of the research on implications of the Learning Agreement pilot for CCIS and data management.

Data collection and analysis

- 2.24 Topic guides (attached as annexes) were developed for the interviews with young people, employers and Connexions staff based on the research objectives and research questions. Interviews were conducted with young people at a time and location convenient to them with most undertaken at their home or at a local Connexions office. A small number of interviews were conducted with young people at their workplace.
- 2.25 All interviews with young people, employers and Connexions staff were taped, fully transcribed and coded using a qualitative analysis software package. A number of important themes were identified and used as codes for analysing the transcriptions.

The research report

- 2.26 The initial sections of this report present findings from the interviews with young people setting out: their experiences of school; reasons, motivations and influences on their choices on leaving school; details, views and experiences of their current employment; their experiences of, views on and future plans for education and training.
- 2.27 The following section then sets out findings from the interviews with employers including: their views on and experiences of employing and training young people aged 16-17 and their general policies on training; their experience of and views on government supported training and business support services; and concludes with their views of the level 2 entitlement and proposals for the Learning Agreement pilot.
- 2.28 The report then presents findings from the interviews with Connexions staff. This section covers their general views on the Learning Agreement pilot as well as the implications of the pilot for data collection and data management.
- 2.29 The report concludes with a number of key lessons which can inform the development and delivery of the Learning Agreement pilot.

3 EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL

3.1 This chapter describes the young people's experience of school. It includes their general experiences and views on school, a description of their attendance and their views on the qualifications they received. It goes on to describe what work the young people did when they were at school as well as the career ambitions they had.

Views on school

3.2 Most of the young people interviewed thought they had a relatively 'normal' school experience. They had mixed views on how much they liked or disliked school, the subjects they studied, and their teachers, but few could be described as 'motivated' learners. For some it was the social aspects of being at school that had been most worthwhile:

'I liked it. I wasn't the best behaved pupil. I wasn't the worst either. I came out with not very good qualifications in my GCSEs but I passed them.'

'I didn't like school, couldn't be bothered at the time'

'If I didn't go to school I'd have hardly any friends. That's part of the reason I got up in the morning to go to school, every friend was there.'

3.3 A significant minority of the young people, however, described particularly negative school experiences. Of these:

- some simply stated that they had 'hated' school;
- some had found it difficult to concentrate and were disruptive;
- some young people reported being bullied;
- some were very critical of the schools they had attended and/or the quality of the teaching;
- some found the academic side of school particularly difficult.

3.4 When asked what motivated them to learn at school, the most common response was a specific teacher or teachers as well as the quality of the lessons. Around five young people suggested that qualifications and/or employment prospects had motivated them to learn at school.

'We had different teachers for different subjects and I worked harder in some than others...I was motivated more if I liked the teacher.'

Attendance and offending history

- 3.5 Almost half of the young people reported having unauthorised absences at school. Most described these as regular, for example they would skip between a few lessons and a few days each week. Others described their absences as occasional; a few days during a term or academic year.
- 3.6 Almost a quarter of the young people had had fixed term or permanent exclusions from school. Single fixed-term exclusions were more common than permanent exclusions and a few young people had been suspended several times during their time at school.
- 3.7 Almost a quarter of the young people reported getting in trouble with the police in the past. Most had only received a caution and a small number reported having a criminal record.

Views on their qualifications

- 3.8 Young people reported having the following qualifications:
- Almost three quarters (50) of young people reported having GCSEs equivalent to level 1 (Ds and Es)
 - Seven young people reported having no qualifications
 - 11 young people reported having GCSEs equivalent to level 2 (A*-Cs)
- 3.9 Around half of the young people expressed disappointment about their GCSE results and regretted not working harder at school. Some felt that they had the potential to get better grades but had lacked motivation.
- 3.10 Nevertheless most of the young people said that they were happy with the grades they got under the circumstances and had not expected to get higher grades. They put this down to not studying enough, problems with the school or personal circumstances:
- 'I was pleased with what I got compared to the school that I was in.'*
- 'I was pleased. I did better than I thought I did. I didn't attend two exams; I wasn't in the right frame of mind for exams when I was doing them. I'm glad I passed two. I knew I didn't achieve what I could have'*
- 3.11 Many of the young people had found that their low qualifications had limited subsequent education and/or employment options and were considering the implications of this for their future:
- 'I originally wanted to join the Underground which I needed Cs for. I didn't get the Cs so I couldn't join and that's when I thought I need qualifications.'*

- 3.12 A small number of young people felt that their qualifications had no impact on their ability to get jobs and appeared to have no regrets about their lack of qualifications:

'They say you can't get a job without them. You can. I've had 5 jobs since I left school and it's never bothered me about having GCSEs'

- 3.13 Some of the young people suggested that the value of qualifications was dependent on what job or training you wanted to go into. They highlighted the fact that they had found their job easily without qualifications. Similarly a small number of young people felt that, in the sector they wanted to work, experience was more important than qualifications.

Work while at school

- 3.14 Some young people (27) reported having undertaken formal work experience while at school. Very few of these reported that the experience had led to a desire to work in that job or sector.

- 3.15 A significant proportion (45) of the young people had part-time jobs when they were at school. Most had started these in the last year or two of school, with a minority starting them at an earlier age. The most common jobs reported were paper rounds, shop work, trades and catering. Many had found these jobs through relatives and family friends and/or worked for their relatives' or family friend's company.

- 3.16 For most young people money was the main reason they worked while at school. Some explained that the money they earned allowed them to participate in social or leisure activities and provided them with independence from their parents.

- 3.17 A minority of young people felt that the work they had done while at school had had an impact on their career decisions on leaving school. For some it had allowed them to rule out possible careers and for others it had led to their current job when they left school. Some felt that it was simply the experience of working that had been important.

Career ambitions at school

- 3.18 Most of the young people suggested that they had an idea of the career they wanted to move into while at school. Many of these had considered several different career options. The most common reasons for wanting to follow certain careers were that they thought they would enjoy them and that they would pay well.

3.19 Most young people had not followed these ambitions on leaving school. The most common reasons for not pursuing these were:

- the prospect of having to study or gain further qualifications;
- their current or previous jobs had lead them into a different career;
- work experience in or research on the career had made them rethink;
- they had found it was too hard to get into because they had been rejected from jobs or college places.

3.20 Some of the young people identified more specific barriers that prevented them from following their initial career ambitions. One young person, for example, had not been able to join the Army because of epilepsy and another young person was not tall enough to become an air stewardess.

3.21 Only a small number of young people felt that they were following a career ambition they had at school in their current employment. Generally these young people had wanted to go into retail, childcare or a trade such as plumbing.

5 MOVING ON FROM SCHOOL

- 5.1 This section of the report describes the various employment or education and training routes which the young people followed on leaving school. It sets out the reasons they gave for choosing or not choosing particular routes as well as the influences that Connexions, family, friends and money had on their decisions. It concludes with a description of any periods 'not in employment, education or training' (NEET) which they had experienced.
- 5.2 The young people interviewed had moved into the following destinations on leaving school:
- Almost three quarters (48) had moved into a job without training. Almost a third of young people (21) had had more than one job since leaving school;
 - One in five (14) young people had stayed on at sixth form or started a full time college course;
 - Three young people had started an Entry to Employment course;
 - Three young people had started an apprenticeship.

Further education or training

- 5.3 As described above, almost a third of the young people had participated in some form of education or training since leaving school. At least half of these young people reported not completing their courses or apprenticeships. For many of these young people they had moved into education or training as a default option and the course had not met their expectations:

'I thought I'd stay on at school, so got in and I'd done it (GNVQ) all before in GCSE and I didn't really like it that much...I didn't make my decision as early as most people did. So I thought I should just go and do something. I did the first thing that popped into my head.'

- 5.4 Young people did not continue in full-time education or training on leaving school for a variety of reasons. The most common reason young people gave for not continuing was that they were disillusioned with school and/or education generally and had no desire to go on to further education. For a significant group school had been a negative or at least a difficult experience which they did not want to repeat and many saw sixth form or college as an extension of school:

'I didn't like school when I was there and was fed up with the whole education thing. I didn't want to learn I just wanted to get a job and get on with life.'

- 5.5 Many young people did not have the right grades to continue in education or training and did not want to resit their GCSEs.

- 5.6 The young people commonly linked their decision to move into work rather than continue in education with the rewards of earning money and/or feeling independent but they did not often describe this as the main reason. Often the decision was the result of a combination of factors:

'My English and Science weren't very good grades...I did think of resitting them but then I thought no, it was a waste of time when I could be going out and getting a job and earning money and liking something instead of sitting in a classroom and retaking them again.'

- 5.7 Some of the young people did have plans to continue in education or training after their GCSEs but had applied too late for college. These young people had then decided to move into work instead. A small number of young people had plans to pursue an age restricted option such as joining the Army or a specific apprenticeship and were working in the meantime. One young person, with a handicap of three in golf, had not continued in education or training because he was pursuing a career as a professional golfer.

Apprenticeships

- 5.8 Almost all of the young people were aware of apprenticeships and almost a third had considered apprenticeships as an option on or since leaving school. Despite this only a small number actually reported having applied for an apprenticeship.

- 5.9 The most common reason young people did not consider or take up an apprenticeship was because they did not think there were apprenticeships available in the local area or in their chosen career. There was a perception among many young people that apprenticeships were only available for trades and hairdressing:

'I did look into apprenticeships but there was nothing that I was interested in doing. It was bricklaying, electronics, at colleges, there was nothing that really interested me.'

WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE LIKED TO HAVE SEEN IN THERE?

'Something to do with nursing.'

- 5.10 Another reason often given by the young people for not considering an apprenticeship was their perception that they did not pay enough. They preferred to be earning more money in a full-time job.

'She got the minimum wage and when I went to the agencies I was getting a lot more money than her so I decided its better to go into an agency to get permanent work like that. I'm on a lot more money than she is now.' (talking about friend who is doing an apprenticeship)

'it seems like something you'd not be getting paid for because they're doing you a favour by giving you experience or be getting paid very little for. I'd rather do a job I don't like at all that much and be earning a decent wage.'

5.11 Where young people had looked into doing an apprenticeship they gave a number of reasons why they hadn't taken them up. These included:

- not having the necessary qualifications;
- not being able to find an employer or a place on a college course;
- strong competition for apprenticeships;
- the college based element had put them off;
- they did not have enough information to follow it through.

5.12 Despite their reservations many of the young people recognised the value of apprenticeships and felt that it could be an attractive option for working and learning.

Advice and influence

5.13 Young people described a number of different influences on their decision to move into work, education or training on completing their GCSEs. This section considers the influence of and views on the formal advice they received through Connexions and the influence of the advice they received from friends and family. It also considers the significance of other influences such as money.

Connexions

5.14 Almost all the young people had received advice and guidance from Connexions at some point either at school or after they had left school. The amount of contact that young people reported with Connexions varied considerably and very few of them suggested that Connexions had a significant impact on their decisions on leaving school.

5.15 Almost all of the young people were aware of the support and advice which Connexions offered. Almost a half of them indicated that they had either accessed support from Connexions about work or training since leaving school or that they would go to the service to seek advice if they needed it.

5.16 Views on the quality of advice and guidance received from Connexions were mixed and many of the young people who had used the service did not express a strong positive or negative view on the quality of the advice they had received.

5.17 Where young people were particularly positive about the advice and guidance they had received from Connexions they described a proactive service that helped them make decisions:

'if you tell him something he'll go through it all the way with you. He won't just say here's an application, go fill it out. He'll say do this and do that and keep on ringing them up.'

- 5.18 Young people that had had particularly negative experiences of Connexions commonly complained of too much information and not enough direction:

'it was more like there's the book go and find it yourself, there was no advice there and at the age you are, I don't think you can decide what you want to do without advice.'

'I did try them but they threw a load of lists at me and said get on with it.'

- 5.19 Some of the young people stressed that they had not been influenced by the formal advice and guidance they were offered at school, and after leaving, mainly because they had made a conscious decision to go into work and were not interested in participating in education or training.

Friends and family

- 5.20 Most of the young people said they valued their parents' advice and many reported that this was their 'first port of call' for accessing advice about work, education and/or training. Some of the parents strongly supported education and training and in some cases were putting pressure on the young person to go back to college or they had helped them to apply for courses or apprenticeships:

'Family would probably give me a lot of oomph. My mum wants me to become a plumber and get something in life, get a trade. She doesn't want me to be working with my Dad as a labourer.'

- 5.21 Many suggested that their parents had been supportive about their choice to move into work and that their parents had left them to make their own decisions. In a few cases parents had actively encouraged young people to move into work rather than go into education or training:

'I asked my Dad because I wanted to go back to college and re-sit them, because I was so gutted with them and my Dad said 'well, why bother?' Because they're not going to get you anywhere, you don't need GCSEs for anything.'

- 5.22 Friends did not tend to be a strong influence on the young person's decision to move into work. Some young people explained that their friends had stayed in education or training and that this had not persuaded them to stay on themselves.

- 5.23 Friends and family were most influential for young people where they had provided them with a personal recommendation of work or education/training. As

explained above, many worked with or for family members and family networks often helped them secure employment.

Money

- 5.24 For many young people money was not the most important factor driving their decision to move into work rather than stay on in education or training. Although the opportunity to earn money had been one of the reasons for moving into work, they stressed that they could survive on a full-time education course and many would consider going back to full-time education:

'I wanted some money for myself, that wasn't the reason I didn't go to college. I wanted to work and not go to college.'

- 5.25 Few of the young people believed that they could never give up earning a wage or take a cut in salary to go back to education or training. Where this was the case it was often where young people needed to work because they wanted to move out of the family home or where they would not be supported by their parents while in education:

'HOW MUCH IS MONEY AN ISSUE THAT WOULD STOP YOU TAKING UP TRAINING?'

'Huge, my parents need a regular income from me and I need to move out.'

- 5.26 Some of the young people stressed that although money had been an important factor at the time they decided to move into work they now realised that there was a 'trade off' to be made between earning a relatively good wage immediately and getting qualifications to get a better job in the longer term:

'Money is a big thing but so is training. It's alright to have a lot of money every week but its even better to have something you can fall back on, have that qualification. It's never worked out that way.'

- 5.27 Young people were aware of financial incentives to stay in full-time education and training such as the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and training allowances although they did not think that this would be enough to persuade them to go back into education or training. A significant proportion of young people did not think they would be eligible for EMA.

NEET

- 5.28 At least a quarter of the young people (17) had experienced extended periods of NEET, ranging from one month to one year. These periods of NEET were most common during the summer after leaving school although some young people had experienced periods of NEET between jobs. For most of these young people the time was spent looking for work although some said they were not looking for

work during these periods. Some young people were supported financially by their parents during these periods of NEET.

6 CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES AND EMPLOYMENT

6.29 This section initially describes the household circumstances of the young people. It then identifies the types of jobs the young people were working in at the time of interview and their pay levels. It reports the young peoples' views about how and why they obtained their jobs including their views on any in-work training they had received. It concludes with a summary of their future work plans.

Domestic circumstances

6.30 All but five of the young people were living with their parents. The remaining five were living with partners or friends.

6.31 Almost all of the young people reported that their parents were working. The parents were employed in a wide range of jobs with many in occupations not requiring a high level of skill, such as, elementary, customer service and routine clerical occupations. Around half of the young people interviewed believed that their parents had qualifications at level 2 or above. The other young people did not know what qualifications their parents had.

6.32 Most young people were paying rent averaging £20-25 a week, although some paid significantly more than this.

Description of current employment

6.33 The young people were employed in a variety of jobs, most of which required few qualifications or little training and could best be described as routine.

6.34 Most of those interviewed were working full-time. Working patterns varied significantly, from one young person who was employed for sixteen hours per week to another young person reporting they worked 50 hours per week. Across the sample the average number of hours worked per week was 28.

6.35 Most young people described their current job as permanent. A small number were on short-term contracts (in most cases these were seasonal retail jobs).

6.36 Despite describing their work as permanent young people often viewed their jobs as a stopgap before they moved on to a 'better' job, or into education or training:

'I just needed a job and anything that came along I took it'

Pay

- 6.37 Young people earned on average £4.67 an hour. This ranged from those who were receiving just the minimum wage (£3.00 an hour) to one young person who earned £7.00 per hour.
- 6.38 The average monthly salary after tax among the young people was £616. This ranged from £161 to £1,182 per month for someone working as an architect's assistant.
- 6.39 Although most young people were pleased to be earning what they described as a good wage they did not describe the amount of money as being the most important motivating factor for working in their current job. Other motivating factors for working in their current job included finding the job interesting, enjoying the work atmosphere and having friendly colleagues. There was little suggestion from the young people of hardship, albeit the wage was important to their independence.
- 6.40 Many of the young people reported a lifestyle that was now dependent on the money they earned. Almost all paid rent or board and most paid for their own clothes, transport and entertainment, along with food when they were at work and away from home. Many young people felt it would be difficult to give up their salary and the lifestyle it provided them with.

'I have to pay rent and I would have to be paid enough money to pay the rent. I've got a car so I'd need petrol and some money for myself.'

Reasons for securing employment

- 6.41 When asked about their current jobs, young people often identified their parents (especially mothers) or other family members as being instrumental in at least getting them the interview and in some cases securing the job itself. Some young people worked in family businesses, and had secured work through family contacts. In a few cases friends had made them aware of job opportunities with their employer.
- 6.42 The most frequent reason given by young people for being in their current job was the payment they received and the lifestyle it facilitated. A small number of the young people reported that they were in the job because it afforded them good prospects for advancement and promotion. Some young people mentioned the location and hours of the job as being attractive.
- 6.43 Some of the young people reported that their options were limited at the time they secured the job and explained that it was the only job on offer to them.

6.44 Some explained that they had taken the job while they were waiting to pursue an age restricted career or training option such as joining the Army. A few explained that they were simply trying out jobs to see what they liked.

Travel

6.45 The young people had relatively easy journeys to work. They either lived within a short walk, cycle or journey by public transport or were driven to work by family or colleagues. Most of those interviewed spent no more than ten minutes travelling to work, with few spending more than 30 minutes. When asked, some said they would travel further to work but were not enthusiastic about this and felt that the extra cost would be an issue.

6.46 Few of the young people had looked for work beyond their immediate or local area. Some of those who lived in reasonably large towns expressed reluctance to look for work in the centre of these towns.

Training received in work

6.47 Almost all of the young people had received induction and basic health and safety training in their current job. They had also received specific for-the-job training. This commonly lasted one or two days or was ongoing, where they were being taught new knowledge and skills as the need arose. In the case of those working in retail for example, they often learned to operate the till and cash-up at the end of the day, and how to process credit and debit card transactions. Many also had training to improve their product knowledge and how to unpack, prepare, display and care for stock.

6.48 Some other specific examples of for-the-job training included:

- shoe-shop workers learning to measure children's feet;
- a leisure centre worker who completed a child protection course;
- machine operators trained to operate their machine;
- construction workers learning to use power tools;
- clerical workers learning to create invoices,
- restaurant and catering workers learning basic cooking;
- a call-centre worker having three days of simulation training before starting in the actual job .

6.49 Several young people reported having extensive training, which some had received as part of apprenticeship programmes, which they had since stopped.

6.50 By contrast, more of the young people described receiving very little training. They learned 'on the job' which consisted of figuring things out for themselves

with occasional help from supervisors and workmates. Some described the training they had received as disjointed, incomplete or of poor quality. One young person described being promised two weeks of shadowing with a senior member of staff, only to have that person moved to a new task after two days and no alternative training put in place.

- 6.51 Young people often expressed dissatisfaction with the limited amount of training they had received. Very few, however, expressed concerns that this had affected their ability to do their job and their descriptions of the training suggested that it was essentially fit for purpose.

Future work plans

- 6.52 The level of interest they had in their job featured regularly in young people's views on their future work plans. Most viewed their job as a mere stopgap, until something better came along, but few had definite intentions to move jobs in the near future. This was often related to the fact that they found their work interesting or were happy with the money they earned:

'[Over] The next few months I'd like to continue doing the job I'm doing at the moment and then a few years down the line I'd like to get into a job which has prospects of promotion and more money and things like that. I'm happy doing not much at the moment but in the future I would like to advance.'

- 6.53 The few who indicated some plans talked of staying in their current job for less than a year, possibly moving to an apprenticeship or course in the following spring or the following September. One remarked:

'I wanted to do engineering and I was always looking for engineering jobs...I'm not disappointed. I'm still looking for the engineering. When I was in this job I had an interview for an engineering job as well.'

- 6.54 Others talked (sometimes vaguely) of wanting to move to a different job with better pay:

'I've heard they have good pay, earning a living and I wouldn't always need my mum and dad for support, money wise.'

- 6.55 A few talked of increasing the hours they worked or moving from part-time to full-time employment, either with their current employer or a different employer. One commented:

'I just want to get a full-time job somewhere, not just three days, because that doesn't bring in much money.'

- 6.56 When discussing why they might eventually leave their current job few of the young people talked of being attracted to alternatives. Instead most of those

interviewed said that after a time they would likely become tired of or 'bored' with their current work and they would then leave and/or look for something else once this happened:

'I'm not staying in the job. It's not because I don't like it, but because I want to do something else. I'll stay there for as long, until, not until I get bored, but until I feel like my time, I've had enough, feel like finding something else.'

6.57 By contrast a small number of the young people indicated they would definitely stay in their job and hoped to progress with their current employer. These young people often expressed positive views about the training and progression opportunities available through their employer. When asked if they would stay with their employer one commented:

'Yes if I'm learning stuff. If I do stock control I think I'm learning something more than working in a hardware store and doing tills.'

7 VIEWS ON TRAINING AND PLANS TO TRAIN IN THE FUTURE

7.1 This section describes young people's general views on training and on the level 2 entitlement. It considers their future plans for undertaking education or training in the future and reports their views of the barriers they anticipated in undertaking such education or training. It concludes with the young people's views on what would encourage them to take up education or training and where they would seek advice.

Views on training

7.2 Many of the young people expressed a positive view of training and recognised its importance for making progress in employment. Most felt that the training they had received in their current job was adequate to enable them to perform their job well and safely.

7.3 In terms of the future, some of the young people believed that they had received enough training in their current job to get by and did not see any benefit to undertaking more training related to it. This was often because they did not plan to stay in the job and had their sights set on something else:

'I could become a quality control manager or supervisor but I'm not interested. I want to do plumbing.'

'If it was what I wanted to get into like construction. If it was any building job and there was training involved as well and I could earn qualifications I'd do that straight away if I could get into it.'

7.4 Some young people recognised that a lack of training would have an impact on their ability to get other jobs and on their longer term economic prospects:

'I don't want a dead end job where you're working 9-5, five days a week. Living in a council house and not having enough money. I want to train and have the money to buy my own house.'

'At the moment I don't need any training but when I go for my next job or if I need to go for another job, the lack of training might become a problem.'

7.5 Several young people recognised the importance of getting the training they had received accredited so it would help them progress in their career:

'It will help me get a job when I leave here.'

'WHAT'S THE MAIN PURPOSE OF DOING AN NVQ?'

To get certificates saying I've got it, it's not to learn anything. There's not much more to learn...

IT'S SO YOU CAN SET UP IN BUSINESS ON YOUR OWN?

Yes.'

- 7.6 A minority of the young people reported that they would not be interested in undertaking more formalised or accredited training. This was because they did not like the idea of having to attend college and/or felt they were better off gaining experience on the job:

'I personally think experience in a job will sometimes be better than a qualification. You could be fresh out of university with some sort of qualification but someone who hasn't got the qualification and experience of that job will always get the job over the person who hasn't worked before.'

Views on level 2 entitlement

- 7.7 Most of the young people, who were eligible, were not aware that they had an entitlement to reasonable paid time off work to undertake training to level 2 or equivalent. Most of those eligible considered it was a good idea and expressed some interest in taking up the entitlement. Some of the young people indicated that they would like to take up training which was related to their future plans and unrelated to the job they were in.

- 7.8 The young people's views were mixed on how their employers might react to learning of a level 2 entitlement. More young people than not thought their employer would be resistant to the idea and that the only way they would be able to convince them to have time off would be if the training was related to the job:

'I don't think anyone in that company would be happy to send me off for a day to college...if it was beneficial to my work then they'd be fairly lenient.'

'They'd probably be a bit annoyed because they're paying me and I'm not there and they need me...they can't really employ someone else when I'm somewhere else because they're still paying for me.'

Future training plans

- 7.9 Almost two thirds of the young people stressed that they intended to return to education or training in the future. A small number of young people felt that they had ruled out doing education or training at any point in the future.

- 7.10 Of the young people who reported an intention to return to education or training, few had any definite plans in place. Some, however, had a clear idea of where they wanted to be in the next year or so and had planned out the steps they needed to take to get there:

'The next few months on the Entry to Employment course and getting an apprenticeship, starting it after the New Year and in a few months what money I get I'll start saving so when I finish the apprenticeship I can start my own company and build on that.'

- 7.11 Most of the young people, however, had less definite plans although they had not ruled out the prospect of education or training in the future:

'I haven't definitely decided I'm going to go back to college so although I've thought about it a little bit, I haven't sat down and thought about it properly'

- 7.12 Some of those interviewed were planning to start a course the following year and were unsure what would happen if they were unable to get a place:

'I tried for an apprenticeship but it didn't go through. I don't know what happened so I thought I'd work here until January and hopefully start a mid term course with plumbing or something.'

HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR THE COURSE?

No I got lazy...I think it's too late to get on the course. I'll try next term.'

'Around about February sorting out colleges if I'm not in an alright job. And then this time next year I will hopefully be in college.'

Barriers to future education or training

- 7.13 Most of the young people who were interested did not anticipate any significant barriers to taking up education or training in the future. Those who did face barriers most commonly pointed to issues around travel, employer attitudes and access to information.

Travel

- 7.14 Around one in six young people reported that travel might represent a barrier pointing specifically to the time it took to reach a college or training provider or to the travel costs they might experience. Several of these young people lived in more rural or remote areas:

'I think travel could affect my decision. If I had to go a long way to get there I think I wouldn't do it then.'

Employer attitudes

- 7.15 Most of the young people who were asked reported that they did not think their employer's attitude would be a significant barrier to them taking up education or training. Some reported, however, that they would not themselves want to ask their employer about education or training. Others suggested they might be constrained because of their employer's schedule or staffing levels.

'I like the job I'm in at the moment. I get along very well with my employer and I don't think I'd be willing to jeopardise my job or my relationship with my boss for extra training or a few days off a week.'

Information

- 7.16 Few young people interviewed felt that inaccessibility of or lack of information was a significant barrier to taking up education or training in the future. Most reported feeling confident about knowing where and how to access relevant advice and information. Some even stressed that it was their responsibility to go and find the information:

'If I wanted advice they're here to tell me ... As teenagers we've got to get off our lazy bums to do something and not wait for it to fall on our lap.'

- 7.17 Some young people, especially those who had investigated returning to education, had doubts about the clarity of the information available, particularly around course entry requirements:

'They don't give you enough information, if you go for an interview to do a course they just tell you about the course and not about what you need to do the course. It's too complicated.'

Money

- 7.18 The young peoples' views were mixed on whether money was a barrier to participating in future education or training. Many felt they would be able to survive financially if they took up further education or training and were guaranteed some kind of training allowance but some felt they would need to combine this with a part-time job:

'It would be a bit of a problem, I pay rent, well board and I'm a smoker, so I can live off £60 a week, but not really anything less, so if I was doing training I'd have to get another job as well.'

- 7.19 A significant minority of young people stressed that they would not be willing to give up their wage for training:

'I'd never go back I like earning money'

Views on training

- 7.20 Some young people felt that their negative attitude to training was a barrier to taking up education or training in the future and did not want to return to a school or college environment.

'WHAT IS STOPPING YOU GOING BACK INTO EDUCATION?'
'Working ... I don't want to go back into education'

What would encourage young people to train

7.21 Many of those interviewed felt that if they were to train in the future, work based training would be the most attractive option. Some said they would be interested in apprenticeships and would be willing to spend at least a day a week at college.

7.22 The value of work based training was stressed by some of those interviewed because they regarded practical experience as very important:

'I think you get more experience of what the job is like rather than just training for the qualifications you need.'

7.23 A significant minority stressed they would only undertake training in a subject in which they were particularly interested:

'As long as it was a course I was really keen on, I wouldn't have a problem doing it.'

7.24 Some of these young people had specific ideas of what it was that would interest them enough to go back to further education or training

'If I could have got on a construction course one day a week. I'd probably think about going back then'

Who would they seek advice from about future education or training

7.25 When asked where they would go to for advice about moving into education or training most young people indicated Connexions. Some said they would use the internet or contact their local college and some indicated they would seek advice from family or friends.

7.26 Several young people felt they would not know where to go for information or advice on education or training, but this was often accompanied by a general lack of interest in future training:

'No plans, never thought about it ... I wouldn't have the first clue where to go.'

8 VIEWS FROM EMPLOYERS

8.1 This section of the report presents the findings from the 15 telephone interviews undertaken with employers. It sets out their views on and experiences of employing and training young people aged 16-17 as well as their general policies on training. It describes their experience of and views on government supported training and business support services and concludes by outlining their views of the level 2 entitlement and proposals for the Learning Agreement pilot. Unless otherwise stated any references to young people in this section relate to 16 and 17 year old employees.

Employment of young people

8.2 The number of young people employed varied according to the size of the employer and ranged from a large retail company employing 30 young people in one branch, to a self-employed fitter employing one young person as their only employee.

8.3 Young people tended to be employed in junior positions. Because of the high proportion of employers in the retail sector most of the young people were working as sales assistants. Around a third of employers reported that the young people they employed earned substantially more than the minimum wage (£5 an hour or more).

8.4 Over a third of employers reported that all or most of the young people they employed worked part time, generally because they were also studying. Some employed young people as casual staff in school or college holidays.

8.5 Only one employer, in the telesales industry, targeted young people as part of their recruitment. However, a small number of employers offered work experience placements to school students and one saw this as an effective means of recruiting for permanent positions.

General policies on training

Induction training

8.6 All the employers offered some form of induction and/or 'for the job' training. Among large multi-branch businesses this tended to be a structured induction that was standard across branches. Among smaller businesses, induction was less formal, with employees normally learning 'on the job'.

- 8.7 The content of induction training depended on the nature of the business with customer service being a key component of induction training in the retail sector, and equipment training being a key component in the manufacturing sector.
- 8.8 None of the induction training provided by employers resulted in nationally recognised qualifications for employees. Induction training was almost always delivered internally, although one employer used a council run training course on food and hygiene.

Training policies

- 8.9 All of the large and most of the medium sized employers had a standard training policy. Requests for training that were not part of standard policy were referred to senior management or Human Resources. Small employers did not have official training policies and decisions about training were made as and when situations arose.

Additional employer funded training

- 8.10 Most of the employers provided some form of work related training over and above basic induction training. Many of them had used external training providers to deliver specialised training, such as IT and English language training. A small number of employers provided training which resulted in nationally recognised qualifications, such as fork-lift truck driving, food and hygiene and first aid training. Many employers offered management training specifically targeted at senior employees.
- 8.11 Almost a quarter of employers offered employees the opportunity to apply for funding for externally delivered training courses. These were all large or medium sized employers and all but one of the employers stipulated that this training had to be relevant to the job. One employer offered a training allowance for each member of staff.

Government funded training

- 8.12 A fifth of employers had offered Modern Apprenticeships. Two of these were in the retail sector offering apprenticeships in butchery and bakery, and one was a public sector employer offering apprenticeships in administration.
- 8.13 A fifth of employers offered other government supported training towards levels 1 and 2 for employees aged under 24. Two of these were in retail and one was a restaurant.

Attitudes towards employment of young people

Experience of working with young people

8.14 A significant minority of the employers stressed that it was difficult to generalise about working with young people as the maturity of this age group varied significantly from person to person. Their attitudes tended to be influenced by individual experiences of working with young people.

8.15 Some of the employers reported particular advantages of working with this age group, namely their energy and enthusiasm, and ability to learn quickly:

'If we fill a room full of lively, enthusiastic kids, there's a buzz in the room and everyone gets on together.'

'You're getting them while they're young, if they want development they're hungry for it and they're like sponges, that is such an immense benefit. When a young person says they want to be developed in your organisation to overlook that is a travesty.'

8.16 Most of the employers reported also that there were disadvantages associated with employing young people. Some felt that young people tended to be unprepared for work and as a result had a poor work ethic, lacked initiative, and were unreliable. Almost a quarter of employers reported predominantly negative experiences of working with young people and for some this had a negative impact on their willingness to employ young people in the future:

'They're badly prepared for work. I think there's a real issue that they're coming out to work when they haven't done it before... they go from school to being employed.'

'The real problem for us is we've employed that age group of people before and it's been problematic. They bring a whole set of issues that are not found with adults... They've let us down. There have been issues about their attendance or reliability.... I've had three or four of those since I've been here and they've all ended up having to go.'

General attitudes to employment of young people

8.17 Most of the employers interviewed regarded young people as short-term employees. Some employers, particularly small employers, attributed this to limited opportunity to progress within the organisation. The most common reason given, however, related to the fact that young people themselves were not interested in staying long-term. The employers explained that many young people were working part-time while studying. They tended to stay for the duration of their course to make 'pocket money', and then moved on elsewhere. Some employers reported that young people who worked full-time also tended to see

the job as a short-term means of making money, rather than as a long term career and some young people were not at an age where they had begun to think about any sort of long-term career:

‘Those who aren’t in education just want it for the money. I think they start to think about their careers when they reach about 19 or 20.... That’s when they start talking to me about development... Those in education see it as a means of making money before they go on to build their career’

‘You can get some really good calibre 16-18 year olds but predominantly they’re in it for the money and its very rare that you’ll get somebody of that age who desperately wants to strive to be a manager in this business or any other business.’

- 8.18 Some employers stressed the business benefits of retaining staff and believed it would be beneficial if more young people remained in the job long-term. They believed that staff retention minimised the requirement to re-train and considered training to be an investment that was wasted when an employee left. A few commented that the best managers were those who worked their way up from the bottom:

‘I came through the ranks. The best managers we have are those who have come through the ground roots of our job.’

Views of training young people

General attitude

- 8.19 The employers stressed that the training opportunities available to employees in their organisations were dependent on their position and role rather than their age. None of the employers offered specific training for young people, except those that offered government funded training where age restrictions applied. Most employers were not aware of the qualification levels of their young employees.

- 8.20 A significant minority of employers believed there was little point in funding specific training for young employees because they tended to only stay for a short amount of time:

‘They also only tend to stick around for a short period of time. To send someone on an external course where you’re having to fork out hundreds or thousands of pounds for someone that will only stick around for 5-6 months isn’t worth it.’

- 8.21 Some of the larger employers reported encouraging junior employees to progress to supervisory or management roles, but at the age of 16 and 17 few employees were likely to have the motivation to do this. In addition a number of employers

felt that employees were unlikely to start thinking about promotion until they were older:

'If they wanted to go onto the management training programme then there's an application form they have to complete... they go through a structured interview with myself, a team leader and a General Store Manager...but they probably would struggle to get through it if I'm honest. The biggest issue... is they're not prepared for it.'

Corporate social responsibility

8.22 Around a third of employers expressed some notion of corporate social responsibility in their general attitudes to training. Some felt that they had a responsibility to encourage employees to improve their skills even if this meant that they ended up progressing to a job elsewhere. A few felt this was important as it was beneficial for the economy as a whole:

'From a corporate citizen point of view I think organisations have a certain responsibility for improving the skills of the people that work for them. People won't work here for ever and they'll go elsewhere, similarly we'll receive people from other organisations who have done that so we benefit.'

8.23 Larger employers demonstrated a commitment to corporate social responsibility through official schemes, such as offering work experience placements for school children. Smaller employers demonstrated this through encouraging individual employees to improve their qualifications and skills in ways that were not necessarily related to the job, for example by allowing an employee to take driving lessons during paid work hours:

'I've had my life. I'm coming to the end of my working life. I wish to start some young person off on their life, they have a long way to go if there is anything I can do that will assist them for their future when I've finished, I'm happy to do it.'

Level 2 entitlement

Awareness of the entitlement

8.24 Only one employer knew of the entitlement and none of the employers had been approached by a young person about their entitlement to paid time off to study towards a level 2 qualification.

General attitudes towards the 2 entitlement

8.25 Almost a quarter of employers expressed predominantly positive views about the 2 entitlement. However, the majority of employers were concerned about the costs to the business and expressed predominantly negative attitudes.

- 8.26 There was no clear relationship between the sector or size of employers and their attitude to the level 2 entitlement. Those who expressed predominantly positive views included a self-employed fitter with just one employee, a large multi-branched retail business, and a large public sector employer.

Positive views of the entitlement

- 8.27 Employers who expressed positive views in relation to the level 2 entitlement tended to do so because of the benefits to the young person and wider society rather than because of any potential benefits to the business:

'Good for the staff... They get qualifications on paper... it will help them in the future... It shows commitment and effort which is probably the two main things I look for.'

'There are massive advantages for the young person which means there are massive advantages for the economy as a whole. For me that's probably the reason why I would support it.'

- 8.28 Only a small number of employers believed there were potential business benefits from the level 2 entitlement. Some felt that allowing young people to take up their entitlement might increase staff retention because employees would stay until their course was complete:

'if it keeps somebody like that in our business it would be worthwhile. It may keep them here for a couple more years while they were doing that course... One of the things we are concerned about is labour turnover... anything that helps to keep labour turnover to a minimum is a good thing.'

Attitude towards nationally recognised qualifications

- 8.29 Some of the employers acknowledged that in general it would be beneficial to their business if an employee was training towards nationally recognised qualifications in a relevant field, such as management. Others suggested that any sort of training would encourage personal development and that this would improve staff performance and motivation.

- 8.30 However, many of the employers did not believe that there was any business benefit from young people training towards nationally recognised qualifications. Some felt that there were no qualifications that would help employees do their job any better and that the best way for them to learn the relevant skills was by doing the job, rather than going to college. A few employers stressed that they had themselves got where they were without any qualifications and did not think they were therefore necessary.

'A degree in science is not going to help doing what we do... there is no formal qualification which is going to assist a great deal. From my perspective I'd be no better off if he spent three years studying to be an electrician.'

- 8.31 Several of the smaller employers said that there was no opportunity to progress in the business and therefore young employees would not have any opportunity to put any increased qualifications and skills to use:

'We couldn't send them on anything to make them any better... They wouldn't be able to get any further in this business... There's nothing where they could work their way up the ladder. If we were a bigger company... they could probably train to become a manager. Because we're such a small company, it's probably all hands-on.'

'The opportunities for somebody of that age in our business are very limited. We've only got two supervisory posts... You can see the benefit for the larger organisation in that if you had people training... they have the opportunity, if they show the right aptitude for the job, to go on through that organisation and spend a career there.'

Attitude towards training unrelated to the job

- 8.32 Many of the employers who were predominantly negative about the entitlement also responded negatively to the fact that young people could do training unrelated to their job under the level 2 entitlement. They felt it was unreasonable to expect employers to cover the cost of staff doing training which they felt would have no benefit to the business:

'A lot of employers will probably resent the fact that they have to pay someone to study in a career that wasn't the same as what they're doing. You're paying for someone to study in a different area in the likelihood that they're going to leave you and work for someone else... If it's connected I can understand it being of benefit.'

'I would say unless my directors could see there was some benefit to them they would find it difficult to see why they should be involved in that... It seems an interesting project but the biggest problem my directors would have is if its not relevant to their business'

Financial implications of the level 2 entitlement

- 8.33 The most significant reservation expressed by the employers about the level 2 entitlement related to the financial and other costs that would be incurred in covering shifts when a young person might be released to study or train:

'For most employers it's the cost of somebody not being there for a day and how do you cover their work?'

- 8.34 Employers who expressed these concerns came from a range of sectors and varied in size. Several of the smaller employers emphasised that it would be more difficult for them to cope with the absence of staff:

'The bigger the business, the easier it would be. This has always been the case... A couple of apprentices here and there isn't that relevant to them – they can loose it in petty cash. Small businesses are more constrained.'

- 8.35 A small number of employers, both large and small, thought that any financial implications of young people being released for level 2 courses would be minimal.

Impact on employer / employee relations

- 8.36 One employer was concerned that employers might resent young people who requested to take up their entitlement and that this would have a negative impact on their relationship. Another employer was concerned that older employees who were not entitled to paid time off work to study would resent young people who took up their entitlement:

'I think it could be awkward. I can imagine a 16 year old going to their scary boss saying I'm going to do a course on Tuesday that's not anything to do with you and I want to be paid for it as well. I would imagine it would cause friction.'

Views on the Learning Agreement pilot

Financial incentives

- 8.37 Most of the employers reported that if they received full wage compensation they would be happy to allow young people to take up their entitlement to train, even if it was unrelated to the job. Most felt that this would enable them to cover a young person's shifts while they were learning. The vast majority preferred the idea of receiving wage compensation to a bonus payment as they felt that it would cover their costs more effectively:

'What would help is where you reimburse for the time off, that's got to be covered... If they reimbursed it back to the organisation then the organisation can pay somebody overtime to fill in that day...'

- 8.38 Only a small number of employers said that they would be unhappy about young people taking up the entitlement even with the wage compensation. One employer, for example, was concerned about the complications of finding staff to cover shifts:

'Its not just a case of saying here's the £30 you would have paid them, get on with it. There's a lot of knock on affects as to what would happen should that person not be available for work... There might be things like exams over and above the normal college day they will want extra time there.'

Support from an external agency

- 8.39 Some of the employers agreed that having an external independent organisation to manage the training would make it easier for employers. For example, they hoped this would ensure that the young person was attending the training:

'Its always useful to have somebody for the young person separate from the employer to go to and to have someone external whose overseeing things as well. Sometimes it its all done internally sometimes things can slip. If you have someone else overseeing it does help.'

'Someone needs to be monitoring it all the time.... You could have this kid who says they're going to do it and they don't turn up for it. You're still paying their wage.'

Awareness and views of government supported training providers

Apprenticeships

- 8.40 Two employers offered apprenticeships. One was a retailer offering apprenticeships in butchery and bakery, and one was a public sector employer that offered apprenticeships in administration. One employer in the retail sector had previously offered apprenticeships but did not do so any longer, and one manufacturing employer was considering running apprenticeships. Most other employers had heard of the apprenticeship programme but were not clear about what they involved and had not considered offering them.

- 8.41 Those employers who offered apprenticeships expressed positive attitudes about the scheme. They felt that apprenticeships were a good way of gaining skilled employees in areas where it was difficult to recruit. In addition, one mentioned the financial benefits of not having to pay the apprentice a wage as well as the benefits for the young person:

'We hadn't got the facility money wise to take them on... and we're willing to give the training, we offer very good training for them. We thought it was useful in the community to help the youngsters and give them an insight. We haven't the resource money-wise to take them on.'

- 8.42 The most common reason given by the employers for not offering apprenticeships was its irrelevance to their industry:

'It's not the sort of industry you can do an apprenticeship in.... Who is going to apply to be an apprentice for a double glazing salesman?'

- 8.43 Another common reason given was the time and resource required to support apprentices. One employer who had stopped offering apprenticeships gave this

as the reason. Several of the smaller employers claimed that it was easier for larger employers to provide this support:

'they have modules they have to complete and to do that they had to have supervision from other staff and we couldn't afford the time to do it properly... In a smaller business ...the amount of time that can be committed to that person is by no means proportional to the amount of time that can be committed if they are in a large organisation...'

'We were looking to do that a while ago but it's the training element and commitment from us that looks a lot and we don't have the back up. A bigger company has departments to deal with this... I don't think I could give enough time over to do it'

Other government supported training

8.44 Three of the employers offered government supported training towards levels 1 and 2. Two of these were in the retail sector and one was a restaurant.

8.45 Two employers felt there were no significant benefits to the business because the young people did not learn anything they did not already know or that they could not learn on the job. However, they all believed that it was beneficial for the young people to gain qualifications and one employer believed there had been a benefit to the business:

'That was quite successful. It kept them motivated and gave them an idea of what they had to achieve and it helped the business as well.... They're both in managerial positions now.'

Experience of working with business support agencies and training providers

External providers

8.46 Most of the employers had used external providers to deliver some sort of training. This included the local authority, local colleges and specialist training providers. Employers who had not used external providers felt they were able to deliver all their necessary job related training in-house.

8.47 Most of the employers who used external providers were happy with the quality of training delivered. Two employers who had accessed local authority training courses commented on the high quality, low cost and wide breadth of the provision.

Business support agencies

8.48 Most of the employers were not aware of business support agencies in the local area. Three employers had been awarded the Investors in People Standard or were working towards it. These employers believed that working towards the Standard, with assistance from Business Link, had drastically improved their training practices and processes:

'Three years ago there was no structure, no formal training, no induction, no appraisal system, no exit interviews, nothing. It's helped us move along the IIP guidelines on what they feel are some of the key areas for having a healthy business and looking after the staff in the business.... Business Link have been part of moving us through to IIP.'

9 VIEWS FROM CONNEXIONS STAFF

9.1 This section describes findings from the telephone interviews with Connexions staff. It explores their perceptions of the accuracy and completeness of data they collect on young people in JWT and sets out what they think are the major implications for the Learning Agreement pilot including the implications for their IT systems.

Identifying eligible young people

9.2 The Connexions staff suggested that identifying young people who were eligible for the pilot was technically simple, but expressed doubts as to the currency of the data they held. They stressed that young people in JWT were the group that Connexions knew least about.

9.3 The staff interviewed reported that the job-hunting strategies of these young people were varied and complex and that it was difficult to keep track of their movements. They suggested that the young people tended to move quickly in and out of the job market and often secured temporary positions with low profile employers who did not often formally advertise vacancies. Furthermore, they thought that many young people were employed through agencies and as Connexions had no arrangements in place to liaise with these agencies again it was difficult to keep track of the young people involved.

9.4 The interviewees explained that even when they knew where young people were working, there were problems establishing whether a young person was in a job without training. On the CCIS information system employment is categorised as:

- Jobs with no training;
- Jobs with locally recognised good quality training;
- Jobs with nationally recognised NVQ level 2 training.

9.5 The Connexions staff explained that they often do not have accurate information about which of these three categories a young person's job falls into and there are particular difficulties around defining employer provided training. One interviewee explained how this was undertaken when they were not in contact with the employer:

'...we'll take all the details and when we've put it down the staff will go to someone else on the staff who lives somewhere up that way and we'll use our local knowledge... It's a mixture of fact and informed guesswork.'

Updating data

- 9.6 The staff stressed that currency periods were a major influence on the accuracy of data they held for young people in JWT. Currency periods include:
- annual confirmation of those in employment or full time education;
 - six monthly confirmation for those in training;
 - three monthly confirmation for NEET young people and unknown.
- 9.7 The Connexions staff pointed out that the long currency period for updating information on young people in employment meant that this data would be less accurate than that on the NEET or unknown groups. Some of those interviewed suggested that a six month currency period would ensure more accurate and current data.
- 9.8 Most of the Connexions staff stressed that the main focus of their efforts was in establishing and maintaining contact with the NEET and 'unknown' groups and as a result there was much less focus on young people in JWT. All the Connexions partnerships reported that these young people were amongst the most difficult to contact. Sending letters to home addresses apparently met with little success and making contact often required telephone calls in the evening or home visits. It was stressed that although young people could be contacted through mobile phones these numbers often changed frequently, so that contact information became outdated. Attention was drawn to the Keeping in Touch (KIT) workers employed by some Connexions partnerships who are charged with maintaining contact with young people and keeping their details up to date. It was suggested that employing such KIT workers might represent good practice for the delivery of the Learning Agreement pilot.
- 9.9 The staff members stressed also that keeping in touch with such young people became more difficult as they got older and as they become more mobile and have less contact with home and parents.
- 9.10 One Connexions representative made the point that under their current targets information that a young person had moved jobs was not of great significance if the young person was still in employment and they did not show up as NEET:
- '...if they've moved from Fred's wood yard to Tom's foundry it's important for the young person but not for the management information. Our work is following up the NEET and 'not knows', it's our first priority.'*
- 9.11 As a result Connexions often rely on young people to inform them of any changes in employment and this was only likely to happen where a young person dropped into Connexions when they were looking for work. As one Connexions representative highlighted:

'From a young person's point of view I think they think if they've moved from Tesco to Sainsbury's its not first in their mind to advise us. There's no incentive... In the young person's mind if they've moved on they don't need help'

- 9.12 All staff explained that in the absence of any contact with the young people themselves they often relied on parents or guardians to provide information on their child's activities. However they stressed that information from parents or guardians on the young person's employer or training was often inaccurate.
- 9.13 Some Connexions representatives expressed frustration that HM Revenue & Customs or DWP are not included in the list of public bodies that provide Connexions with information on young people, under the Learning and Skills Act 2000. They felt that these bodies could supply very useful information on where young people were working and when jobs or periods out of work started and finished. They suggested that young people could be tracked on the basis of their National Insurance (NI) number.
- 9.14 Connexions staff felt that this data sharing should be fairly straightforward but that some IT enhancements to the database would be necessary and more user friendly procedures were needed to facilitate effective data sharing between agencies who currently work with incompatible databases. They stressed that such information would be less sensitive than information they already receive from local authorities, health authorities and youth offending teams. Some also stressed that Connexions had received information on young people starting jobs from employers in the past and that recent reforms had put an end to these sources.

Knowledge of employers and promoting Connexions

- 9.15 Connexions staff reported having good quality data for employers who had used their services, such as those who offered work placements or advertised jobs through Connexions. This included information on the size of company, the sector, a contact person(s) within the company, the young person's job, and the training they received.
- 9.16 Connexions staff reported knowing little about employers who did not use their services. Some staff felt that promoting their vacancy filling service was the most effective way to establish better links with employers who did not currently use their services but who might recruit 16 and 17 year olds:

'Our database system is strong on young people, that's where the government has focussed our attention. If the government wanted to focus our attention onto employers, if it put some targets down that were monitored, that would mean we would do it...'

- 9.17 At least one Connexions representative felt it was important for Connexions Personal Advisers (PAs) to develop better links with employers:

'I do think it is important that in order for them to do their job that they do spend some of their time going out and seeing what's happening in the workplace and being familiar with jobs and employers, it is important. It's always been a very small proportion of their time in comparison with the time that they're given to work directly with young people. Its getting that balance right.'

- 9.18 At least one Connexions representative suggested they would be nervous about contacting employers out of the blue to discuss training and stressed that some employers, especially smaller ones, were hostile to government agencies. Staff also highlighted potential data protection concerns among employers around information they would be requesting on young people and the training they were receiving. Some felt they would be easily dissuaded from pursuing information on young people from employers if data protection concerns were raised.

- 9.19 The main barrier to gathering more information from employers was seen as staff time and resource issues. Some staff recognised the need to work more closely with the Learning & Skills Councils and others doing similar work with employers.

Views on the Pilot

- 9.20 The views of the Connexions staff on the pilot were broadly positive and the financial incentives for young people and employers were welcomed.

- 9.21 The interviewees highlighted a number of issues which might affect the delivery of the pilot. One Connexions partnership commented that the pilot would have to engage with some young people who were in JWT for only a short time and suggested it would be difficult to time an intervention which fit into this short period.

- 9.22 Connexions staff also stressed that the offer of training to the young person needed to be attractive. Some staff felt that in order to do this the pilot should offer an unrestricted choice of courses along with flexible modes of delivery such as those that allowed work based training and not just day release to college. At least one representative stressed that this might mean that additional training provision was made available to young people to ensure the offer was flexible and personalised:

'In a lot of cases the issue is the provision of appropriate training...The issue I would have is to make sure that the brokerage is independent and can be what the young person and employer want and they don't necessarily have to go on the nearest LSC funded course, which is what happened in the past and which is why a number of people said we don't want to do that.'

9.23 Some staff also thought that level 2 qualifications may not be suited to the young people targeted by the pilot and that qualifications at or below level 1 may be more appropriate in some cases. Some also suggested that it would be challenging for many of these young people to complete a level 2 qualification, especially within the pilot period:

'... if on average it takes 15 months to get a young person through a full NVQ level 2, really we've got to sign them up by December of the first year to get them through by the end of March 2008.'

9.24 Those interviewed stressed that the additional resources for staff provided through the pilot would be essential to its delivery and to cover the extra workload created.

Possible Enhancements to IT systems

9.25 Connexions staff reported that only a limited number of enhancements to IT systems would be required to facilitate the pilot. One of the main enhancements needed was the capacity to track a young person's progress on the pilot and to manage delivery of financial bonuses to young people and employers:

'If you need a system to have review dates, check that they're reaching qualification levels, tick off when bonuses are given out to either the employer or the young person, then I don't think we could do that on our database as it stands.'

9.26 Many stressed that one potential difficulty was that different Connexions partnerships use different databases, and the databases in use in each area are often different from those used by their local partners.

10 LESSONS FOR THE PILOT

10.1 This concluding chapter sets out a number of key lessons to inform the development and delivery of the Learning Agreement pilot. These lessons draw closely on the research findings detailed above.

Young people in jobs without training are difficult to contact

10.2 The experience of carrying out this research demonstrated that young people in JWT are difficult to contact. At least a third of the contacts provided by Connexions partnerships in the seven fieldwork areas were inaccurate or incomplete. Furthermore, even where contact details were accurate young people often had to be called several times before they were contacted. Connexions staff explained that until now young people in JWT have not been a priority group, such as the NEET or unknown group, and the currency period for updating contacts is one year. They also stressed that this was the group they knew least about, as they tended to move frequently from job to job.

10.3 Pilot partnerships need to take into account the difficulties of contacting young people in the development and delivery of their pilot plans. Significant resources will be required to reach these young people and to keep their details up to date.

Young people in jobs without training are a heterogeneous group

10.4 This research has found that young people in JWT display a wide range of characteristics, experiences, motivations and attitudes. They are located in a variety of jobs and plans or ambitions for employment or education vary substantially.

10.5 Pilot partnerships need to be mindful of this heterogeneity when developing delivery plans and approaching young people and employers to take part in the pilot. A one size fits all approach will not be effective and learning opportunities need to be flexible and personalised to be attractive to the young person.

Young people in jobs without training have not ruled out education or training in the future

10.6 This research has found that young people in JWT are generally positive about the value of education or training and most have at least vague plans to take up education or training in the future. Many had considered apprenticeships and many felt that work based training was the most attractive form of education or

training. Only a small number of young people had definite plans to stay and progress in their current job and some of these young people stressed a preference to move into full-time education or training. It appeared that many would benefit from more information or advice about turning these vague plans into reality.

- 10.7 Pilot partnerships are likely to encounter many young people who want to train but who are unsure about what they want to do or how to go about doing it. Partnerships will need to approach each case sensitively as for some, such as those who do not want to stay in their job and would like to return to full-time education or training, a learning agreement may not be the most appropriate immediate option. For others a learning agreement may be a positive transitional phase back into full-time provision which may otherwise be classified as simple non-completion.

Some young people in jobs without training do not want to take up education or training in the future

- 10.8 In this sample of young people there was a minority who stressed they were not interested in engaging in any education or training in the future. These young people had often had negative experiences of education in the past or were happy to stay in their job and receive a regular wage.
- 10.9 Pilot partnerships need to consider how they will approach and market the pilot to young people who appear to be against the idea of any education or training. Marketing strategies such as 'it can help you earn more money' or 'it can help you get a better paid job' for example might be more successful with this group.

Employers are more willing to allow young people reasonable paid time off to study where they will receive financial compensation

- 10.10 This research has indicated that employers are likely to respond positively to the wage compensation element of the Learning Agreement pilot. Most reported that they would be happy to allow young people to take up their entitlement to train where they were receiving full wage compensation. However, in the absence of compensation employers were predominantly negative about the level 2 entitlement particularly in relation to the financial cost and disruption they might incur in covering shifts when the young person is in training. Few saw any benefits to the business of allowing young people to train to level 2, particularly where this training was unrelated to the job.

10.11 Partnerships in pilot areas not offering the wage compensation need to consider how they will market the learning agreement to employers and in particular tackle the question of employer costs. This research has indicated that marketing messages around the positive effect of participating in the pilot on demonstrating corporate social responsibility and increasing staff retention and motivation might be effective.

Connexions have limited experience of contacting and working with employers

10.12 The research has found that Connexions information on employers in their local areas is restricted and that their staff often have limited experience of working directly with employers. Contacting employers for the research has demonstrated the importance of identifying the person within the organisation responsible for training and who has authority to sign off the learning agreement. This is more complex in multi-branch organisations. Similarly employers had limited experience of dealing with business support agencies or in the provision of government supported training.

10.13 Pilot Partnerships will need to allocate additional time and resources to build up and strengthen their contacts with local employers who employ young people without training. This could be assisted by making contact with partners in their local area who have experience and expertise of working with employers such as Business Link and Train to Gain brokers. They could also work closely with local Learning and Skills Councils in order to draw on their knowledge of local employers.

The Learning Agreement pilot will be sensitive for employers and young employees

10.14 This research has shown that although many employers and young people are positive about the learning agreement, there are concerns that the employer/employee relationship might be strained if it is not brokered sensitively. Partnerships will need to consider how their brokers approach young people, and their employers, to minimise this potential friction.

CCIS enhancements are needed to track progress of the Learning Agreement pilot and related financial incentives

10.15 The Connexions staff interviewed for this research suggested that fields to track progress and financial bonuses are the only crucial addition required for CCIS to deliver the pilot. Some staff mentioned that increased data sharing between

agencies would help to increase the accuracy of data on young people in JWT and that this would also require enhancements to the system.

ANNEX 1 – TOPIC GUIDES

Understanding young people in jobs without training

Interviews with young people

Research Objective

The central objective of this interview is to understand the background, attitudes and motivation of young people (aged 16-17) who are in jobs without training (JWT), specifically to understand:

- the characteristics of young people in JWT and their particular life circumstances;
- their experiences of and attitudes to education and training;
- their experiences of and attitudes to their current and previous work;
- their motivations with regard to training and work;

Notes to Interviewer:

- It is important for you to understand what we mean by a job with training. Our definition is:
 - 10.1 Accredited training which leads to an approved qualification under the provisions of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Young people will understand this as:
 - 10.1.1 an FE college course
 - 10.1.2 a sixth form college course
 - 10.1.3 an apprenticeship or training at work for an NVQ.Generally speaking if they have to pay a fee it is not accredited.
 - 10.2 For the purposes of this research training includes a course leading to **NVQ Level 2 or above** (Level 2 is equivalent to five GCSEs A*-C)
 - 10.3 The training **doesn't** have to be related to the job the young person is working in as long as it is an accredited course
 - 10.4 **Excludes** on the job training which is not accredited as detailed above
- **Make sure at the end of the interview** you request employer details from the young person and establish whether or not they are happy for us to contact them and if they are happy for their identity to be shared. Assure

them that all their responses are confidential and their employer or manager will not be told of any answers they have given.

1 INTRODUCTION

Aim: To introduce the research and ensure the respondent is comfortable with the research environment.

- 1.1 Introduce yourself and *Inclusion*.
- 1.2 Introduce the research
- 1.3 Reassure with regard to:
 - confidentiality,
 - the use of tape recording,
 - right to decline to answer any question and to withdraw at any time.
- 1.4 Confirm the length of interview (1 hour)
- 1.5 Ensure young person completes consent form
- 1.6 Any questions?

2 ABOUT THE YOUNG PERSON AND SCHOOL

Aim: To explore the characteristics of the young person, their educational and employment background and their current circumstances.

2.7 Check personal details, establish:

- Age
- Ethnicity (ask young person to choose from list on monitoring form)
- Employer's Name
- Type of business
- Size of business (number of employees - local office and nationally)

2.8 Current employment and living circumstances, probe for:

- Hours worked
 - 2.9 Full-time, part time
 - 2.10 Permanent/ fixed term / casual
 - 2.11 Days worked
- Hourly rate and average weekly income after tax
- Job title and description of the job they do
- Distance of employment from home and travel arrangements
- Living circumstances
 - 2.12 If they are living with parents/carers are they working
 - 2.13 Does young person pay rent/board, how much each week
- What is the occupation of their parents (or main parent/carer)?
- Do they know the highest qualification achieved by their parents/carers?

2.14 Previous experience of education and employment

- Establish age they left school
 - 2.15 Did they stay at school until the required leaving age (the summer after their 16th birthday)?
- Establish how many secondary schools they attended

■ Explore experience of school

The aim of this question is to get a general impression of whether the young person had a positive or negative experience of school. Probe for:

2.16 Subjects (likes, dislikes, favourite subjects)

2.17 What motivated them to want to learn at school?

2.18 Relationships with teachers

2.19 attendance record, any fixed term/permanent exclusions

■ Qualifications achieved

2.20 Explore importance of qualifications to the young person for their future

2.21 If no qualifications do they regret this

2.22 Why do they think they did not get more qualifications at school?
E. g lack of vocational offer, no incentive due to poor post-16 / employment opportunities

2.23 What do they feel were their main achievements at school

■ Explore the extent to which and how their experience of school has influenced their subsequent decisions about training and work

■ Establish any work young person did while they were at school, probe for:

2.24 Part-time/weekend work

2.25 Casual or summer jobs

2.26 Work experience

2.27 Day release at college

■ Explore their reasons for working while at school and their experiences of the work they did

2.28 Has this work experience helped them get the job they are in now?

■ Explore any career ambitions while at school

2.29 What do they think led them to have these ambitions e.g. influence from family, friends or teachers

2.30 If they haven't followed these ambitions – explore why this is the case

2.31 If they had no clear ambitions what did they think they would do on leaving school

- Explore whether young person has had any contact with the criminal justice system:
 - 2.32 Whether they have a criminal record/attending Youth Offending Team

3 MOVING FROM SCHOOL TO WORK

Aim: these questions aim to explore the decision process which young people went through on leaving school and moving into further education, training or employment and the support they received to reach this decision.

Note to interviewer:

During this section we want to explore each of the options which young people may or may not have had available to them. These include:

- Re-sitting GCSEs (at school or college)
- GNVQs or A levels (at school or college)
- An FE college course
- An Apprenticeship
- Work

- 3.33 Which option(s) (if any) from those above did the young person choose on leaving school?
- 3.34 Explore whether the young person felt at the time they left school if each of the options above were possible and realistic for them
 - 3.35 If not, why were these options not available to them?
 - 3.36 If they were available why did they decide not to take them up?
 - 3.37 If they did take them up, did they stick at them? If not, why not?
- 3.38 Explore whether they received any advice at the time which influenced their decisions on which route to take. Probe for:
 - Friends
 - Parents and family
 - Teachers
 - Career guidance
 - Connexions

3.39 What did they think about the quality of the advice they received?

- Would they have liked to have received more/different advice or support?
- What would have been useful advice or support at the time?

3.40 Explore the importance of money in their decisions

- How important was money in their ultimate decision to move into work
 - 3.41 Did they have an idea about how much they wanted to earn?
 - 3.42 Did this affect the type of job they looked for?
- Explore awareness of different financial incentives to stay in education and training and whether these encouraged them to stay in education or training, probe for:
 - 3.43 Education Maintenance Allowance
 - 3.44 Training allowance for some FE courses
 - 3.45 Paid Apprenticeships
 - 3.46 Entry to Employment

3.47 Only ask if apprenticeships were not covered above

Explore whether and if they have ever considered an apprenticeship, probe for:

- Views on apprenticeships
- Where they could access information, support about apprenticeships

4 ACTIVITIES SINCE LEAVING SCHOOL

Aim: To establish everything the young person has been doing since school in relation to employment, education and training and their experiences of these.

4.48 Establish a chronology of what else the young person has been doing since leaving school including any:

- Jobs (full-time, part-time, temporary, casual)

Note to interviewer: explore if they received training in these jobs.

- Education
- Training
- Voluntary work

4.49 Explore for each of the activities identified above:

- Why they decided to do it
- Whether it was part of a longer term career aim
- What advice or support they received in making their decision to do it, probe:
 - 4.50 What was the source of this advice/support
 - 4.51 How influential was it in making their decision
 - 4.52 Their views on the quality of the advice/support
- What if any relevance it has had to the job they are doing now
- How satisfied were they with the job/training/education/volunteering
- The reasons for it coming to an end

4.53 Explore whether there have been any NEET periods since leaving school and probe for:

- If so, how many times have they been in and out of NEET? For how long?
- What were they doing during these periods
 - 4.54 Unemployed and actively looking for EET
 - 4.55 Periods of inactivity (reasons for this e.g. health, caring)
- Young person's view on why they ended up as NEET
- Any advice or support they received at this time to move back into ETE
- Any experience of dealing with Jobcentre Plus and receiving hardship payments

5 CURRENT EMPLOYMENT

Aim: To explore how the young person ended up in their current job and explore their views on training within this job

5.1 Explore how they got their current job, probe for:

- any support they received to look for and/or find the job
- any support they received on whether to accept the job

- 5.2 Explore what influenced their decision to take the job, probe for:
- Whether they saw it as part of any career path, link to their own career ambitions
 - Opportunity to progress in the job and/or availability of training
 - Pay and/or other financial benefits
 - Hours
 - Location
 - Whether they felt there was no other option
 - Influence of friends, parents, family, others
- 5.3 Explore whether they have received any training from their employer in their current job? Probe for:
- description of training
 - 5.4 Any employer delivered training e.g. induction, health and safety
 - 5.5 Any other training received
 - Whether training is accredited/linked to National Qualification Framework
 - how the training is helping them in their job
 - views on the quality of training received
- 5.6 Are there other young workers performing similar jobs to you at work? Do they know the level of their qualifications or to what extent they have received training at work?
- 5.7 What does your employer think about training? Leave open and then probe for:
- Is there a policy within the company on training?
 - Whether the young person has ever discussed training with their employer or manager?
- 5.8 Did you know that young people could get time off work to study for their NVQ Level 2 and still get paid?
- Do you think your employer is aware of this?
 - Have you ever spoken to your employer or manager about this?
 - How do you think your employer would feel about it?
 - How might you convince your employer it was a good idea?

5.9 Explore whether young person feels they need training in their current job, probe:

- What do they think training would add to their ability to do the job
- What do they think they would get out of training
- Do they think they are missing out by not getting any training

5.10 How important is training to them in their decision to stay on in the job?

5.11 Explore what they are looking to get out of this job.

6 FUTURE PLANS

Aim: to explore the young person's immediate plans for the future and plans for education or training as well as their longer term plans.

6.12 How long do you think will you stay here?

- in this job
- with this employer

6.13 What would you like to do next, after this job, probe for:

- Are they applying for other jobs at the moment, if so what kind of jobs?
- Is it important that future jobs have training attached or an opportunity to progress?
- Has the lack of training limited what jobs they can apply for?

6.14 Explore to what extent education and training features in their future plans

- Any definite plans to apply for/take up further education or training
- If no definite plans would they consider it in the future
- Do you they know what education and training they would like to take up?

6.15 Explore how they would access information about education or training, probe for:

- Connexions
- School
- Friends and/or family

6.16 Explore any barriers they have to taking up further education or training

- money
- negative attitudes towards education or training
- travel
- lack of information or support
- employer attitudes
- attitudes of family or friends

6.17 Explore what might encourage them to take up education or training in the future

- Type of training - on the job, College/classroom based
- What information or advice they would need
- Financial incentives

6.18 Do you have a plan of what you want to do and where you want to be

- In the next few months?
- In the next few years?

End interview

Thank the young person for their time

Ask them if they have any questions/anything else to add

Explain what will happen with the research and ask if they would like any further information – provide contact details.

Ask young person if they are happy for us to contact their employer and happy to say we have spoken to them. Reassure them that we will not tell the employer what they have said in this interview. Ask young person to sign consent on the receipt and collect employer contact details.

Pay young person £15 pound and ask them to sign receipt.

Understanding young people in jobs without training – Interviews with employers

Research Objective

The central objective of this interview is to understand the attitudes and motivations of employers in relation to young people (aged 16-17) and their training; specifically to elucidate and understand:

- the characteristics of these employers;
- their attitudes to training;
- their attitudes to young employees and training young employees ;
- what motivates them to provide training;
- their attitudes to government schemes to promote training in work.

Notes to Interviewer:

It is important for you to understand what we mean by a job **with** training. Our definition is:

- Accredited training which leads to an approved qualification under the provisions of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Employers will understand this as:
 - 6.19** an FE college course
 - 6.20** a sixth form college course
 - 6.21** an apprenticeship or training at work for an NVQGenerally speaking if they have to pay a fee it is not accredited
- For the purposes of this research training includes a course leading to **NVQ Level 2 or above** (Level 2 is equivalent to five GCSEs A*-C)
- The training **doesn't** have to be related to the job the young person is working in as long as it is an accredited course
- **Excludes** on the job training which is not accredited as detailed above

1 INTRODUCTION

Aim: To introduce the research and ensure the respondent is comfortable with the research environment.

- 1.1 Introduce yourself and explain *Inclusion*.
- 1.2 Introduce the research – **Only if young person has given their consent** explain whether or not you have already interviewed their employee and if so reassure them that their views will not be shared with the young person and that this interview is merely to elicit their own views and practices on training. Stress that the questions are based on a standard format to be asked by all employers taking part in the research and have not been influenced by their employee.
- 1.3 Reassure with regard to:
 - confidentiality,
 - the use of tape recording,
 - the right to decline to answer any question and to withdraw at any time.
- 1.4 Confirm the length of interview (40 mins)
- 1.5 Any questions?

2 ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION

Aim: To describe the organisation and set the context for the rest of the interview.

- 2.1 Details about the interviewee
 - Position/title
 - Length of time in this position
 - Role and responsibilities (particularly in relation to training)
 - Relationship with young person interviewed (**where relevant**)
 - What is the highest level of qualification they have achieved? Was this obtained prior to, or while they were in, this current employment?
- 2.2 Characteristics of employer, establish:

- Number of employees, sector, location and nature of business

Note to interviewer: probe for number of employees at local and national level where appropriate

- Numbers of young people aged 16-17 employed
- How the majority of 16-17 year olds are employed?

2.3 full-time

2.4 part-time

2.5 seasonal

2.6 temporary

- What hourly rate do they pay 16 and 17 year olds, do 16-17 year olds work overtime and how much on average.
- Positions 16-17 year olds commonly hold in the company
- How they recruit 16/17 year olds – has this changed in any way over the last five years, if so why and how?
 - 2.7 Do they target 16/17 year olds for recruitment for any particular reason?

2.8 Establish annual turnover of employees aged 16-17 if they know it.

3 POLICY ON TRAINING OF STAFF

Aim: To explore what general policies and practices employer has in place for the training of staff.

3.1 Establish the company policy on training for employees, probe for:

- Whether there is a formal training policy and/or procedures
- What proportion of employees undertake work-related training
- Training budgets and whether each employee has a specified budget

- 3.2 Establish what types and levels of formal training the employer offers their employees, probe for:
- Type and content of training
 - Level of training linked to National Qualification Framework
 - Delivery of training
- 3.3 Internally by employer
- 3.4 Internally by external agency
- 3.5 Externally through college/other training provider
- Any specific training targeted at young people (16-17 year olds)
- 3.6 Explore issues of
- who is trained,
 - why they are trained,
 - how a decision to train is taken
 - Who takes this decision (CEO, HR, training manager, line managers)
 - Where appropriate the relationship between Head Office and local establishment on training. To what extent is it a HO led strategy or the discretion of local managers?
 - whether training is dependent on job role
- 3.7 Determine the employer's awareness of locally available provision of
- Training e.g. through local colleges or training providers
 - information and guidance services for employers and employees in relation to training
- 3.8 Explore their views on each of the following sources of support they may have accessed for employees:
- The Local Learning and Skills Council (National Employer Training Pilots)
 - Business Link
 - Investors in People
 - Chambers of Commerce
 - Local FE colleges and training providers
 - Any other support they have accessed

4 TRAINING OF YOUNG PEOPLE

Aim: to explore the employers' attitudes towards the employment and training of young people and views on paid time off to study.

4.9 Discuss employer's attitude to working with young people

- Do they see young people as a long-term employees or short term workers?
- Do they view young people differently from other employees?
- Are young people managed differently to other employees? If so how?
- Do they have any idea of how 16 and 17 year olds view their longer term career prospects?

4.10 Explore employers' views on the importance of training for their 16 and 17 year old employees:

- Do they see it as an investment for the business or unnecessary expense
- Explore any benefits they see for young people or for the company of providing/funding accredited training for 16/17 year olds

4.11 Explore employer's knowledge of skills and qualifications of their 16-17 year old employees

- GCSEs
- GNVQs
- National Certificates

4.12 Explore employer's awareness of the training needs of these young people

- How are their training needs assessed?

4.13 Establish if and how training is provided specifically for young people aged 16-17

- How does it differ from their general training policy in terms of who decides if training is appropriate and how are the decisions made on training?
- Does it depend on employment terms of young person e.g. seasonal, temporary
- What training are 16 and 17 year olds currently/previously undertaking?

4.14 Explore their knowledge of accessing training for young people through external providers locally

- Whether and how have they accessed training in the past for this group
- Experience of accessing training for this group
- What information and advice services would be useful to access training in the future

4.15 Establish awareness of and views on Level 2 entitlement for young people

(that young people aged 16-17 are entitled to training that leads to a first NVQ Level 2 and to reasonable paid time off work in which to study)

- General awareness
- Experiences of employees taking up the entitlement
- Whether any young people have approached the employer about it
- General views on the entitlement and paid time off to study
- Advantages and disadvantages to the business of allowing young people paid time off to study to level 2
- What would encourage employer/employees to take up entitlement
- How might they promote it to young people

4.16 Explore views on whose responsibility it is to see that young people get their entitlement to training?

- Young people
- Employers
- Government agencies

4.17 Explore whether employer sees any link between training of staff and Corporate Social Responsibility?

- Do they only see a business benefit with training or a wider social benefit for allowing young people to train to level 2.

5 GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Aim: to explore the employers' views on other government supported schemes for training employees, particularly around apprenticeships.

5.1 Establish awareness of and views of Level 2 entitlement for adults

(that from August 2006 everyone in work will be entitled to training that leads to a NVQ Level 2, under the National Employer Training Programme)

- General awareness
- Experiences of working with National Employer Training pilots
- Views on the entitlement
- Value to business of having employees qualified to Level 2
- Views on the importance to their business of accredited training
- What would encourage employer/employees to take up entitlement
- What are the potential barriers for the employer promoting entitlement

5.2 Explore their attitudes to apprenticeships

- Explore awareness of apprenticeship programme
- Do they offer apprenticeships or encourage young people to become apprentices?

5.3 If not why not?

5.4 If yes to whom?

- What would encourage them to offer apprenticeships
- Whether they see any financial incentives in taking on apprentices

5.5 Explore views on the National Minimum Wage for 16 and 17 year olds

- Do they see it as an incentive or disincentive

5.6 to employ young people

5.7 to provide them with training

5.8 Explore attitudes to the Learning Agreement pilot

Learning Agreement pilot

£80 million to be spent on about 2,000 16/17 year olds who are in work but not receiving accredited training

Funding will be used to support training for qualifications, with bonuses for young people and subsidies for employers who allow their workers time off for training.

Three main elements are:

- Brokerage through:
 - 1.1 Connexions Personal Advisers
 - 1.2 Business advisors (NETP, Business Link, Investors in People)
- Learning agreements
 - 1.3 learning needs assessment by Connexions PA
 - 1.4 agreement negotiated with young person and employer.
 - 1.5 Connexions PA maintains a record of progress
 - 1.6 course of study may not be directly relevant to current job.
 - 1.7 the employer will need to provide the support.
- Financial incentives
 - 1.8 employer provides paid time off to complete the course.
 - 1.9 bonus payments (up to £250) to young people and employers
 - 1.10 employer wage compensation
 - 1.10.1 a sum equal to a full weeks wages for the employee
 - 1.10.2 variable rates to compensate for additional resources

- Which aspects do employers prefer and why?
- How might pilot be sold to employers?
- How important are financial incentives?
- What is the value of the pilot in their view?

End interview

- Thank employer for their time,
- explain next steps of the research
- offer contact details/ to send them further information about the research

Understanding young people in jobs without training – Interviews with Connexions staff

Research Objective

The central objective of this interview is to understand and provide in-depth analysis of the attitudes of key staff in Connexions to the Learning Agreement Pilots, specifically:

- To understand the processes of collecting and maintaining data on young people for the CCIS data
- To understand the limitations of collecting and maintaining information for young people in JWT.
- To inform DfES' assessment of the accuracy and completeness of the Connexions Customer Information System (CCIS).

Notes to Interviewer:

It is important for you to understand what we mean by a job **with** training. Our definition is:

- Accredited training which leads to an approved qualification under the provisions of the Learning and Skills Act 2000. Employers will understand this as:
 - 5.9** an FE college course
 - 5.10** a sixth form college course
 - 5.11** an apprenticeship or training at work for an NVQGenerally speaking if they have to pay a fee it is not accredited
- For the purposes of this research training includes a course leading to **NVQ Level 2 or above** (Level 2 is equivalent to five GCSEs A*-C)
- The training **doesn't** have to be related to the job the young person is working in as long as it is an accredited course
- **Excludes** on the job training which is not accredited as detailed above

1 INTRODUCTION

Aim: To introduce the research and ensure the respondent is comfortable with the research environment.

- 1.1 Introduce yourself and explain *Inclusion*.
- 1.2 Introduce the research – explain that this interview is to elicit their views on the Learning agreement pilots, their role in identifying a target group for the pilot and the processes and practices of data gathering and maintenance that underpins this role.
- 1.3 Reassure with regard to:
 - confidentiality,
 - the use of tape recording,
 - the right to decline to answer any question and to withdraw at any time.
- 1.4 Confirm the length of interview (30 mins)
- 1.5 Any questions?

2 ABOUT YOUR ORGANISATION

Aim: To set the context for the rest of the interview.

- 2.1 Details about the interviewee
 - Position/title
 - Length of time in this position
 - Role and responsibilities

3 DATA COLLECTION AND MAINTENANCE: POLICY AND PRACTICE

Aim: To explore what general policies and practices connexions has in place for gathering and maintaining data on young people

- 3.1 Explore how a young person's details end up on the CCIS database.
- 3.2 Is data collected on every young person who seeks advice from Connexions
- 3.3 Establish how information is initially collected on young people
 - When is data first collected
 - 3.4 What age is the young person when data is first collected
 - 3.5 Have they left school at that stage
 - How is data first collected
 - 3.6 interview,
 - 3.7 form filling,
 - 3.8 data transfer from school or other databases
- 3.9 Explore how often and the process for keeping this information updated
 - How often is a young person's circumstances updated
 - 3.10 When they are at school
 - 3.11 Once they have left school
 - How does the process of updating records work?
 - Do certain events trigger an update – e.g., news on a young person's changing circumstances
 - Is there an issue with wrong contact details and what systems are in place to help rectify wrong contacts?
 - 3.12 Probe for any difference between young people aged 16 and 17
 - Is there an 'official procedure' that young people are asked to go through to notify Connexions of a change in circumstances.
 - How accurate do you think this is for recording young people that transfer in and out of NEET status?

3.13 Explore whether and how Connexions becomes aware of a young person moving into work

- How do Connexions find out whether young people are in work - probe for the most likely/unlikely methods

3.14 Through the annual census process

3.15 Through providing information or advice to help them find work

3.16 Through young people contacting Connexions to let them know their change in circumstances

- What proportion of young people's changing circumstances do Connexions become aware of

3.17 'after the event', or

3.18 by chance

3.19 Establish what information is currently collected about young people aged 16 and 17 who are in employment

- What information is collected about this employment:

3.20 full-time/part-time or permanent/temporary

3.21 Sector

3.22 Specific occupation

3.23 Size of employer

3.24 Establish what information is collected about training undertaken by young people aged 16 and 17 who are in employment

- Explore how they define training
- Do Connexions seek to establish whether training is work related or not?
- If they are training in work how do they assess what NVQ level training is at?
- Are there any barriers to collecting this information
- Are employers willing to share information about training, if not why not

3.25 Ask them to estimate what proportion of their database records have good data on training at work.

3.26 Are there any new systems or protocols that need to be introduced to facilitate collection of this data?

3.27 Are there any database system enhancements needed to facilitate collection of this data?

4 ATTITUDES TO THE LEARNING AGREEMENT PILOT

Aim: to explore the connexions views on the Learning Agreement pilot and their role in it.

Learning Agreement pilot

£80 million to be spent on about 2,000 16/17 year olds who are in work but not receiving accredited training

Funding will be used to support training for qualifications, with bonuses for young people and subsidies for employers who allow their workers time off for training.

Three main elements are:

- Brokerage through:
 - 1.11 Connexions Personal Advisers
 - 1.12 Business advisors (NETP, Business Link, Investors in People)
- Learning agreements
 - 1.13 learning needs assessment by Connexions PA
 - 1.14 agreement negotiated with young person and employer.
 - 1.15 Connexions PA maintains a record of progress
 - 1.16 course of study may not be directly relevant to current job.
 - 1.17 the employer will need to provide support.
- Financial incentives
 - 1.18 employer provides paid time off to complete the course.
 - 1.19 bonus payments (up to £250) to young people and employers
 - 1.20 employers may be entitled to wage compensation

- 4.1 Explore their broad reactions to the prospect of the Learning Agreement pilots.
- 4.2 Explore how prepared they feel about being able to use data from the CCIS to identify young people aged 16 or 17 in jobs without training.
- 4.3 What further data might Connexions Personal Advisers need
 - to broker the Learning Agreement between employers and young people in jobs without training
 - to maintain a record of young people's progress while on the pilot
 - to record financial incentives and bonus payments made as part of the pilot
- 4.4 Is there anything else about the process of recording the employment and training status of Young People on CCIS that you would like to mention?

End interview

- Thank them for their time,
- explain next steps of the research
- offer contact details/ to send them further information about the research

Copies of this publication can be obtained from:

DfES Publications
P.O. Box 5050
Sherwood Park
Annesley
Nottingham
NG15 0DJ

Tel: 0845 60 222 60
Fax: 0845 60 333 60
Minicom: 0845 60 555 60
Online: www.dfespublications.gov.uk

© Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion 2006

Produced by the Department for Education and Skills

ISBN 1 84478 718 4
Ref No: RR736
www.dfes.go.uk/research