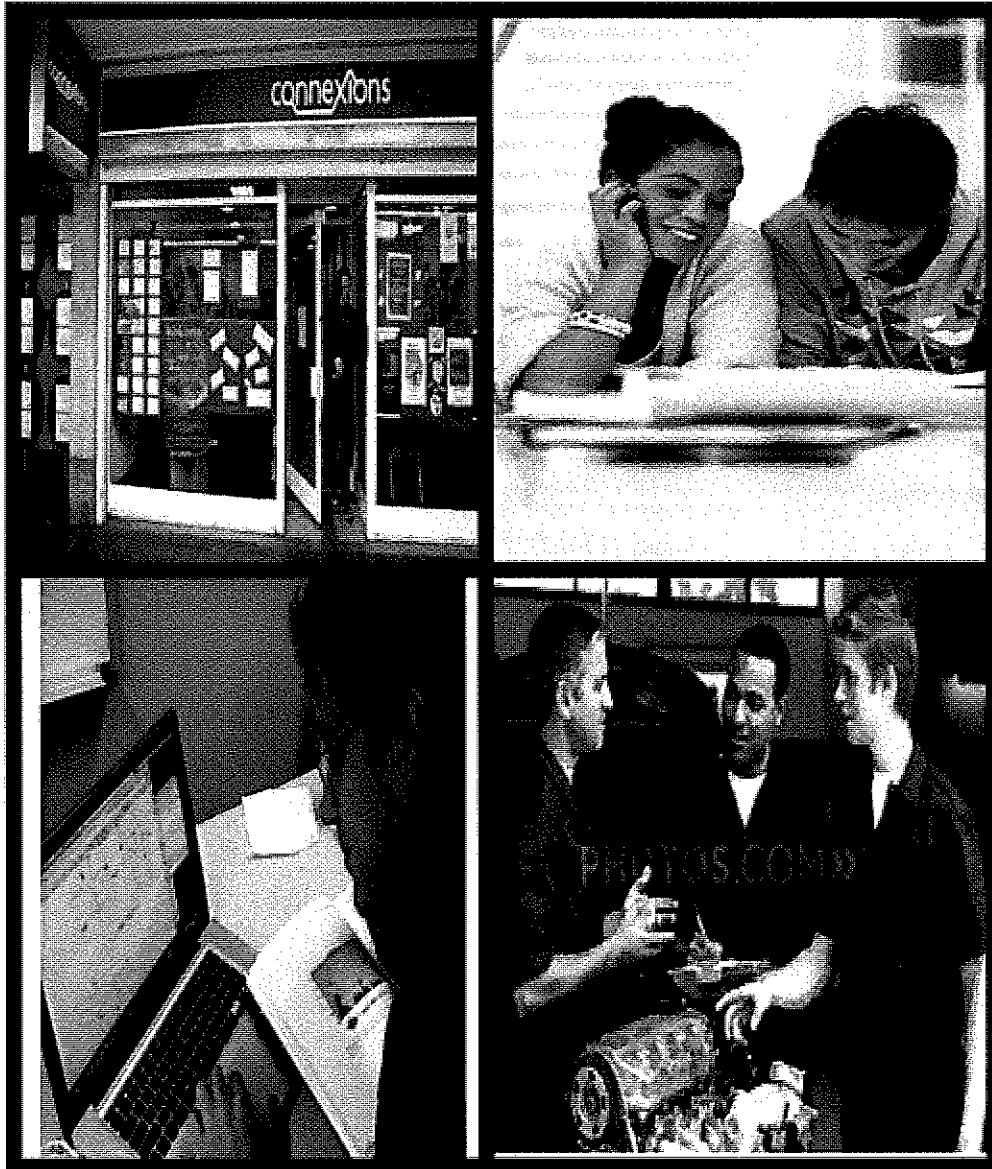
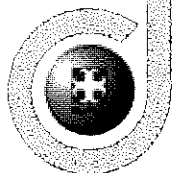


**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
(CHILDREN'S SERVICES)  
and  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
(REGENERATION & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES)**



**NEETS  
JOINT WORKING GROUP**

**FINAL REPORT  
MARCH 2013**





## **LEAD MEMBER'S INTRODUCTION**

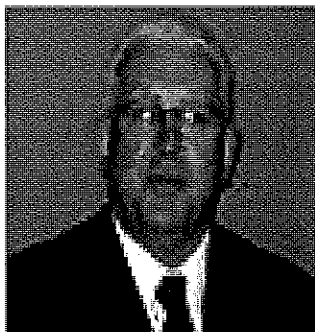
I am very pleased to introduce this joint Overview and Scrutiny report, between Children's Services and Regeneration and Environmental Services, on NEETS (not in education, employment or training).

This report seeks to inform Elected Members and Officers of the problems surrounding NEETS through the Working Group's discussions, interviews and visits and the ensuing recommendations should improve on the existing excellent service.

The recommendations are not heavily dependent on additional resources and we believe they are realistic and achievable. If these recommendations are accepted, the young people of Sefton will enjoy a continuously improving and more efficient service and are less likely to fall into the NEET category.

I wish to thank all those people who took part in interviews and facilitated visits and for giving up their valuable time to inform the Working Group. I am tremendously grateful to my fellow Working Group Members for their commitment to our young people and for their ideas and contributions.

I sincerely hope that this report will not be merely shelved, but that its recommendations are taken forward to enhance the lives of the young people in our Borough who are, after all, our future.



**Councillor Bobby Brennan  
Lead Member of the NEETS Joint Working  
Group  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
(Children's Services) and  
Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
(Regeneration & Environmental Services)**

## BACKGROUND

At its meeting on 18 September 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) resolved that:-

“the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services) be advised that this Committee recommends the establishment of a Joint Working Group to investigate NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training)”.  
(Minute No. 11(5) refers).

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children’s Services) at its meeting on 25 September 2012 resolved that:-

“a Joint Working Group be established with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) to investigate NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training); and

Councillors Brennan, Dorgan, Keith, Killen and McKinley and Parent Governor Representative Mrs S. Cain be nominated to serve on the NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) Working Group.”  
(Minute No. 13 (7) and (8) refers).

On 13 November 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) resolved that:-

“Councillors Welsh and Roche be nominated to serve on the NEET Working Group”.  
Minute No. 21 (3) refers).

Details of Working Group meetings are as follows:-

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
• 03 December 2012	Scoping & discussion of issues;
• 15 January 2014	Interview of witnesses from MAD (Making a Difference 4 Children in Care) Group & Sefton Young Advisors;
• 25 February 2013	Discussion of findings & determination of recommendations.

In addition, Working Group Members undertook site visits, as follows:-

- 23 January 2013 Site visit to Basetech, a training provider;
- 30 January 2013 Site visit to Intraining, a training provider;



- 05 February 2013 Site visit to Hugh Baird College;
- 08 February 2013 Site visit to Southport College;
- 15 February 2013 Site visit to Connexions, provider of independent information, advice & guidance for all young people.

## DEFINITION

NEETS (not in education, employment or training) covers young people within the age range 16 to 18/19.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE AND OBJECTIVES

The Working Group was advised that, as from September 2013, the Council has a statutory duty to implement the Raising of the Participation Age to 17. In short, this means that all young people leaving school from Year 11 in 2013 will no longer be able to undertake employment without training.

Most of our young people do progress at 16 to some form of education or employment with training, but some (not many) enter the NEET cohort in autumn each year, and of those some are harder to place and move on than others.

The NEET figure generally rises when it comes to 17 year olds and rises further still for 18 year olds.

Against the above background, the Working Group considered:-

- some of the provision the Council has for harder to reach young people,
- the support and challenge systems available, within a very limited financial resource envelope, to fulfil the Council's duties; and
- what measures might be needed to mitigate against barriers to participation;

with a view to making recommendations.

In addition, an analysis of NEETS within five wards in the Borough was undertaken.

## METHODS OF ENQUIRY

The Working Group collected information by means of interviewing individuals identified as relevant and by conducting site visits to relevant organisations



## **KEY WITNESSES – SUMMARY OF STATEMENTS**

The following points are a summary of the discussions held with key witness invited to Working Group meetings:-

### **Corporate Parenting Officer, People Directorate, Sefton MBC, together with members of the MAD Group (Making a Difference for Children in Care)**

- Cost to obtain training a barrier, no help with meals, drinks, etc.
- Employers want experience for vacant jobs.
- Care leavers being asked to live independently much earlier than other young people. This brings its own problems, eg. No parents to encourage them to get organised, routines, etc.
- Care leavers can be a target for drug pushers. Difficult to move away from the culture of drug & alcohol abuse.
- Being in/having been in care can be a barrier to getting on in life.
- Communities tend to have low expectations of people who have left care. Need to turn perceptions around.
- Core skills such as communication and functional skills seen as important.
- Pathway to Employment for care leavers been developed.
- Placement Mentors within the Council have been trained, includes staff in Cleansing.
- Mental health issues can be a problem with young care leavers, eg. depression, unresolved issues, loneliness, etc. Social workers can be contacted but not the same as being in a family;
- 1 care leaver undertaken charity work abroad.
- Criminal record for petty crime during adolescence a barrier to employment.

### **Young People's Engagement & Participation Lead, Sefton CVS, together with Sefton Young Advisors & the Co-Ordinator of the Noted project**

- Mental health a barrier to overcoming NEET.
- Gap between young and adult mental health services.
- Documents on options/information can be inaccessible, also job application forms.
- Hard to find things to put on CVs. "Experience essential" a barrier. Difficult to get a job without experience.
- Past minor criminal record can be a problem, particularly when applying for a job that handles cash.
- Practitioners don't talk to young people about self-employment.
- More co-ordination of different activities would be useful.
- Greater opportunities to share with different practitioners would help.
- Case studies provided be shared, huge amounts of information are provided but not known where it ends up. Could be shared more, good practice.



- Could potentially invite employers to annual events to share information and good practice.
- Need to change perceptions amongst employers.
- Early preventative side to NEETS – mentoring model, peer mentoring in schools, confidentiality can be an issue.

## **SITE VISITS – SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

The following points are a summary of the discussions held with individuals met during site visits undertaken:-

### **Basetech**

Members met with training providers & young people participating on the programme.

- Basetech is an example of good practice amongst foundation learning providers.
- Basetech provides training and development programmes for young people aged between 13 and 18 years-of-age and who may not be in Education, Employment or Training (NEETS).
- Basetech provides training and development in classic car restoration.
- The Intraining Group sends young people to Basetech for car engineering experience.
- Basetech engages hard to reach young people categorised as NEETS.
- Young people are engaged by providing motivational training and practical experience.
- Only good behaviour and success is rewarded.
- The young people are taught as adults getting ready for work.
- Basetech is funded only £45 per day and guarantees a job to students who complete the programme.
- Programmes are employment led and Basetech now has over 200 business waiting for Basetech Students.
- Basetech's Motor Industry Youth Employment Drive has backing from local Councillors and 300 employers.
- Basetech is opening its 2nd Phase soon.

### **Intraining Group**

Members met with the Business Manager and the Learning Engagement Consultant.

- The Intraining Group is an umbrella training provider that offers foundation learning.
- The Intraining Group is an off-shoot of Newcastle College and receives funding from the College.
- Outreach work undertaken at Litherland Moss.



- Intraining work with Connexions and Sefton MBC.
- Connections with the North West Training Council – engineering training undertaken with Jaguar/Landrover.
- Recent advert placed in the Daily Post aimed at businesses.
- Merseyside apprenticeship awards to take place at St. Gorge's Hall in March 2013.
- Intraining send young people to Basetech for car engineering experience.
- Need more awareness raising amongst employers.
- 95 16-18 year olds on the books at Intraining at present.
- Parent understanding on options available – an area for improvement.
- More employer buy-in – an area for improvement.
- Regeneration and future skills – an area for improvement.
- Continuous improvement on collaborative working with partners – can always be improved.

### **Hugh Baird College, Bootle**

Members met with members of staff and students participating on a public services course.

- In future, more 14 year olds will be able to access colleges.
- Attendance for certain vulnerable groups e.g. young carers, is difficult.
- Learning support in classes for students with e.g. dyslexia.
- Some students have part-time work outside college, generally have 3 days in college, 2 days off.
- The college gives some students money for lunches, bus fares, etc.
- There has been an increase of over 25% with claims for help with bus fares; travel is an issue due to the lack of part-time jobs available.
- A big barrier is to get into schools to give guidance on courses and options.
- The college is building a community library for community use and aims to put IT in there and careers advice.
- The College sees itself as fundamental to the community and regeneration.
- The College hopes to re-vamp its old exams hall to convert it into a gym, to link in with Health, and to encourage NEETS. It hopes other bodies will enter into this. College trying innovative approaches.
- The College hopes more of the private sector will link in as time goes on, in order to work together to provide something for employers for the future. Hopes to be able to provide information, etc. on employers at age 14.
- Impact on reducing NEETS – got post-code statistics. College doesn't deliberately target specific post-codes. Travel over 1 mile in distance – a travel pass is provided unless the family income is over £30,000.
- When the participation age changes, the College is looking at how to target NEETS, etc.
- College in contact with Connexions if anyone becomes NEET.
- Still a challenge to predict what qualifications will be needed for future jobs at the Port, mapping of future jobs and development of appropriate skills set amongst young people.





- Starting links with Mersey Maritime.
- Face to face interactions with young people to explain options would be good, prior to leaving school e.g. careers fairs.
- Need to talk to young people early enough before they fall into NEETS.
- Hard data/evidence of targeting NEETS, numbers and where they are, needed.
- Qualifications lead young people into university or a job.
- Free breakfasts offered to any students at College, over 660 students this year.
- A bursary fund is available for students who need it.
- All colleges need to meet the demands of the changing landscape.

### **Southport College**

Members met with members of staff and students, including a teenage parent.

- The difficulties facing some young people in gaining employment as an apprentice.
- Young people can apply for 30+ jobs with no feedback so unaware of what employers are looking for in young people.
- Some young people felt that they didn't get any careers advice in school and didn't understand the choices available to them. Prior to leaving high school there is little/no preparation for the students or discussions with them for what they intend to do when they leave school.
- 2 young people dropped out of a school sixth form in November and were able to start at college in January which was ideal for them.
- Many young people willing to work unpaid, volunteer etc to gain experience.
- There are many barriers for young people to be in education, including finance, home difficulties.

### **Connexions Centre, Bootle**

A Member attended a Case Conferencing Group and met with the Team Manager and relevant staff.

- Provision – suggestion that there is a need for more apprenticeship placements with employers - training providers attending the meeting, who are placing on behalf of employers, or whom offer access to apprenticeships (employability programmes) or Foundation Learning programmes, level 1 programmes)
- School based information, advice and guidance (IAG) –schools roles in the provision of Careers Education (CE) and impartial IAG explained. There is a need for consistent high quality CEIAG programmes in all schools and colleges. Concern expressed that this responsibility had been passed directly to schools (by Government) without additional funding. This has been a decreasing service in the last 10 years. At one time all young people in Sefton



had the opportunity to have face to face career guidance during Key Stage 4 but now services are mainly focussing on young people at risk of NEET, or schools can now set their own priority groups. Very rarely will be a universal service. This will lead to some young people progressing on to 'unsuitable' courses and then leaving mid-course and becoming NEET and losing significant time before they can continue their education and career plan.

- Tracking responsibilities for Connexions – this ensures all identified NEET young people do not 'fall through the net'. NEET young people are case loaded to named advisers who take responsibility for (hopefully) engagement and 'move on'. This involves face to face contacts, telephone calls and home visits, plus working in the local communities (e.g. libraries, children's centres, Sefton at work, etc.)
- Parental support – the impact of parents capacity to support, motivate and encourage their children discussed

## NEET DATA

The Working Group requested an analysis of NEETS within five wards in the Borough. In the event, an analysis of all Wards within the Borough was undertaken and that analysis is attached to this report as an **Appendix**.

## KEY FINDINGS

It is important to note that in terms of NEETS, Sefton currently has the best record on Merseyside. The Working Group found the existing service to be excellent and that joined up working between the Council and its partners is highly developed. There are particularly barriers for young people leaving local authority care to overcome in order to avoid falling into the NEETS category.

The following points are a summary of the key finding by the Working Group that Members felt they could address without being dependent on additional resources.

1. Young people leaving Year 11 of school do not always feel that they have received sufficient impartial advice and guidance on the full range of options available to them. Parents also feel they are lacking this information.
2. Mentoring schemes within schools and colleges can offer support and guidance for young people on the range of options available, prior to them leaving school and college.
3. Given the current financial climate, the Council needs to ensure that it is receiving best value for money in terms of the services provided in the NEETS area.
4. Looked after young people leaving local authority care remain a concern due the barriers they already face. The Council needs to ensure that they are



monitored in order to note their achievements whether they subsequently fall into the NEETS category.

5. Given the current concerns regarding unemployment amongst young people, the Council needs to ensure that information and statistics on the NEETS area is regularly reviewed.
6. Statistical information held by the Council and its partners on NEETS, although already effectively managed to target interventions, could be used more efficiently and SMARTLY to effect greater improvements.

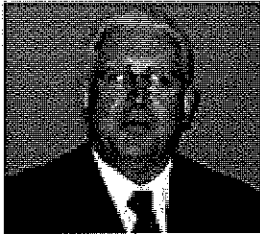
## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND THANKS**

In producing this report on NEETS, acknowledgements and thanks are attributed to the following individuals for their time and input:-

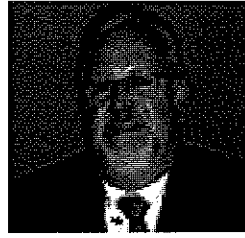
- **The Senior Officer for 14-19 Strategy Management, Children's Services Directorate;**
- **The Corporate Parenting Officer, People Directorate, Sefton MBC, together with members of the MAD Group (Making a Difference for Children in Care);**
- **The Young People's Engagement & Participation Lead, Sefton CVS, together with Sefton Young Advisors & the Co-Ordinator of the Noted project;**
- **Training providers and young people participating in the Basetech training programme;**
- **Staff at the Intraining Group;**
- **Staff and students at Hugh Baird College, Bootle;**
- **Staff and students at Southport College;**
- **Staff at the Connexions Centre, Bootle.**



Thanks must also go to the Members of the Working Group who have worked hard and dedicated a great deal of time to this review, namely:-



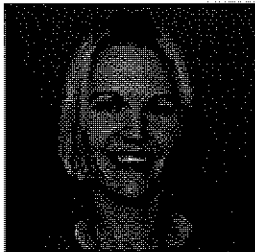
**Councillor Bobby Brennan  
(Lead Member)**



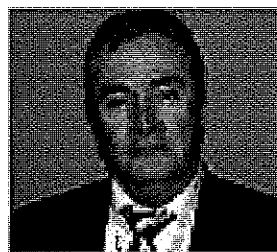
**Councillor Sean Dorgan**



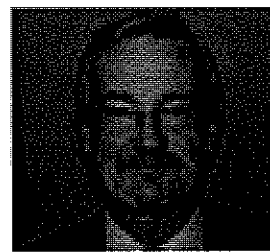
**Councillor Pat Keith**



**Councillor Nina Killen**



**Councillor Patrick McKinley**



**Councillor Michael Roche**



**Councillor Marianne Welsh**

**and Mrs. Sandra Cain (Advisory Member)**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Director of Young People and Families be authorised:-

1. to request head-teachers, and chairs of governors of high schools (including academies and free schools) within the Borough to consider increasing the breadth, range and quality of impartial advice and guidance provision for young people in schools, prior to leaving year 11, to receive advice on the full range of options available to them, and for information to also be made available to parents.
2. to request head-teachers of high schools and principals of colleges within the Borough to consider increasing the level of mentoring support and guidance for young people , in order for them to be better supported in learning about the range of options available to them, prior to leaving school and college.
3. to produce a follow-up report, to be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee (s) in twelve months time, to include (i) whether the Council is receiving best value for money in terms of services provided within the NEETS area; and (ii) monitoring of looked after young people leaving Council care and their achievements or whether they subsequently fall into the NEETS category.
4. to produce six monthly reports, to be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee, outlining the latest position with regard to the NEETS.
5. to ensure that the Council and its partners be encouraged to use all available statistical evidence to identify NEET hotspots and agree robust intervention targets to reduce numbers in these areas, together with agreed robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of joint interventions.



**Overview  
& Scrutiny**



**For further Information please contact:-**

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**Sefton Council** 

