Literature Review of the Costs of Being "Not in Education, Employment or Training" at Age 16-18

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Executive Summary

Aims and objectives of this review

This literature review was undertaken as part of a larger project designed to provide some estimate of the cost of young people who are disengaged from education, training and employment between the ages of 16-18, often referred to in the literature as "NEET" (see *Estimating the cost of being 'not in education, employment or training' at age 16-18* (Godfrey *et al.*, 2002)). This review of major data sources and research literature was undertaken to provide understanding of the main risk factors associated with being NEET, the over-representation of some groups and the evidence about the longer term consequences of being NEET between the ages of 16 and 18. It also provided a critical review of some major data sources together with a cautionary note on relying upon large data sets alone.

Estimates of the size of the group

The size of the NEET group as estimated by the DfES for the end of 2000 is around 170,000 or nine per cent of the age group (DfES, 2001f). This estimate is based on Labour Force Survey (LFS) and administrative data. This report reviews the LFS and the Survey on English Housing (SEH), both being large household surveys and thus will not include within the sample those not living in households (hostels, leaving care schemes etc.). The SEH provides different overall estimates and an examination of regional differences. Estimates of the size of the NEET group from the SEH are around 11 per cent of the age cohort, with variation across regions between 17 per cent in the North East to seven per cent in East Anglia. This report also reviews the Youth Cohort Study (YCS).

Groups over-represented within the NEET group

One of the main purposes of the review was to examine routes into and out of the NEET group. This helps identify other groups of young people that the research literature shows are over-represented within the NEET group.

These included:
- Young people "looked after" (in care);
- Teenage parents;

- Young carers (caring for other family members);
- Young people with chronic illness, disabilities or special needs;
- Young people with mental illness;
- Risk behaviours amongst young people, including smoking, drinking alcohol and serious drug misuse;
- Suicides amongst children and young people;
- Young people involved in crime and the criminal justice system.

Some of the main findings about these over-represented groups include:
- The number of young people "looked after" (in care) in England is just over 55 thousand. Three quarters of this group reach school leaving age with no qualifications and they are highly over-represented amongst the young unemployed, the homeless, teenage parents, and those in young offenders institutions and prisons. Provision for this group is being radically overhauled under the *Quality Protects* programme and Children (Leaving Care) Act, the latter being implemented for the first time in September 2001;

- At the time of the 1999 Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) report on teenage pregnancy, it was estimated that there were 90,000 conceptions to teenagers every year, including 7,700 to under 16 year-old girls and 2,200 to girls under the age of 14. Teenage pregnancies were also spatially clustered in some local authorities and wards within authorities often associated with high social deprivation. Before the programme of action following the SEU report, teenage pregnancy was highly correlated with dropping out of school or college, with having low or no school qualifications, and having no involvement in education, training or employment;

- Estimates of the numbers of young carers have varied from between 10,000 and 210,000 with one of the latest estimates suggesting a figure of around 32,000. Young carers are more likely to be young women than young men. Being a carer is associated with periods of absence from school and considerable underachievement in schools qualifications at the age of 16. If the caring role continues after the age of 16 it is correlated with the young person becoming NEET. Some small scale studies suggest that, given support and extra time in post-16 education, young carers can go on to be educationally successful;

- The extent of mental illness in young people is disputed. A survey by the Office for National Statistics claims that around 10 per cent of children between the ages of five and fifteen has a mental disorder. The Mental Health Foundation claims that around 20 per cent of children and young people under the age of twenty experiences psychological problems. There is some evidence that it is also associated with social class, family poverty and being brought up by a lone parent who is poorly qualified. "Looked after" children are highly over-represented amongst those young people with mental health problems. A number of studies also relate mental health problems to smoking, drinking and regular drug use. It is difficult to separate all these factors which are also associated with being NEET between the ages of 16 and 18 from the influence of the mental illness alone.

- Youth crime is widespread. The most recent Youth Lifestyle Survey indicated that 26 per cent of young men and 11 per cent of young women committed at least one offence in the previous twelve months. Young offending is highly correlated with truancy and school exclusion and a number of other family and community factors. Being a young offender is likely to cause, and be caused by, becoming NEET aged 16 to 18. Where young people become involved in the criminal justice system this is highly likely to impact upon their potential involvement in education, employment, or training. The cost of processing youth crime alone stands at £1billion and some estimates suggests the wider cost of youth crime is over £7billion. However, only four per cent of young men and one per cent of young women reported that they had been cautioned or taken to court. Much of the cost of crime is, therefore, borne by private households and communities.

Risk factors and routes into disengagement

In examining groups over-represented amongst young people who are NEET, an attempt is made in the report to estimate how many young people are involved, and the degree to which it is linked with disengagement from education, employment and training between the ages of 16 and 18. More particularly we look at the main risk factors associated with being NEET and the major routes into disengagement. These include:

- Family disadvantage and poverty;
- Having a special educational need;
- Truancy and exclusion from school before the age of 16;
- Low, or no, educational achievements at the age of sixteen;
- Having poor health (including mental health problems);
- Teenage pregnancy;
- Having parent(s) who are unemployed;

- Membership of some minority ethnic groups;
- Drop out from post-16 education;
- Drop out from government sponsored training;

Some main findings related to these risk factors include:

- The majority of those NEET had not simply stopped doing anything upon leaving school. A third had previously been enrolled on a course of post-16 education before dropping out and a further 40 per cent had dropped out of government sponsored training;
- Young people from unskilled manual backgrounds were more than five times more likely to be NEET than young people from managerial/professional backgrounds;
- Members of African Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups were more likely to be NEET than their white contemporaries;
- One in four young people living on "difficult to let" estates gained no GCSEs, five times the national average;
- A third of those who were persistent truants or who were excluded from school were likely to be unemployed and NEET at the age of 18;
- The number of young people with statements of special educational need has been rising in recent years and accounted for 3.1 per cent of the school population in 2001. However, only 36 per cent of these were being educated in special schools;
- Having poor health and/or being registered as disabled also increased the likelihood of young people being NEET;
- 40 per cent of young women who had been NEET aged 16-18 were mothers of at least two children at the age of 21 compared to less than five per cent of their non-NEET contemporaries. Of those young women who had been NEET for six months or more aged 16-18, over 70 per cent were mothers at the age of 21.

Longer term consequences

The report also reviews evidence about the relationship between being NEET between the ages of 16 and 18 and its likely effect throughout the later life course. This involved a review of the research evidence on the likely experience of unemployment, involvement in drug or alcohol misuse, poor health, parenting at an early age, and involvement in crime. Being NEET, and the factors correlated with it, are also linked to the likelihood of lower earnings through the life-course even when the person is in work. This report examines whether the research evidence can demonstrate a clear correlation between being NEET and these later behaviours so that this too could be taken into account in measuring the longer term cost of disengagement at age 16-18. It also examined some of the policy development seeking to re-engage young people after the age of 18 and

the costs of these. Re-engagement policies include the New Deal for Young People dealing with those long-term unemployed between the ages of 18 and 24 and other initiatives dealing with issues such as drug dependency, poor health (including mental health) or crime.

Key findings include:
- Many of those unemployed at the age of 18 have low or no qualifications and this will significantly impact on any later earnings if employment is obtained;
- Almost half of those who were out of work at the age of sixteen were also out of work at the age of 18;
- Because young people who are unemployed lack work experience, even when they find employment their levels of pay are likely to be lower;
- These periods of unemployment and lower levels of pay when in work will also mean a lower pension entitlement;
- Evidence from the early years of New Deal for Young People seems to confirm that those unemployed for over six months suffer from multiple problems and barriers to employment;
- Persistent offending amongst 18-30 year olds is highly correlated with having been excluded from school, having no or low qualifications and regular drug and alcohol misuse. Evidence on persistent offenders confirms the cumulation of risk factors leading to social exclusion;
- Early parenting had long term consequences for both the mother and the child. Becoming a mother before the age of 23 and the experience of childhood poverty is strongly linked to adverse consequences in later life.

Taking account of the changing policy and practice context
One serious difficulty in constructing a model of routes into and out of NEET is that policies and practices change, sometimes in quite a radical and far reaching manner, with the aims and intentions of reducing the size of the NEET group or attempting to ameliorate the worst long term effects. One of the main aims of the re-focusing of the Careers Service in the late 1990s, the development of the Connexions Service in the new century, and the piloting of Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) was to work most intensely with the NEET group and seek to re-engage them. But the impact of policy-change is not restricted to that *directly* working with the target group. Policy and practice changes have also been directed towards each of the more specific groups known to be over-represented within the NEET group. The report provides an illustrative account of much of this changing policy context.

Chapter 1: Introduction

This review was undertaken as part of a larger project designed to provide some estimate of the cost of young people who are disengaged from education, training and employment between the ages of 16-18, often referred to in the literature as "NEET". It was prepared in conjunction with a second report *Estimating the cost of being 'not in education, employment or training' at age 16-18* (Godfrey *et al.*, 2002). This report summarises evidence both from large data sets and from other research of a more specialised nature. It seeks to provide a critical examination of a wide range of different data through which estimates of the size of the NEET group can be made. Some data were used in order to cover issues such as crime and mental health. However, a cautionary note is also added on the dangers of relying upon large data sets alone. This report reviews other evidence that helps understand the main risk factors associated with being NEET, the over-representation of some groups and the evidence about the longer term consequences of being NEET between the ages of 16 and 18

This chapter outlines the main aims and objectives of the project and the overall structure of the linked research. It also outlines some of the main policy developments associated with young people and social exclusion between the ages of 16 and 18. It starts by introducing some of the issues involved in the economic evaluation of social policy.

Economic evaluation of social policy

Economic evaluation of social policies is relatively new, although there has been considerable development within health economics. Despite this, educational failure and dropping out of education and training has, for some time, been recognised as expensive. For instance, as early as 1993, the Audit Commission was reporting that between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of 16 and 17 year olds left their courses of post-16 education without attaining the qualification for which they were designed. This non-completion it estimated to cost around £500m per year. This calculation, however, did not take into account a whole range of extra costs to the student throughout their lifetime of failure to achieve the desired qualification (Audit Commission-OFSTED, 1993).

Other, more sophisticated work has been done elsewhere. In Canada, for instance, the Conference Board of Canada tried to estimate the cost of "drop out" of students before they graduated. Based on those who did not complete their education in a single year (1989) the full cost of this was estimated to be $4 billion over their working life (The

Conference Board of Canada, 1992). Other attempts have been made to estimate the costs of problematic behaviour (such as substance abuse) associated with educational drop out (Single *et al.,* 1994).

In terms of the Treasury Guidance to appraisal and evaluation set out in 'The Green Book' (HMT, 1999) this review will provide supporting analysis for any future appraisals of specific policies. It will provide:

- Causal relationships between immediate, intermediate and ultimate objectives and outputs;
- Costs and benefits which cannot be easily valued;
- Information on the timing of costs and benefits.

The costing exercise will provide supporting analysis on:

- The main components of the Net Present Values costs or values (in current costs);
- Sensitivity analysis of the effects of changing key assumptions.

The evaluation in this case concerns the reduction in the numbers of 16,17 and 18 year olds not in education training or employment. The alternative state is taking part in some form of education, training or paid work at these ages. Throughout the review the contrast in outcomes for these two states will be sought.

In the social welfare field some issues are particularly intransigent and may explain why it is a relatively underdeveloped area. For example the following areas listed in Sefton (2000) are relevant to this study:

- Multiple outcomes, in this case the outcome could be a reduction in drug use, or crime or fewer spells of unemployment in later life;
- Long-term outcomes, such as poverty in old age, or inter-generational disadvantage;
- Qualitative outcomes such as increase in self esteem, which are not very amenable to measurement;
- Low level effects, the impact of social welfare interventions is often small or applies to small numbers of people and is difficult to detect relative to the scale of the problem or other external influences on the problem;
- User involvement: the active involvement of the user is often crucial to the success of social welfare interventions.

To enable a future systematic evaluation to be undertaken, this project provides the critical exploration of such issues at a broad level in this report, and more precisely in the

second (see *Estimating the cost of being 'not in education, employment or training' at age 16-18* (Godfrey *et al.*, 2002)).

Aims and objectives of the project

The aim of the whole project is to broaden the understanding of the benefits accruing from encouraging young people aged 16-18 to remain in education, training or employment beyond the standard work done on rates of return to Further and Higher educational qualifications.

Being in education, training or employment has wider benefits apart from increased employability. Such young people are likely to avoid the costs of the greater likelihood of poor health, drug abuse, and crime, which are associated with not being in education, training or employment at age 16-18. Two papers are produced to meet the aims of the project:

- This report clarifies the definitions of, and numbers included in the "socially excluded" aged 16-18 years, and analyses the links between social exclusion and poor outcomes.
- The second report will provide a more comprehensive framework linking different costing models to the policy questions (Godfrey *et al.*, 2002).

Contents and structure of the review

To achieve these ends the review will cover the following ground:

a)   definitions of socially excluded young people. For example, how far does the time young people are not in education training or employment influence their being defined as 'socially excluded';

b)   the circumstances of socially excluded young people, their incomes and sources of incomes, their health, their involvement with drug abuse and criminal activities. Information will be sought on how socially excluded young people compare with those in education, training or employment;

c)   the likely future for socially excluded young people. To what extent does being out of employment, training or education at age 16-18 result in unemployment, and ill health beyond this age group;

d)   the long term effects of social exclusion at this crucial stage in the development of the young adult. Over a lifetime employment prospects may be reduced, health may be

affected. The ability to save for a pension could be reduced and socially excluded young people are more likely to be dependent on the state in old age.

During this search, the information will be critically evaluated as to the robustness of the data on which it is based, and the soundness of the methods of predictions into the future. Other data sets, expanding on those listed in Hutton (1999), which might provide better estimates will be listed and evaluated. Particular attention will be paid to the following data sets:

- The Survey of English Housing
- The Labour Force Survey
- Family Resources Survey
- Health Survey of England
- The British Household Panel Survey
- The Longitudinal Study from the Census
- The Birth Cohorts
- The Survey of Poverty and Social Exclusion in Britain
- The Survey of Mental Health of Children and Adolescents in Great Britain
- The British Crime Survey
- The Youth Cohort Survey
- Other data sources particularly covering specific aspects of social exclusion.

Chapter 2 discusses the currently used definitions of socially excluded young people, and compares recent estimates of the numbers so defined. It also provides a critical review of some of the major data sources through which an estimate of the size of the group can be established and what such sources can tell us about the characteristics of the group. Chapter 3 examines some of the major routes into the NEET group and the association between this and earlier patterns of educational disaffection and disadvantage. Chapter 4 provides more detailed information on the over-represented groups, paying particular attention to the over-represented groups listed below:

- Young people 'looked after' (in care)
- Teenage parents
- Young carers
- Young people with chronic illness, disabilities, and having accidents
- Suicide by young people
- Mental illness
- Risk behaviours involving smoking, drinking alcohol and serious drug misuse
- Young people involved in crime and criminal justice.

Chapter 5 assembles the information available on the futures of young people beyond age 18 who were socially excluded at ages 16-18. Longer-term, lifetime effects of social exclusion among young adults is discussed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 provides a summary of the key findings.

Policy background and the changing patterns of support

Disengagement from all forms of education, employment and training amongst 16 and 17 year olds has been the subject of research for the past twenty years, although it received much more prominent attention in the late 1990s. It was the subject of the Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) fifth report '*Bridging the Gap'* in 1999 and significant changes in provision for 13-19 year olds are currently being implemented. For instance *Bridging the Gap,* provided a long-term agenda for change in a number of policy areas and set up four working groups to address its 25 point 'action plan'. The DfES White Paper *Learning to Succeed,* published shortly before the report, also signalled a wide-ranging series of reforms including:

- *greater choice at Key Stage 4* and a *Learning Gateway* of options at age 16;
- a new Connexions Service offering information, advice, guidance and support;
- a *Connexions Card* offering incentives and rewards for participation in learning;
- a single *Learning and Skills Council* with local *Learning and Skills Councils* to co-ordinate post-16 education and training; and
- the extension of *Education Maintenance Allowances* for those wishing to participate but whose family circumstances mean they cannot afford to do so (DfES, 1999f).

The Government's policies for raising participation and achievement in learning focus on four key areas: improved curriculum and range of qualifications; outreach and personal support; improved standards of delivery; and financial support for those who need it. It may be useful to review each of these policy initiatives in turn.

Modification of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and a Learning Gateway at 16

The SEU highlighted the fact that disaffection at age 16 and 17 is linked to earlier disaffection in school and especially during the final years of compulsory schooling. The evidence will be reviewed in subsequent chapters of this report. It argued that, if education is to engage all young people in the final years of compulsory schooling, there must be some flexibility in the restricted academic diet of the national curriculum. A national curriculum review is being undertaken to increase flexibility in dis-applying the curriculum to 14-16, to increase vocational qualifications for this age group (including a

new Part 1 GNVQ) and to experiment more with work-based approaches to learning. Extra funding is being made available to enable this to happen.

In the recent Green Papers *Schools: Building on Success* and *14-19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards – consultation document* (DfES, 2001c; DfES, 2002) the Government has set out proposals for enabling pupils to pursue a programme of learning which is tailored to their individual abilities, interests and aspirations. From the age of 14, pupils could choose to study for vocational and technical qualifications alongside academic ones: young people would be able to mix academic and vocational study, or switch between options, to ensure that their learning reflected their emerging and developing talents and interests through to age 19. The proposals should help to ensure that schools, 6th form colleges and FE colleges can offer something relevant to all pupils, not just those who do well at academic subjects.

For the vocational pathway, the government is also putting in place a framework for vocational learning based on an entitlement to a Foundation or Advanced Modern Apprenticeship for those who meet the entry criteria. Those not meeting the Modern Apprenticeship entry criteria will no longer participate on 'Other Training' programmes. Instead, they will be referred by the Connexions Service to pre-apprenticeship programmes delivered through the 'Learning Gateway' which are designed to bring them up to the entry standard.

Connexions Service

The SEU also proposed that there was a need for more coherent help and advice about options at sixteen, especially for those groups most at risk of dropping out. The new *Connexions* service aims to provide this.

The Connexions service will provide integrated advice, guidance and access to personal development opportunities for **all** 13-19 year olds in England. It is a universal service, for all young people but targets support at those most in need of assistance.

There is now a more general acceptance of the fact that leaving school is a 'life episode' where things can go badly wrong and where accessing suitable public services can be difficult. Even before the Connexions service began its work Careers companies were required to pay particular attention to vulnerable groups and those at risk of disengaging from all forms of education, training and employment.

The SEU report points out that in most areas outreach careers work is often not well integrated into other mainstream provision and is dependent upon short-term funding and unrealistic outcome performance measures. **Personal Advisers** are the cornerstone of the service. Under Connexions, young people will no longer be passed between different professionals for advice, without any co-ordination. This is because a Connexions Personal Adviser (PA) will be available to give advice and guidance and help young people identify barriers to learning and find solutions and achieve their full potential. Personal advisers will be drawn from a range of different backgrounds.

Connexions will work closely with the LSC (see below) particularly to help ensure that there is an adequate range of local provision for young people. Most of the 47 LSCs cover areas which are larger than those in which Careers Companies and TECs have operated in the past.

The support provided to young people will reflect need; vulnerable and disadvantaged young people will receive extra help to overcome barriers to learning and progression and improve their life chances. This more comprehensive approach to the disadvantaged and disaffected is also expected to be linked to much better systems of 'mapping' and 'tracking' whereby *all* (and especially the vulnerable and at risk) can be identified, engaged, take an active part in career planning and have their progress monitored (Green *et al.*, 2001). One way in which this may be made easier is through the use of a new Connexions *Card* already being piloted in a number of areas. This card often gives access to free public transport and discounts in some youth consumer markets. It can also be used as a swipe card to monitor attendance in post-16 provision. It is hoped that the combination of the card and the responsibilities of the *Connexions* Service should precipitate prompt action in offering support at the most critical times.

The service is being rolled out across England from April 2001 and will exist everywhere in England by 2003. Fifteen of the Partnerships went into operation in 2001. It will have a three tier structure: a national unit responsible for strategy and reporting to the partner government departments; a Connexions partnership parallel to new Learning and Skills Councils throughout England; a local management committee operating at local authority levels (or multiples) and drawing from local partners. The service will be based on eight key principles:
• raising aspirations – setting high expectations for every individual;
• meeting individual need – overcoming barriers to learning;
• taking account of the views of young people, individually and collectively as the service is developed and operated locally;
• inclusion – keeping young people in mainstream education and training;

- partnership – agencies collaborating to achieve more for young people, parents and communities;
- community involvement and neighbourhood renewal;
- extending opportunity and equality of opportunity;
- evidence-based practice – basing interventions on rigorous research and evaluation about what works.

The Connexions service will also have 'targets' for year-by-year improvements in participation, accepting as it does that participation is an important key to other aspects of 'well-being'. Further targets are expected for participation in post-16 education and training and for the achievements of minority ethnic groups; for those living in communities with low achievements; for teenage mothers; and young people with disabilities. The contribution Connexions Partnerships make to increasing participation will be measured through cross cutting and partnership targets. Partnerships will support the following cross cutting targets that have been agreed locally by partner organisations:

- to increase the proportion of 16 year olds obtaining 5 or more GCSEs at grades A-C by four percentage points between 2002 and 2004 (DfES and LEA target);
- by 2004, 92 per cent of 16 year olds should obtain 5 or more GCSEs at grades A-G including Maths and English (DfES and LEA target);
- to increase by 2004, by three percentage points the number of 19 year olds achieving a qualification equivalent to NVQ level 2 compared to 2002 (DfES and LEA);
- for 80 per cent of 16-18 year olds to be in structured learning by 2004 (LSC);
- to reduce truancy by 2004 by a further ten per cent from that achieved by 2002;
- to reduce the under 18 conception rate by 50 per cent by 2010, and establish a firm downward trend in the conception rates for under 16s.

In addition, partnership targets will be set that relate to specific aspects of Connexions work. Partnerships will have the lead role in setting and achieving these targets at local level. Partnerships targets cover a reduction in the number of young people leaving education and training to become NEET; increasing the proportion of care leavers, young offenders and teenage mothers who are in education or training and increasing the number of young people with a drug related problem, who are referred to specialist support.

Key within the service will be a network of personal advisors.

Personal Advisers will broker access to specialist support services, such as housing or drug misuse support. Personal Advisers will work in a range of different settings including schools, colleges, one-stop shops, community centres and on an outreach basis.

Learning and Skills Councils

As youth training and forms of post-16 education expanded in the 1980s and 1990s, the system for funding, managing and overseeing local provision became complex. The Government is now determined to promote a more level playing field for funding and more co-operation and joint planning between the different sectors, remaining in school, further education and youth training. To do this a new Learning and Skills Council for England is being made responsible for delivering all post-16 education and training (outside HE) with local Learning and Skills Councils to plan and co-ordinate provision locally. The councils superseded TECs in April 2001 and are intended to promote Learning Partnerships across all sectors and for all age groups. Learning Partnerships are expected to co-ordinate local action to raise standards, identify and address gaps in provisions, eliminate duplication and ensure that education and training meets local needs. The councils will have both a Young People's Learning Committee and one devoted to adult learning.

Financial support and EMAs

Education Maintenance Allowances (EMAs) are designed to help young people from less well off families stay on at school or college. Educational research clearly shows that participation in education among 16-18 year olds from less well off households is some 20 per cent below that for young people from better off families. The result is that many of these young people subsequently move in and out of low skill jobs and are at risk of long-term unemployment and social exclusion. EMAs, currently being piloted in a third of the country, provide eligible young people with up to £30 per week (£40 in two areas) to help them carry on with their studies, with additional bonuses payable for staying on and achievement.

From September 2000 four of the original 15 pilot EMA LEAs began piloting additional flexibilities in the EMA scheme to meet the needs of vulnerable young people (those who are homeless/estranged, have disabilities, or are parents), in response to *Bridging the Gap*.

Bridging the Gap also suggested that the option of a Single Youth Allowance, which has operated in Australia since 1998, would need to be investigated. This system is means-tested according to parental income and a series of complex 'disregard rules' about the earnings a young person can make without reductions in benefit, including the earnings of students who work part-time or during vacation time.

This raft of policy initiatives are both far-reaching and radical. But they are not the only policy developments likely to impact upon the social exclusion of young people.

Other related policy developments

A number of policy initiatives across government departments also aim to address issues of social exclusion amongst young people. The Social Exclusion Unit has called for more youth policy co-ordination across Government and several departments have been responding by promoting and supporting multi-agency work, especially with vulnerable groups. The DfES has long recognised that disengagement at 16-18 can be traced back to earlier patterns of educational disaffection and disadvantage and has a 'Standards Fund' to help areas of most acute need. Truancy and School Exclusion was the subject of the second report of the SEU in 1998 and following this, new guidance was given to schools and local authorities by the DfES to help meet the targets of reducing both by a third by 2002.

It is also clear that disengagement at 16-18 is associated with later unemployment. The New Deal for Young People[1] was the first of a series of 'New Deals' now extended to older age groups and lone parents. The Government is, therefore, equally committed to developing prevention strategies to intervene earlier in young people's lives to prevent social exclusion in the first place.

Each of the vulnerable groups known to be over-represented with those not in education, employment or training aged 16-18 have also been the subject of recent policy reviews, new initiatives and new structures are being developed to help more effective implementation. For instance, young people 'looked after' are now covered by the 'Quality Protects' initiatives developed by the Department of Health, and care leavers will receive new patterns of provision following the Care Leavers Act. The Youth Justice System has also been fundamentally reformed following the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act and the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999. The new Youth Justice Board is responsible for all aspects of youth justice and the working of Youth Offending

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1 Policy responsibility for the New Deal lies with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)

Teams in all local authority areas. Teenage pregnancy, the subject of the fourth SEU report has also been the subject of a far-reaching policy review resulting in a national campaign to reduce conceptions (especially to young people under the age of 18) with local patterns of provision overseen by local co-ordinators appointed by Health Authorities. More detail of these and other developments will be covered in Chapter 4.

The DfES also provides many additional forms of support aimed, directly or indirectly, at reducing social exclusion.

Study support encompasses a broad range of activities including homework, study and breakfast clubs; sports and outdoor activities; opportunities to pursue particular interests such as the creative arts, languages and ICT and developing study skills. There are 45 *Playing for Success* Centres currently in operation with others due to open later this year. These are out of school hours study support centres within top football clubs and other sports grounds and focus on raising literacy, numeracy and ICT standards amongst KS2 and KS3 pupils. A pilot scheme of *Pupil Learning Credits* has also been introduced, from September 2001, to channel additional funding to enable secondary schools to provide additional learning opportunities for KS3 pupils whose social circumstances are exceptionally challenging. The pilot is operating in 30 areas and is targeted at schools with a minimum of 35% of pupils in receipt of free school meals.

Sure Start is a cross-departmental programme overseen by ministers from a number of departments including DfES. The programme works with parents-to-be, parents and children to promote the physical, intellectual and social development of pre-school children - particularly those who are disadvantaged. *Sure Start* sets up local programmes to improve the services available for families with children under four, for example, providing family support and ensuring provision for quality play and early learning opportunities.

Further, as part of the National Curriculum, drug, alcohol and tobacco education is provided to all children, although schools individually decide how best to deliver it according to the needs of their pupils. The DfES encourages schools to develop drugs policies which will address the needs of all pupils, including those at greatest risk of developing problems in later life. Further, through it's 'extended schools' policy the DfES will also encourage schools to consider providing a range of services built around the needs of children who attend the school, their families and the wider community. This might include more out of school hours learning, adult education, parenting classes and mentoring. All these things can support and motivate pupils and adults.

Finally, mention should be made of the attempt to embed a more coherent and 'joined-up' approach to youth policy in Government. Policy Action Team (PAT 12) was set up to review policy for young people. It made 24 separate recommendations. Many of the proposals are about ways through which new Youth Inclusion Objectives can be established, reviewed and progressed but they also include strategies to co-ordinate better government youth policy both within national and local government. The report provides six youth inclusion objectives, including putting young people at the centre of policies that affect them, and organising services around their needs, including the consultation with, and the involvement of, young people in policy development. Also prominent is a commitment to ending child poverty, supporting vulnerable young people especially at vulnerable times in their lives, and supporting those who face discrimination because of ethnic origin, disability or gender.

In response to PAT 12's report the Prime Minister announced in July 2000:

- The establishment of the Children and Young People's Unit

- A new Cabinet Committee on Children and Young People's Services;

- The creation of the new post of Minister for Young People

- A 'Children's Fund' worth £450 million over 3 years.

The Children and Young People's Unit supports Ministers by co-ordinating policies and developing strategy to prevent under achievement, poverty and social exclusion amongst 0-19 years olds.The Chancellor, Gordon Brown, chairs the Cabinet Committee with Estelle Morris (Secretary of State for Education and Skills) as vice chair.

This Unit is responsible for co-ordinating policies and developing a strategy to prevent underachievement, poverty and social exclusion amongst 0-19 year olds. The Unit is also responsible for the administration of a new funding stream (The Children's Fund) designed to address issues of disadvantage and poverty, and in particular to provide 'preventative' measures not already met by mainstream policies. The Children's Fund has already been allocated a budget of £450 million over three years focusing on young people aged 0-19 year olds.

However, the responsibilities of the new Unit are much wider that the administration of the Children's Fund. The Children and Young People's Unit is located in the Department for Education and Skills, but works across Departmental boundaries. It's cross departmental nature is guaranteed by the separation of Ministerial responsibilities and by the fact that the Unit has its own ring-fenced resources separate from DfES budgets. The Unit has the task of looking at how best to improve service provision further and to work closely with the voluntary, community, faith and statutory sectors. Central to the Unit's work will be their commitment to engage children and young people themselves,

learning from what works and from each other, to develop services that are better designed and delivered to meet young people's needs.

The Unit has just completed their national consultation exercise that invited suggestions on the Government's proposals for the developing of the overarching strategy. This included 40 workshops that involved children, parents, voluntary organisations and the wider public. The workshops covered issues such as social exclusion, children in care and social cohesion. The unit will publish the results of the consultation shortly.

Summary

This chapter has outlined the issues to be addressed in economic evaluation of social policies such as reducing the impact of social exclusion at ages 16-18. It has set out how the project, of which this paper is the first part, aims to contribute to this policy. It has also outlined a number of current policies for young people aged 16-18 likely to impact upon social exclusion.

It has also examined the proposed transformation of support services for 14-19 year olds. Clearly the latter must address problems of disadvantage and disaffection in school and, as we will see in Chapter 3, this involves long-term problems throughout compulsory school and indeed even before compulsory schooling begins. One of the major changes to have been introduced through New Deal for Young People and the Connexions service is some concerted means through which complex and 'joined-up' problems can be addressed. The extended use of personal advisors over a long period of time are intended to address all 'barriers to inclusion', be these located in the family, housing, life style or qualifications and training. These new approaches go some way to making interventions more 'holistic' in their assessment of need. Part of this strategy is also designed to involve young people as active partners in developing for themselves solutions and strategies to deal with the problems they face. Chapter 4 will return to the complexity of the problems when we examine the particular circumstances of groups who are most at risk of being outside of education, employment and training. Chapters 5 and 6 examine the medium and long-term consequences of being NEET at ages 16-18.

Chapter 2:   Definitions and Numbers

This chapter examines the different definitions that have been used to describe young people who are 'social excluded', 'status zer0' or NEET. It reports on what can be gleaned from big data sets on the size of the group and some of their main characteristics.

Definitions of socially excluded young people

'Social exclusion' is often now used as a generic 'catch-all' phrase concerned with syndromes disadvantage. The Social Exclusion Unit define it as 'a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown'. As applied to young people it is the latest in a series of terms that sometimes have different meanings and connotations including 'Status Zer0' and 'NEET'. Initially 'status zerO' was a technical term derived from careers services records where status 1 referred to young people in post-16 education, status 2 those in training and status 3 those in employment. But as Williamson argued it soon came to represent 'a powerful metaphor' for the fact that 'status zer0' young people appeared to 'count for nothing and were going nowhere' (Williamson, 1997). NEET (not in employment, education or training) was devised as a more neutral term. Both NEET and 'status zer0' are, however, used primarily to describe young people out of work and not in education or training. The descriptions are couched very firmly in the relationship that young people have to education and the labour market, although it is also recognised that there are many other factors connected to this. Employment has been singled out as one of the most powerful pathways to independence. There is also a strong moral argument for the promotion of social inclusion through access to employment either directly or via education for disadvantaged young people. Most young people aspire to having an 'ordinary working life' although significant numbers are severely disadvantaged in achieving in a variety of different ways.

Trying to define 'socially excluded' young people prompts consideration of the opposing group 'socially included' young people. Recent developments in the labour market suggests that ideas of what constitutes an ordinary working life may have changed. One option is to think of this in terms of a traditional life course as set out in the National Insurance scheme for the State Retirement Pension. Between age 16 and 65 men (and women now) have to have made regular weekly contributions over 45 years to achieve a full pension entitlement. In the past few women have achieved this (Ginn J and Arber S, 1994) although it may be more possible with the help of Home Responsibility Payments

and other developments. There are many people, both men and women, who do achieve an ordinary working life but increasingly they are a group with good educational backgrounds working in high demand occupations or areas of high employment. There is also a large number of people who although not out of work for the whole of their working lives have a much more interrupted working life. This group are more likely to live in areas of high unemployment and have lower educational qualifications and experience repeated periods of unemployment. But work undertaken as part of the review of New Deal indicates that some live adjacent to buoyant labour markets (Bryson *et al*., 2000). The decline in manufacturing industry has left many areas of high male manual employment with high unemployment and little opportunities for unskilled work.

Young people are particularly vulnerable to low paid work in which they can be on short-term contracts, and with few employment rights. The years 16-18 have always been a period of change in the lives of young adults. Even in times of high employment they tended to try a number of jobs. Now they are much more likely to be moving in and out of employment, unemployment and educational courses. The notion that they are socially excluded if they are not in employment, education or training at some time between the ages 16-18 suggests that the contrasting group is one with an ordinary working life either in education or employment throughout the ages 16 to pension age. In policy terms this could be thought optimal - that everyone should be able to work and contribute to their own retirement income throughout their working age. Problems remain for some groups of people such as those providing informal care, such as mothers and daughters, those with health problems and disabilities.

For the purposes of this paper we will define socially excluded young people as those not in employment, education, or training at some time between the ages of 16 and 18. Where possible the focus is on England only, although sometimes it is not possible to disaggregate the finding of studies which have a broader remit.

The number of young people who are NEET

The research undertaken by both South Glamorgan and Mid Glamorgan Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) attempted to estimate the destination of age cohorts leaving school in their areas (Instance *et al*., 1994; Mid-Glamorgan TEC, 1996). On the basis of these calculations, Mid-Glamorgan TEC estimated that between 16 and 20 per cent of 16 and 17 year olds in their area were 'status zer0'.

This is a higher estimate that one done by Wilkinson in a study in Sunderland but broadly in line with other calculations (Wilkinson, 1995). In the mid-1990s Youthaid, for instance, used the Labour Force Survey to estimate that between December 1996 and February 1997 there were 149,000 unemployed 16 and 17 year olds (Chatrik and Convery, 1997). Some of the main sources of data were reviewed by Pierce and Hillman in a study for the Institute for Public Policy Research (Pierce and Hillman, 1998). Another study by Bentley and Gurumurthy for Demos, used a number of large data sets (particularly the Labour Force Survey) to attempt to assess the size of the group (Bentley and Gurumurthy, 1999). This latter study also called for far reaching reform in youth support services and was closely followed by an enquiry by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) between 1998-1999. The SEU report too made use of a variety of different sources including a special analysis of data from the Youth Cohort Survey (YCS) commissioned by the DfES (Payne, 2000). Below we present an up-to-date review of what the main data sets can tell us about the numbers involved. Concern about this group in particular has led to widespread changes in policy and practice and in institutional responsibilities (DfES, 1999; DfES, 2000a and b). Yet our knowledge of the size and characteristics of this group is still open to debate and little attempt has been made to estimate the long term cost of their disengagement (but see Chatrik *et al*., 2000; Craig, 1999). Below we review some of the main sources of statistical estimates of the size of the group.

The Youth Cohort Surveys

The most recent information from the Youth Cohort Study ninth survey of 18 year olds carried out in spring 2000 have been released (DfES, 2001c). The survey found that 11 per cent of 18 year olds were NEET and that a third of those who were out of work at age 16 were also out of work at 18. The percentage of all 18 year olds out of work has fallen by more than half since 1993. Young people from an unskilled manual background were more than five times as likely to be out of work than those from a managerial/professional background. A third of those who were persistent truants or excluded from school were NEET at age 18. Occasional truants were far less likely to be out of work.

The DfES currently estimates that there are 170,000 NEET based on LFS and administrative data. 157,000 at the end of 1999, being the latest available estimate at the time of the analysis. Neither of these are based on the YCS although some studies have used this survey to examine characteristics of the NEET group.

Payne (1999) outlines the characteristics of young people who are NEET such as that 28 per cent spent between three and six months NEET and 25 per cent spent more than six months NEET. Unemployment was the most common reason for people to be NEET although almost half of young women were 'doing something else'. People become NEET through different routes, some from education, some from jobs. They also leave in different ways. Low levels of education were more common in the NEET group than for others. Other characteristics include greater likelihood of truancy, poor family backgrounds, and from certain ethnic minorities. All these characteristics are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

The Survey on English Housing (SEH)

The SEH is a continuous government survey that has been carried out every year since 1993/94. Here we have analysed data from 1998/99 - the most recent available for analysis at the time of writing. The analysis is based upon an non weighted base of 20,506 households containing 50,074 individuals. The results that are given below are based on the weighted and grossed data files representing 20,423 households containing 48,705 individuals. Crudely, every single household in the SEH sample represents 1,000 households in England.

- The weighted and gross data estimates that 1,825,000 16-18 year olds lived in households (i.e. non institutional) in England in 1998/99. Table 2.1 shows the estimated age distribution and Table 2 their recorded educational or economic status.

The most obvious categories to be included in estimating NEET are the unemployed, those categorised as 'Sick/disabled', and 'other inactive' which indicates that, of the 1,810 16-18 year olds on whom we have data, 204 or 11 per cent are not in employment, education or training. This figure of 11 per cent is an estimate for all 16-18 year olds. However, it should be noted that a further 447 or 25 per cent are only in part-time employment.

Table 2.1:   16-18 year olds living in households in England

Age	Number in the sample	% of cohort
16	571	31
17	642	35
18	611	43
Total	1,825	100

Table 2.2:   Employment status of 16-18 year olds

Economic status	Numbers	%
Base	1,810	100
Student	738	41
FT employment	400	22
PT employment	447	25
Government Training Scheme	21	1
Unemployed	140	8
Sick/disabled	10	1
Other inactive	54	3
NEET	**204**	**11**

It should be recognised that some sixteen year olds will still be at school because they have not yet reached school leaving age. So at age 16, 9 per cent are recorded as NEET, and at age 17 this has risen to ten per cent. By the age of 18, the size of the group not in employment, education and training has increased by 50 per cent to 15 per cent of the age group. Young women are also slightly more likely to be NEET than young men, 12 per cent compared with ten per cent

Although the sample cells are small, in percentage terms, some minority ethnic groups (Black, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) are more likely to be NEET than their white counterparts, although those from an Indian background are less likely.

One of the reasons for using the SEH is to examine spatial concentrations in particular housing tenures. Young people living in the social rented sector are considerably more likely (25 per cent compared with seven per cent of young people from the owner

occupied sector) to be NEET. Those living in private rented accommodation have an intermediate likelihood (19 per cent).

It is also associated with living in households where the head of household is either unemployed or economically inactive. Almost half of the young people living with an unemployed head of household are NEET, compared with 34 per cent where the head is inactive; 17 per cent where the head is sick or disabled, and seven per cent where the head is in full-time work.

There is also evidence of regional differences with some Northern regions having more than double the percentages of those reported in the Midlands and East Anglia.

Table 2.3: **Regional Differences in NEET. Percentages and numbers of the 16-18 year old age group NEET**

Government Office Region	%	Total no. of all 16-18 year olds living in households, in thousands
North East	17	79
North West	13	206
Merseyside	18	67
Yorkshire & Humberside	15	169
East Midlands	9	163
West Midlands	8	227
East Anglia	7	198
London	12	244
ROSE	10	292
South West	13	166

Source: Survey of English Housing, 1998/9

Finally, a preliminary logistic regression undertaken for this project suggests that those least likely to be NEET are those living with two parents in owner occupation with father working FT. Those most likely to be NEET are those living as a couple or on their own with children, living in social housing and with a head of household who is unemployed. *The Labour Force Survey (LFS)*

The LFS is a survey of households living at private addresses in Great Britain. Since 1992 quarterly publications have become possible because of the increased size of the

survey, now 60,000 households every quarter. The LFS is intended to be representative of the whole population of Great Britain. It covers all persons resident in private households, all resident in National Health Service accommodation, and young people living away from the parental home in a student hall of residence or similar institution during term time. The sample design currently consists of 59,000 responding households in Great Britain every quarter representing 0.3 per cent of the population of Great Britain. A sample of approximately 2,000 responding households is added to this representing 0.4 per cent of the Northern Ireland population, and allowing United Kingdom analyses to be undertaken.

Based on the survey conducted in the Autumn of 2000, the Unemployment Unit and Youthaid have provided estimates for this paper. This confirms that at the time of this survey just over 170 thousand (171, 613) 16-18 year olds are not in education, employment or training, 9.6 per cent of the age group. This estimate is based on all those aged 16-18 in households covered by the survey. Many of the 16 year-olds, however, will be below school leaving age. However, LFS data do allow for the age groups to be determined by 'educational years' rather than chronological age. Where this is done, the estimate rises to over 177 thousand (or 10.1 per cent) of the age group. This survey indicates that, whichever age definition is used there are slightly more young men than young women in this category. The survey also indicates that some groups of young people are more likely to be NEET than others. More than 1 in 5 (22.5 per cent), are reported as having no qualifications. Young people with disabilities are also over-represented with 16.1 per cent reporting that they are not in any form of education, employment or training. As with other surveys, the number of young people who are NEET and are members of minority ethnic groups is difficult to estimate because of the sample size. There are plans to have booster samples in new Cohort studies. The LFS data do, however, indicate that Pakistani and Bangladeshi young people are, more likely to be NEET than other groups.

Reviewing a range of evidence the SEU also reported on spatial concentrations. Regions with a history of high unemployment, and deprived areas in all regions, had much higher rates. Young people whose parents were unemployed were also reported to be over-represented (SEU, 1999b). Young people from African Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi minority ethnic groups were also over-represented. One in six young people from Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities experienced spells of non-participation of four or more months during the two years following the end of compulsory schooling (SEU, 1999b).

Some problems of relying on big data sets alone

In analysing routes into and out of being NEET, a number of short-comings in the Youth Cohort Survey data were revealed (Payne, 2000). The YCS is a large questionnaire survey of young people. Yet, as reported by Payne, by the time young people are surveyed at age eighteen, only just over 40 per cent of the initial sample frame respond and there are reasons to suspect that those who are disengaged are heavily over-represented within those who do not respond.

Response rates in the YCS are generally lower for men in general, and for men and women less well qualified and for those not in full time education. However, the YCS is weighted to take account of lower responses from certain groups between sweeps of the YCS. Included amongst the characteristics which are taken account of when devising the weighting of the latest 18 year old survey (cohort 9 sweep 3) was whether the respondent was NEET at 17 – so although fewer NEETs reply to the survey at 18, the data is weighted to take account of this (and other characteristics of non-responders).

Young people in special schools, who by definition have a range of moderate to severe social, emotional and learning difficulties (and are thus faced with difficulties in the labour market) are not in the sample frame.

The SEU report also made use of the Birth Cohort Study, a large cohort study of those born in 1970. This seemed to indicate a number of correlates of being unemployed and disengaged at age 16 and 17, later unemployment and a number of other factors such as being a teenage parent and having health (including mental health) problems. Yet this birth cohort reached minimum school leaving age in the mid-1980s at a time when unemployment was at an historically high level and when recruitment on to the Youth Training Scheme was at its peak (Roberts, 1995). It is therefore difficult to project such findings on to the fortunes of those reaching minimum school leaving age in the twenty-first century when general unemployment rates are falling and in circumstances where the policy context has changed fundamentally. For instance, those born ten years after the BCS age cohort, were eligible for New Deal for Young People which has had a marked affect on their fortunes. Many of those reaching the age of sixteen now, do so in an era in which in most parts of the country the rates for staying on at school are around 80 per cent. Also in some areas, they are eligible for Educational Maintenance Allowances. Both the economic, social and policy contexts are therefore fundamentally different to those facing the 1970 birth cohort. There are, therefore, very good reasons for not relying slavishly upon big data sets alone.

At the end of 1999 the DFES estimates of the number of 16-18 year olds NEET in England was 157,000 (eight and a half per cent) a decline from ten per cent (185,000) at the end of 1998 (DFES: SFR 28/2000). This is the number we will use in the cost estimates in the second report (Godfrey *et al*., 2002)

This was the latest estimate at the beginning of the analysis undertaken. These estimates use the Labour Force Survey and administrative data.

Chapter 3: Risk factors leading to, and associated with, social exclusion at age 16-18

This chapter will describe the:

(1)   routes into NEET;

(2)   risk factors occurring before the age of 16 mainly concerned with educational disadvantage and disaffection.

The chapter concentrates on links between educational experience prior to the end of compulsory schooling and being NEET aged 16-18. Some of these links are mediated by disadvantaged family background and living in poor neighbourhoods where underachievement and disaffection is widespread. However, these same factors are also linked to other issues, such as becoming 'looked after' (in care), being a young carer, suffering chronic illness, becoming mentally ill, indulging in various forms of risk taking behaviour likely to exacerbate ill-health and/or disengagement, or associated with other behaviour linked to disengagement, such as committing criminal offences and being embroiled in the criminal justice system. Because of the complexity of these relationships, the main characteristics of these groups and their connection to being NEET will be reviewed in the next chapter. This chapter focuses on routes into NEET and broad patterns of educational disadvantage and disaffection before the age of 16 which are associated with later disengagement from education, training and the labour market. However, where relevant, reference will be made to the connections between educational disadvantage and disaffection and other behaviours.

Routes into NEET

Largely based on the analysis of YCS data the SEU report *Bridging the Gap* concluded that only around one in five of those identified as being NEET became non-participants immediately upon leaving school. The evidence also suggests that the majority have tried some form of education, training or employment after minimum school leaving age before dropping out. A third of those not participating did so after dropping out of further education, with a further 40 per cent dropping out of a job or training. Drop-out from employment (27 per cent) was nearly twice as common as drop-out from government-sponsored training.

Drop out from post-16 education has been the subject of two enquiries by the Audit Commission and the National Audit Office. The first report *Unfinished Business* published in 1993 reported that between around 150,000 young people who registered for post-16 education courses (30-40%) left without achieving the relevant qualification for which the course was designed (Audit Commission, 1993). Following the report, further education colleges invested considerably in student support services and management information services to try to remedy drop out. However, a further report *Improving Student Performance* published in 2001, suggested that, whilst the FE sector had expanded considerably and that whilst some improvements had occurred, there was still considerable wastage.

In 1998-9 there were 3.1 million students enrolled on provision funded by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) at a cost of £3 billion. Only 21 per cent of these were under the age of 19 but most of these were on full-time courses. Overall the sector has increased student numbers by 70 per cent in the previous five years and now services over 17,000 different qualifications from 480 different awarding bodies (NAO, 2001). The combination of increases in numbers together with a number of initiatives to support students in FE are likely to have balanced each other out. Overall retention rates in the FE sector have remained steady in the last five years. Retention rates within general and sixth form colleges are claimed to be between 72-98 per cent; however, variation in the rates of those who attain the qualifications for which they first register is much greater - between 33-98 per cent. In the FE sector as a whole, 15 per cent did not complete their course and 26 per cent failed to achieve the qualification for which the course was intended. The 1997 Committee of Public Accounts 63rd report expressed concerns that 10 per cent of colleges had student achievement rates of less that 50 per cent (HoCPAC, 1997).

Drop out from FE into NEET is difficult to calculate from data collected by the FEFC and analysed by the NAO. Achievement rates for 16-18 year olds are slightly higher than for those aged over 19 (72 per cent compared with 65 per cent). When combined with retention rates, this means that 56 per cent of the younger age group attain the desired qualification compared with only 51 per cent of the older age group. Reasons for drop-out remain obscure. College management information systems are largely inadequate in being able to diagnose complex reasons because most record only one 'main reason' and, according to Kenwright (1997) it is doubtful whether even this is accurate. Some research indicates that financial difficulties and the lack of adequate and up-to-date information of financial support is important (Calender, 1999). Involvement in part-time work, and drop out to take on further employment is also a factor, although the relationship between drop-out and employment remains a little confused. One study

suggests that working 10 hours or less is related to higher retention rates, whereas employment for more than 15 hours results in higher than average drop out (FEDA, 1999). Overall, however, the 2001 NAO report *Improving Student Performance* concluded that:

- Sixth form colleges have, on average, retention rates which are seven per cent higher than FE colleges and three per cent higher than general colleges
- Retention rates are generally higher for courses leading to higher level qualifications
- There are no marked differences between the retention rates of different ethnic groups
- Students aged 19-24 have the lowest retention rates
- Students recruited from deprived areas have the lowest retention rates
- Retention and achievement rates are also lowest where students have their fees remitted because they are unwaged, they are studying basic education, they are studying English and have a language other than English as their first language (NAO, 2001).

Work based training

The DfES regularly produces data on work-based training for young people. Work based training has been significantly reformed since 1997 and now covers 'Advanced Modern Apprenticeships' (AMAs) and 'Foundation Modern Apprenticeships' (FMAs).DfES/LSC have announced their intention to phase out 'Other Training' which will be replaced in England partly by an extension of Modern Apprenticeships including coverage of sectors where there are currently no established frameworks for apprenticeship training, and partly by the introduction of new provision, Entry to Employment for those who are not yet ready to enter apprenticeship or other employment. The latter will encompass Life Skills provision delivered through the Learning Gateway.

The DfES now reports on data collected from Learning and Skills Councils on "Supported Work Based Training" (DfES, 2001d) but estimates here are based on the returns by Training and Enterprise Councils in 2000. Estimates of the numbers involved given here are based on aggregate management information returns provided by TECs as part of their contract with DfES, from 'starts' certificates that TECs are required to complete as individuals join the programme, and 'outcomes' derived from a postal questionnaire sent to each trainee after leaving the programme. These statistics indicate that just under 238,000 young people started in work based training in 1999-2000, with around a third taking part in each of the three main strands of training. Survey results for

1999-2000 suggest that just over 70 per cent of trainees were in a job six months after completing their training with 12 per cent unemployed. The proportion designated as 'unemployed' was significantly less than the 20 per cent reported at the beginning of the 1990s and 15 per cent in 1997-8. Those reporting positive destinations were also more likely to have taken part in the more advanced training schemes with AMAs having a better record than FMAs and both significantly better than Other Training. Completion rates for 'Other Training' is also much lower at 55 per cent for 1999-2000. Minority ethnic groups and young people who self-identify as having a disability are also slightly less likely to complete and to gain employment.

Some main risk factors associated with NEET

A number of other different factors were associated with non-participation at the age of 16, 17 and 18. The SEU *Bridging the Gap* reported a clear correlation between both educational disadvantage and disaffection pre-sixteen and later disengagement (SEU, 1999b). Educational disadvantage is also associated with social factors such as the family, the school or communities, as well as personal characteristics of the child or young person. In this chapter we consider the impact of factors such as social class background, gender and ethnicity, as well as living in poor neighbourhoods or attending special schools. Disaffection is concerned not so much with circumstances and attributes but with the attitudes young people have to their education and schooling. This is most obviously manifest in truancy or behaviour that results in school exclusion. Both educational disadvantage and disaffection are linked to a number of background factors such as:

- Family disadvantage and poverty;
- Having a parent(s) who is unemployed;
- High unemployment areas;
- Membership of some minority ethnic groups;
- Having a chronic illness, disability and/or special educational need.

Educational disadvantage

Some groups are over-represented amongst those unqualified or under-achieving at age 16 *and* those who do not participate in employment, education or training at age 16-18 years old. The research done in South Wales provides some limited information about the social characteristics of this group (Williamson, 1997). In these studies, only a few were found to have been formally excluded from school but a quarter had had little contact with education after the age of 13 (and some much earlier). Some did take examinations but the majority had few, if any, qualifications. Four out of ten did have

some involvement with youth training but most gave up on it when it failed to offer a realistic route to secure employment, or when something more lucrative (even if short term) opportunity presented itself. Training and employment careers were often complicated by a disruptive or turbulent family life, especially for 'status zer0' young women, a third of whom became mothers themselves. Two-thirds of the men in the sample were living at home with both parents. There was also some evidence of involvement in crime and drug and substance abuse.

Social class has long been associated with educational success (Furlong, 1992; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; Skeggs, 1997). There is also concern about the relative under-achievement of minority ethnic groups. One report concludes that educational achievement is rising among all ethnic minority groups, but that Bangladeshi, African-Carribean and Pakistani groups have drawn least benefit from the rising levels of attainment, resulting in an inequality of educational attainment (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000). However, the report also concluded that '… no ethnic group is inherently less capable of academic success'. Whatever their minority ethnic background, young people from higher social class backgrounds do better. However, African-Caribbean males and young people from Pakistani or Bangladeshi backgrounds are reported as under-achieving compared to other groups, although there are some important differences between different parts of the country (Gilborn and Gipps, 1996). In Birmingham, for instance, Asian groups did significantly better than African Caribbean pupils but less well than white groups. In Brent, those from Indian ethnic backgrounds outperformed all other ethnic groups, including their white peers. In Tower Hamlets, which has a large Bangladeshi population, following a dramatic rise in their fortunes, they now outperform both white pupils and black groups with a Caribbean background. Black male pupils from Caribbean backgrounds are over-represented in under-achieving groups in most locations, although differences between young women from such backgrounds and other groups are reported to be very small (Newburn, 1999). A 1999 OFSTED report also made important distinctions between the patterns of disadvantage experienced by different ethnic groups. Bangladeshi and Pakistani pupils experienced problems in the early years of schooling, often associated with proficiency in English. When this was addressed and overcome they then did as well in school as other groups, although their grades in GCSE still proved to be lower. Black Caribbean pupils were reported to make a sound start in primary school but their performance showed a marked decline in secondary school (OFSTED, 1999).

In England, approximately eight per cent of 16 year olds leave school without any passes at GCSE, with 15 per cent of girls and 19 per cent boys not achieving passes in any of the three core subjects of English, Maths and Science (Newburn, 1999). Low, or

no, achievements in school qualifications are also clustered in schools serving poor neighbourhoods as measured, for instance, through pupils eligible for free school meals (Glennester, 1998). The 1998 Social Exclusion Unit report on poor neighbourhoods, for instance, reported that one in four children at schools on 'difficult to let estates' gained no GCSEs, five times the national average. Truancy was also five times higher (SEU, 1998c). The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), however, claims that there is no 'inherent reason' for such under-performance. Yet clearly, as the SEU recognise, some neighbourhoods do contains clusters of disadvantage, which are linked to under-achievement, making it more difficult to run successful and dynamic schools.

The 1999 OFSTED report on minority ethnic pupils also reported on 'gypsy traveller children' who were regarded as the group most at risk in the educational system (OFSTED, 1999). This group are unlikely to appear in any of the major household surveys on which estimates of the size of the NEET group are usually based. The OFSTED report was based on an intensive study of 48 schools attempting to cater for children from gypsy traveller families. Although none of the schools carried out systematic monitoring of their performance, whilst some children from gypsy-traveller families made a reasonably promising start in primary school, by secondary school they appeared to be seriously underachieving compared to all other groups. Many, and especially boys, had dropped out of education by year 9 and few achieved success at GCSE or beyond. In half the schools with traveller children on roll, none of them had yet sat for a GCSE. They were also highly likely to be placed on special educational needs registers, with many schools reporting that more than half had been 'statemented' as having a special educational need. Young people from minority ethnic groups, and young people living in deprived neighbourhoods, may also experience school as an alien environment in which they may be subjected to bullying and harassment.

Special educational needs

In 1998 in England there were over 1.6 million pupils in some form of special education (nearly 20 per cent of the school population). Around a quarter of a million of these had 'statements' (three per cent of the total school population) with nearly 90,000 being educated in special schools (DfES, 1999d). By 2001 the number of students with statements had risen by 16 thousand (DfES Bulletin, Jan 2001). Some authors have pointed to the fact that being educated in a special school is highly correlated with attaining few, if any, qualifications at the age of 16 (Barnes, 1990). School league tables indicate that only very few special schools have any pupils attaining A-C grades at GCSE, although this is not surprising given the special needs of such pupils. This does not mean that the work done in such schools is necessarily poor. Indeed, in many cases,

completely the opposite is the case. But special schools are often small, unlikely to have teachers who are specialists in National Curricula subjects, and many have to cope with young people with severe and debilitating medical conditions as well as special educational needs.

Perceptual or cognitive impairments, such as dyslexia, learning disabilities, and emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) add to the complexities of defining special educational needs. Some of these needs may remain undetected and undiagnosed and poor work or problematic behaviour may be regarded as the result of a lack of skills, poor motivation or wilful indiscipline. Often tests for dyslexia or EBD are relatively simple and quick to carry out. Yet, often these impairments remain undetected throughout a young person's educational career. For instance, one study amongst prisoners in a young offenders' institution in Scotland found that over a third could be identified as having previously undiagnosed dyslexia (Reid, 1999). In such cases the failure to identify and respond to disadvantage can result in long term damage, at huge cost to individual lives and the public purse.

Taking part in some form of post-16 education is now the norm for most young people with special educational needs diagnosed before the age of 16, particularly since the expansion of FE in the 1990s (Bradley *et al*., 1994). The Tomlinson report, for instance, estimated that 131,000 young people with learning disabilities were attending college (FEFC, Tomlinson report, 1996). Post-16 education was often part of the 'transition plans' promoted by the 1994 Code of Practice. There is, however, considerable unease about whether such planning is effective; whether it involves young people as active partners; or whether it is sufficiently long-term (Tisdale, 1996; Mitchell, 1998; Mitchell, 1999). Often planning is restricted to 'what next' and provision is in specialist courses or in specialist colleges, including residential colleges. The latter have been argued to offer only a brief interregnum of independence and social participation before returning home to inactivity and social isolation from friends (Sinson, 1995; Mitchell, 1999).

Ill-health, disability and NEET

Much of the research which seeks to investigate any associations between poor health and young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) focuses upon psychological health with relatively little attention paid to the physical health of young people who are NEET. Gathering evidence from existing survey reports, to enable a reliable estimation of the numbers of young people who both experience poor health and who are NEET using existing literature, based upon the analysis of large datasets is difficult. There are a number of large national datasets with which primary data analysis

would provide the opportunity to further explore the relationship between poor health, and young people aged 16 to 18 who are NEET, however, it appears these resources have been under utilised for this purpose.

According to Fryer (1997) all researchers who have looked at the psychological consequences of moving between school and employment or unemployment are agreed that there are measurable differences in the psychological health of those who find employment and those who are unemployed. This is evident in the results from a limited analysis of cross-sectional data from the British Household Panel Survey undertaken for the project. The contents of Table 3.1 illustrate a statistically significant association amongst 16 to 18 year olds between their self-assessed general health status and their involvement in education, employment or training.

Table 3.1: Relationship between poor health and NEET

	In Education, Employment or Training %	*Not in Education, Employment or Training* %	*Number*	*Significance level*
All	All 90	10		

Age
Age 16
      17
      18
	92
	91
	86
		8
		9
		14
			1095
			1135
			1126
				***

Gender Gender Male Female	90 89	10 11	1714 1642	n.s

Registered Disabled
Registered Disabled
         Yes
         No
	84
	90
		16
		10
			19
			3327
				n.s

General Health
General Health **(Over last 12 months)**
  Excellent
  Good
  Fair
  Poor
  Very poor
	93
	90
	84
	88
	73
		7
		10
		16
		12
		27
			858
			1774
			579
			129
			15
				***

Health limits daily activities Yes No	83 90	17 10	147 3209	**
Health limits amount or type of work Yes No	82 90	18 10	159 3196	**

** significant association at the 99% level; *** significant association at the 95% level; n.s. not significant

Data source: The British Household Panel Survey (Years 1990 to 1998): Analysis for this project

The results of this analysis show that compared with an average of ten per cent of the population being NEET, 27 per cent of those with 'very poor' health were NEET, 17 per cent said that 'health limits their daily activities', and 18 per cent said that 'health limits

the amount or type of work' they are able to do. Sixteen per cent of those registered disabled were NEET. More details from research on young people, ill-health including chronic illness and mental illness will be covered in the next chapter.

Educational disaffection

Disaffection is manifest in a variety of different ways. Whilst the terminology of disaffection indicates that this is primarily to do with various forms of 'deviant' behaviour on the part of the young person, the degree to which this results in social exclusion does, in part, result in the response of those in authority. So, for instance, in the past minor acts of disobedience or rule-breaking can result in permanent exclusion from school as was indicated by the 1998 SEU report on Truancy and Exclusion. This can have a major impact upon the likelihood of the young person achieving good qualifications at the age of 16 and/or being involved in other forms of risk taking or criminal behaviour. On the other hand being oblivious to minor incidents of truancy from school may result in that behaviour escalating and seriously damaging educational performance. In setting new targets to reduce truancy and exclusion the DfES have tried to identify policies to redress both the behaviour of young people and the responses of those in authority in both tolerating and/or appropriately responding to such behaviour.

School exclusion

Carl Parsons has estimated that there was a 450 per cent increase in permanent exclusions between 1990-97, from less than 3,000 to in excess of 13,000 (Parsons, 1998). Fixed term exclusions are estimated to be at least eight times this level, at 100,000 as estimated by OFSTED in 1996. The figures on school exclusions peaked in the mid-1990s but, nevertheless, were sufficiently serious to ensure that exclusions and truancy was one of the first topics to be investigated by the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU, 1998b). Since the SEU report a number of measures have been introduced to monitor exclusions, to try to avoid them wherever possible, and to ensure that those who are excluded continue to receive education and training. However, an Audit Commission report suggests that the data which do exist are not being used properly or effectively by local authorities (Audit Commission, 1999b).

The DfES reported reductions in permanent exclusions from 12,700 in 1996/7 to 8,300 in 1999/2000. The groups most at risk of exclusion remain the same with black pupils being three times more likely to be permanently excluded than pupils from other ethnic groups (DfEE, 1999c and 2001e). Most exclusions (81 per cent) in 1999/2000 take place from secondary schools and are most common in pupils aged 13-15 and at the start of

the year. However, the SEU also reported that exclusions from primary schools had increased by 18 per cent between 1995-6 (SEU, 1999). In 1997-8, the vast majority of school exclusions (84 per cent) were boys. Black Caribbean exclusions were still nearly five times more likely than for their white counterparts who were, in turn, more likely to be excluded than those from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian communities However, where local authorities had introduced ethnic monitoring of exclusions, alongside other measures offering support to 'at risk' groups, the reduction in exclusions were very marked. In Birmingham in the late 1990s, for instance, exclusions of Afro-Carribean boys were reduced by 40 per cent in four years (Birmingham Education Service, 1999).

The DfES report that there is a strong association between schools permanently excluding pupils and those serving deprived communities, as evidenced by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. There is also an association between schools with high exclusion rates and schools with relatively poor educational attainment scores at the age of 16. Pupils with a statement of special educational need are also more likely to be excluded. In 1998-9, although pupils with a statement of special educational need accounted for 0.81 per cent of the school population, they accounted for 18 per cent of all permanent exclusions (DfES, 2000f). The SEU report also noted that, according to one survey, young people 'looked after' are ten times more likely to be excluded (SEU, 1998). Clearly, some schools and some local authorities are reported to be more prone to exclude than others, with a quarter of secondary schools responsible for two-thirds of all permanent. Some research has pointed to the correlation of exclusions with high levels of family stress, family disruption, poverty and unemployment and an OFSTED report pointed to other factors such as poverty and poor relationships with parents, teacher and other pupils as well as poor acquisition of basic skills and limited aspirations (Brodie and Berridge, 1997; OFSTED, 1996).

Truancy

Official figures quoted by the Social Exclusion Unit suggest that schools report that only around one per cent of secondary school pupils and under a half of one per cent of primary school pupils are absent from school without a legitimate reason. However, this is accepted to be a huge underestimate (SEU, 1998; DfES, 2000g). A slightly better source of evidence on those who do not attend school is obtained through large questionnaire surveys of young people, either those in state maintained schools or those aged 16 and over covered by the Youth Cohort Studies Study (O'Keefe, 1994; Casey and Smith, 1995; SEU, 1998b). According to one survey, one third of pupils truant at some time during their school career. Over eight per cent truant at least once a week, including around ten per cent who do so in their final year of compulsory schooling.

When the questionnaire was administered, however, 17 per cent of the potential sample was absent (O'Keefe, 1994). The Youth Cohort Study suggests that around five per cent of year 11 pupils do not attend school for 'days or weeks at a time' with half of these missing weeks at a time. This suggests that the minimum size of the 'hardcore' non-attenders in year 11 alone is between 11,000 and 28,000 (Newburn, 1999). Overall, 0.7 per cent of half days were missing in 2000/01 because of unauthorised absence with the largest amount of unauthorised absences from special schools and in inner London (2.2 per cent each) (DfES Bulletin, Dec. 2001).

It is noteworthy that, given the over-representation of boys amongst those excluded from school, around the same number of boys and girls report that they truant. The children of travellers are reported to have an attendance record of less than 50 per cent, with many others unlikely to be registered with school authorities. Young people 'looked after' also have a poor attendance record. A joint report by OFSTED and the Social Service Inspectorate in 1995 reported that 12 per cent of those of statutory school age were not in school, rising to more than a quarter (26 per cent) of 14-16 year olds who should have been studying for the GCSE examinations (OFSTED/SSI, 1995). For boys, living in a single parent family appears to be a risk factor, and for boys and girls, so is living in social housing and in a household in which the parent(s) is unskilled. Some studies suggest that truancy is more common in inner cities and that there are some local authority areas and some schools where it is more common. For instance, unauthorised absence in Manchester is reported as four and a half times higher than in South Tyneside and nine times higher than in Oxfordshire (SEU, 1998b).

The reasons and explanations for truancy include a mixture of family circumstances, and school and community factors. Some parents may not know about the failure of their child to attend school and nearly half of those who said they did not truant were apparently held back by a fear of their parents finding out. Others who do truant think their parent(s) knows about it and condones their behaviour; they often have parents who collude in order to arrange out of school activities, including caring for other family members. In one truancy sweep in the north-east, 80 per cent of the truants stopped by education welfare offices and police were with a parent (DfES, 1999b). Other factors are related to anxiety about being bullied - the most commonly cited factor. A third of girls and a quarter of boys worried about bullying (Balding, 1996). Other factors include dislike of particular teachers or particular subjects, and a fear of being humiliated because of being a weak reader, for instance (Carlen *et al*., 1998; Kinder, 1996). Home Office research also indicates a strong correlation between truancy and having a strong attachment to siblings or friends who are in trouble with the police (Graham and Bowling, 1995).

Conclusions

The links between educational disaffection and disengagement from education, employment and training at age 16-18 are clearly established. A quarter of those who truanted persistently in Year 11 were not in employment, education or training the year after. Those permanently excluded from school in years 10 and 11 were two and a half times more likely than their peers to be non-participants later and those with fixed term exclusions twice as likely. A quarter of those with no reported qualifications and nearly one in four of those with only 1-4 passes below C grade became non-participants.

Yet some groups of young people are much more likely to underachieve at school or truant or be excluded from school. The next chapter looks in more detail at research on these over-represented groups.

Chapter 4:   Groups who are over-represented in NEET

This chapter reports on research evidence about a number of different groups of young people known to be over-represented amongst 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET). In some cases the routes into NEET may well involve some of the issues concerning educational disadvantage and disaffection before the age of 16, as described in the last chapter. However, often there are other issues and circumstances that make the groups described here especially vulnerable. Often the groups are numerically small and as such a proper analysis of their circumstances and prospects are not susceptible to analysis using large surveys. The groups covered in this chapter include:

* Young people 'looked after';
* Teenage parents;
* Young carers;
* Young people with chronic illness, disabilities, and having accidents;
* Suicide by young people;
* Mental illness;
* Risk behaviours involving smoking, drinking alcohol and serious drug misuse;
* Young people involved in crime and criminal justice.

'Looked after children'

In March 1999 there were approximately 55,300 children and young people 'looked after' by local authorities in England (with a further 12,000 in Scotland and a further 2,000 each in Wales and Northern Ireland). In England, the numbers involved have reduced markedly in recent decades, from 96,000 in 1977, to under 60,000 in 1990, and to below 50,000 by 1994. Since then there has been a rise of around 6,000. The reasons for the rise in recent years remain unclear. There is no evidence that it is as a result of anticipating the proposed changes in the responsibilities of social service departments contained in the 1999 Leaving Care Bill. These official statistics on the number of children and young people 'looked after' are, however, snap-shot figures as recorded at the end of each year and the 'looked after' population changes throughout each year as young people move into, and out of, care. Recent research evidence on this 'moving picture of care' suggests that, of the 11.4 million children in England and Wales, 190,000 will be referred to social service departments in any one year, 160,000 will be supported at home, and 30,000 will become 'looked after'. Half of this latter group will be 'looked after' for six weeks or less before being returned to the charge of their families, although around 4,000 of these will later have a second period of care. Of those who are 'looked

after' for more than six weeks, 9,500 will be placed in foster care and a further 750 in a mixture of foster and residential care (DOH, 1998). This suggests that, of the 55,000 at the end of 1999, there were just under 11,000 new cases involving children and young people spending significant amounts of time away from their parents.

Slightly more boys (54.5 per cent) than girls are 'looked after' by local authorities and this gender difference is broadly the same in all age groups. The ethnic composition of the care population is much more difficult to determine. The DOH accepts that it is likely that around one in ten of those 'looked after' are from minority ethnic groups and that this is probably a lower proportion than ten years ago (Department of Health, 1998). In an earlier study Bebbington and Miles concluded that no ethnic group was over-represented especially when controlling for other background factors such as housing, family structure and poverty (Bebbington and Miles, 1989). However, gender and ethnicity are important in the distribution of the population. Girls have a greater chance of being in foster care (three in four admissions compared to one in three boys). Minority ethnic children are also much more over-represented amongst the small number of those 'looked after' in 'secure accommodation' (DOH, 1998).

Those who become 'looked after' are much more likely to have lived in deprived and disadvantaged circumstances before they are taken into care. One large scale study at the end of the 1980s, for instance, found that children living with only one adult were eight times more likely to be taken into care than children from dual parent families, and three-and-a-half times more likely to be moved to care from over-crowded accommodation. Their parents were three times more likely to be on benefit and twice as likely to be under the age of 21 (Bebbington and Miles, 1989). However, there has been also a growing recognition that many young people taken into care because they were vulnerable have their future welfare further disadvantaged, rather than enhanced by their experiences in care, and the support offered to them when they leave. The recent Children's Safeguards Review (The Utting Report, 1997) summarises some bleak 'headline statistics' based upon a review of evidence reviewed by the Social Services Inspectorate:

- More than 75 per cent of care leavers have no academic qualifications of any kind;
- More than 50 per cent of young people leaving care after 16 years are unemployed;
- 17 per cent of young women leaving care are pregnant or already mothers;
- 10 per cent of 16-17 year old claimants of DSS severe hardship payments have been in care;

- 23 per cent of adult prisoners and 38 per cent of young prisoners have been in care;
- 30 per cent of young single homeless people have been in care (SSI, 1997).

Only a tiny proportion of 'looked after' young people are educationally successful. The then DfEE reported to the Health Committee in 1998 that only between 12 per cent and 19 per cent go on to further education compared with 68 per cent in the rest of the age group. Part of the reason for such poor performance lies in the complex difficulties and turmoil in their lives; 13 per cent have special needs and over half of this group have emotional and behavioural difficulties (Koprowska and Stein, 1999). There is little systematic evidence of the mental health problems of young people 'looked after'. Yet in one study in Oxfordshire, a staggering 96 per cent of young people in residential care and 57 per cent of those in foster care were reported as having some form of psychiatric disorder (McCann *et al*., quoted by Koprowska and Stein, 1999). The vast majority of young people 'looked after' (between a half and three quarters according to different surveys) do not attain any qualifications at the age of 16 (Biehal *et al*., 1995; Stein, 1997; Utting, 1997). At least part of this is due to a lack of stability of or continuity of care in their care placements. Being moved between placements often results in disrupted education and changes of school. Those who are successful are much more likely to have been 'looked after' in stable, long-term placements (Biehal *et al*., 1995).

Following the Children's Safeguard Review, the Government initiated a *Quality Protects* programme aimed to fundamentally improve matters. The Ministerial Task Force which considered the 1997 Safeguards Review considered over 130 recommendations for change and developed a radical new programme for the reform. The Government response to the Safeguards Review involves a three year programme called 'Quality Protects' with a total of £380m of funds allocated to it over three and a half years. This is to be distributed through a new Children's Services Special Grant. One of the key areas for change is an attempt to reduce the number of placements 'looked after' children experience. Local authorities also now have to provide data on the percentage of children and young people 'looked after' who experience more than three placements a year with a national target aimed at ensuring that less that 16 per cent of children experience more than three placements a year (DOH, 1999). There are some grounds for accepting that a large number of moves lead to a lack of co-ordination of effort, insecurity in those 'looked after' and poor outcomes at later stages in the life course.

However, there are doubts about whether setting simple targets on the number of placements per year alone will adequately address the real issues (Jackson and Thomas, 1999).

At the time of writing, most young people cease to be 'looked after' shortly after they reach the age of 16. A quarter of young people 'looked after' are discharged from care at the age of 16 and two-thirds will have moved to independent accommodation before they are 18 (DOH, 1999c). Contemplating living independently at such an early age is a major anxiety and a paramount concern at the time when their peers are more concerned with other post-16 options in education and training. This goes some way to explaining why care leavers are over-represented amongst those non-participating in education, training and work (SEU, 1999b).

A number of surveys have pointed to the fact that many young people being looked after become parents either whilst they are in care, or shortly after leaving (Biehal *et al*., 1995; Botting *et al*., 1998; Broad, 1998; Garnett, 1992). Biehal *et al*. reported that one in eight young people were parents before they were legally discharged from care. Within two years of leaving care, overall one third had become parents and half of all the young women mothers of at least one child (Biehal *et al*., 1995). Just over half of the pregnancies were unplanned. Of those that were planned, the vast majority had been planned with their partner. Although young women had moved in with their partners, some of the relationships broke down within a short time. The SEU report, *Teenage Pregnancy,* raised questions about the personal and social education being offered to young people in care and the lack of a trusted adult with whom the young person could talk and from whom they could receive advice.

Provision for young people ceasing to be 'looked after' are set to change radically in October 2001 when the Children (Leaving Care) Act is implemented. This Act makes clear that local authorities have a *duty* (rather than the power to assist as at present) to assess and meet the needs of 16 and 17 year olds leaving care. The initial Bill was amended in the House of Commons to extend this duty until the age of 21, or when full-time education was completed, whichever was the latest. There is also a clear indication that young people should not be discharged from being 'looked after' before the age of 18 except in exceptional circumstances. Enhanced forms of personal support are also proposed so as to ensure that all 'looked after' young people are given a Young Persons' Advisor to co-ordinate support and assistance in accordance with a 'Pathway Plan' which they will develop with their advisor. These plans are intended to set out clearly the support and assistance the young person will receive and include a named person responsible for delivering this, as well as target dates for the achievement of particular transition milestones. The plans are to cover education, training and employment, accommodation, personal support (such as befriending or mentoring), health care, life skills and financial support. Pathway Plans are to be based upon a multi-

agency assessment of need, and involve a planning process in which the young person must be a key partner. It will also involve a range of other service providers. If a young person does not agree the plan, it is proposed that an Independent Review Panel will adjudicate an appeal. It is intended that plans should be reviewed regularly and at least once every six months. It is proposed that financial support for care leavers will be made through a single source, social services, rather than, at present through a complex range of different agencies such as the Employment Services and the Benefits Agency. Together with the *Quality Protects* programme, this represents a very radical new approach to care and care leaving, one which it is hoped will enhance the educational and training prospects of 'looked after' children.

Teenage mothers

The *Bridging the Gap* report indicates that there were significant gender differences in young people who were NEET aged 16-18. Within the overall total of young people who were NEET, there were slightly more young women than young men. However, of those classified as 'unemployed' two-thirds were men. Three-quarters of those 'economically inactive' were young women, half of them indicating that they were parents or carers. This indicates the strong association between young women who are NEET and teenage pregnancy. In that this is a significant route, it is important to examine the routes into, and consequences of, teenage motherhood, rather than NEET *per se*.

The Social Exclusion Unit report on *Teenage Pregnancy* in 1999 reported that the UK has twice the teenage pregnancy rate of that in Germany, three times that in France and six times that in Holland. Rates in most of Europe were about the same as they were in the UK in the mid-1970s but in other countries there were significant declines, in the 1970s and 1980s especially, during which period rates in the UK increased (in the 1980s especially). In 1997, 90,000 teenagers became pregnant, including 7,700 under the age of 16 and 2,200 under the age of fourteen. Around half of the conceptions of those under 16 end in abortion but two-thirds of all teenage pregnancies (56,000) result in births. Rates in the UK declined a little in the early 1990s only to rise again in 1996, possibly as a result of a scare in 1995 of the effects of taking contraceptive pills. The rate of pregnancies for under-16 year olds in 1997 was also ten per cent higher than in 1993.

A number of factors are correlated with teenage pregnancy. The SEU outline eight main factors:
- Poverty and living in poor neighbourhoods;
- Children in care or leaving care;
- Having a mother who was a teenage parent;

- No involvement in post-16 employment, education and training;
- Being the victim of sexual abuse;
- Having mental health problems;
- Being in trouble with the police.

Those whose parents are in unskilled manual jobs (or if unemployed, had been previously in unskilled jobs) are ten times more likely to become a teenage parent than those in professional occupations. Those living in social housing are three times more likely than those living in owner occupied properties to become parents in their teens. Half of young women who have been 'looked after' (in care) are likely to be mothers of at least one child by the age of 18. Daughters of mothers who gave birth in their teens are also one and a half times more likely to become pregnant in their teens than the daughters of older mothers. Young women with low educational achievements at 16, and those whose achievements declined between the ages of seven and 16, are most at risk. There is also an association between teenage pregnancy and truanting from, or being excluded from, school. There is also an association between not being in any form of employment, education or training at age 16 and 17 and pregnancy; with one study reporting a third of young women in this group becoming pregnant (SEU, 1999a).

The SEU report on a number of studies that indicate that three minority ethnic groups are also over-represented amongst teenage parents: Bangladeshi; Pakistanis; and African Caribbean. For some groups, this may be related to traditions of early childbirth within marriage, as in the case of the former two groups. On the one hand members of both these groups are also reported to be less likely to have had sex before the age of 16. On the other hand, there is a link between membership of these groups and other forms of disadvantage related to early pregnancy, such as living in poor neighbourhoods, poorer than average educational achievement and various forms of disaffection.

The SEU also produced analysis of the spatial clustering of teenage pregnancies in local authority districts. This enabled it to examine further the relationship between indices of local deprivation and high rates of pregnancies. There is indeed some similarity of pattern, with those districts scoring highly on deprivation having teenage pregnancy rates over six times higher than the most affluent areas.

A number of studies also report a relationship between teenage pregnancy and child sexual abuse. The SEU report that of the 7000 calls to Childline about teenage pregnancy in 1996-7, five per cent also were also about sexual abuse. Relatively small scale studies have also found that a quarter of those who become pregnant in their

teens had a probable psychiatric disorder (Zoccolillo and Rogers, 1991). The SEU reports on one project for young parents run by Barnardos in Skelmersdale. This indicated that, of those young women involved in the project, 40 per cent had been in care, 70 per cent had lived with family breakdown, 40 per cent were themselves daughters of teenage mothers and all lived in poverty and were educationally disadvantaged or disaffected. Large scale longitudinal surveys also suggest that girls and boys who have some involvement with the police are twice as likely to become teenage parents. Around a third of those in one Young Offenders Institution were estimated to be fathers.

Problems also continue after the birth of their child. Teenage pregnancy is related to a number of negative outcomes for the welfare of both the young mother and her child. Three quarters of teenage pregnancies are reported not to have been planned and teenagers go to their doctors much later in pregnancy than older mothers-to-be. They thus miss out on early pre-conception health measures because they are not planning to be pregnant and also often miss ante-natal planning because of the turmoil their pregnancy causes with families, relationships and their education. Nearly two-thirds are regular smokers before they are pregnant and almost a half continue to be during their pregnancy. All of this has negative health consequences for their child. Teenage mothers are only half as likely as older mothers to breast-feed their baby. The babies of teenage mothers are also more likely to be under-weight at birth, have a higher infant mortality rate (60 per cent higher than for older mothers). They are also more likely to suffer accidents, with twice and many being likely to be admitted to hospital as the result of accident or gastro-enteritis. Relationship breakdown is common. Only around a half of teenage mothers are still in a relationship with the child's father a year after the baby's birth. Nearly a third end up living alone, often having to get by as best they can on benefits. Post-natal depression is three times more common amongst teenage than older mothers. All this suggests that in terms of 'risk factors', causes and consequences, teenage pregnancy should be addressed holistically.

The SEU report quotes a barrage of research reports which indicate that good and comprehensive education about sex and relationships can help in delaying the age at which young people engage in sexual behaviour and make them more likely to use contraceptives when they do (SEU, 1999a). The vast majority of parents (90 per cent) look to schools as the favoured source for sex education. Much research suggests that most young people think that sex education in schools gives too little information and comes too late. Boys were found to be much more critical than girls, but in the lessons that were observed, boys were seriously disruptive and dominant (Measor, 2000). Knowledge (particularly knowledge about sexual health) was more likely to come from

friends and from the media.

Young carers

There has been increasing evidence in recent years of the numbers of young people who perform significant 'caring tasks' in the home where either a parent or sibling is ill or disabled. Throughout the 1990s there has been considerable research and policy interest in young people who carry out significant caring tasks in and around the home for adults (usually their parent) or siblings. Surveys produce a range of wildly differing estimates of anywhere between 10,000 and 210,000 (Walker, 1996). Some of these discrepancies are due to differences in the way in which the term 'young carer' is defined. A survey carried out for the Department of Health claimed that the most appropriate definition should not include teenagers looking after their own children. Nor should it include those living with a sick or disabled adult where the young person only took on 'age appropriate' domestic tasks, and where others, including other adults or older siblings, did most of the caring, and where the young carer performed such tasks for less than 10 hours a week. On the basis of this definition, an Omnibus Survey of households estimated that:

- There are approximately 32,000 young people aged 8-17 years old who were young carers.

However, it is difficult to estimate the numbers who are aged 16-18. Because this is only an estimate based upon a sample, however, this still means that the true figure could be anywhere between 19,000 and 50,000.

Other surveys have been based upon those contacted through young carers' projects and have produced data through which we can draw a profile of the characteristics of young carers - what they do, and what the implications of fulfilling this caring role are for their own welfare (Deardon and Becker, 1998). In all surveys it was found that young women are more likely to take on the young carer role than young men. They were also more likely to live in poor households and were twice as likely to live in lone parent families (Deardon and Becker, 1998). In their 1997 survey, mothers were the main recipient of care, accounting for three quarters of all carers living in lone parent families. However, of those living with two parents, a third of young carers were found to be looking after brothers or sisters. Many projects supporting young carers cater specifically for those from minority ethnic groups, although surveys suggest that young carers from minority ethnic groups are no more likely than their white peers to take on such a role. The recipients of care were most likely to have a physical illness or disability (57 per

cent), although mental illness and disability accounted for a quarter of all cases and learning disability a further one in ten (11 per cent). The type and severity of the illness and disability do, of course, influence the kinds of care that will be required.

Young carers are often absent from school or, if there, educationally disadvantaged. This may be because they are tired when in school because of their caring duties at home. They also often have interrupted schooling and may be uncomfortable or anxious in the school environment because of social isolation at home. Compared to their peers they are less likely to achieve the examination success of which they are capable, with all the consequences this has for their success in the labour market in later life. Much of their educational disadvantage is associated with erratic attendance and as such may be written off as disaffection unless their circumstances are fully understood. There is some limited evidence that, especially when given support, young carers do try to continue their education after the age of 16, with significant numbers continuing to participate up to and including higher education (Deardon and Becker, 2000).

Chronic Illness, disabilities, accidents and ill-health

The literature on young people and health tends to be spread across a number of different sub-disciplines that often makes the overlap between different groups difficult to discern. All four headings to this section may be associated with educational disadvantage before the end of compulsory schooling and disengagement afterwards.

Many authors regard 'youth' and young adulthood as associated with peaks of general health and fitness, although it is now generally accepted that a minority do suffer distinctive patterns of risks. Some have argued that, in general, marked inequalities of health that occur in childhood seem to disappear during adolescence only to re-appear in adulthood (West, 1997). Yet, based upon data drawn from a large scale longitudinal study in the West of Scotland, the same author has argued that 'teenagers who become unemployed can, at an earlier stage in life, be distinguished from those with more favourable prospects (such as work or continuing education) in terms of health, lifestyle, significant events in their lives, and "social integration"'. Whilst still at school, they are more likely to have a longstanding illness, poorer mental health, to smoke, drink, try drugs, experience more undesirable life events and be more peer-orientated and disaffected (Sweeting and West, 2000). The authors speculate that the prospect of having no job or only low paid work, or long periods of family dependency, may lead to poor mental health and the adoption of a more risky life style. Other researchers working with large longitudinal surveys have also pointed to the accumulation of risk within

childhood and the negative impact this has on youth transitions (Schoon, 2000).

The 1997 Health Committee report also concluded that children and young people are more vulnerable to certain types of injury and accident, less able to choose and control their environment and, for children especially, more dependent upon adults for care, protection and advocacy (Health Committee, 1997). A review by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) in 1997 did draw attention to some distinctive health problems and argued, perhaps unsurprisingly, that most of these were associated with poverty. These included 'accidents, respiratory problems, depression, schizophrenia, suicide, eating disorders, sexually transmitted diseases, teenage pregnancy, and tobacco, alcohol and drug abuse' (Dennehy *et al*., 1997).

Death amongst children and young people under the age of 20 is most likely to occur because of accidents (just under 30 per cent of all deaths), with road traffic accidents being far and away the most common cause of death in young people (Quilgars, 2000b). Accident rates increase as children get older, are higher for boys than girls in all ranges, and are more likely to occur outside the home in older children and young people. There is also a strong correlation between death by accident and social class, with the children of unskilled manual workers five times more likely to suffer a fatal accident than children of professional and managerial workers. This class differential increased during the 1980s. The CPAG review also reported that children whose parents were in manual occupations (social class five) are more than four times more likely to die as pedestrians than children whose parents were in professional or managerial jobs (class one). Children whose parents are classified as 'unoccupied' (largely economically inactive single mothers) have the worst mortality rate of all social groups, with 10-15 year-olds being four times more likely to die at that age than those in classes one and two. Social and economic disadvantage can be fatal; and children and young people are not exempt.

Mortality rates are not always the best indicators of patterns of ill health in children and young people. Acute illness affects around one in ten children and young people at any one time. Consultations about respiratory complaints are twice as common among children and young people as among adults and are a common cause for admission to hospital, especially amongst younger children. Diagnosis of asthma by doctors was reported amongst 23 per cent of males aged 13-15 and 18 per cent of females in the same age group (NSO, 2000b). Reports of 'wheezing' were of a similar proportion and thought to be related to passive smoking. Meningitis and septicaemia are also serious and life-threatening diseases and are prevalent in children and young people. Meningitis results in death in one in ten cases and is known to have been increasing in recent

years, with 275 notified cases amongst 16-19 year olds in 1999 (NSO, 2000b). It is most common in young children, with 16-19 year olds being the next most vulnerable group, especially students in their first few weeks of college and university.

Much of the evidence reviewed above points to the fact that ill health is socially patterned, though arguably less so during teenage years (West, 1997). What is less clear is how it impacts upon youth transitions and later stages in the life course. Clearly, chronic illness can have an adverse effect upon schooling and education. The prevalence of long standing illness or disability has also been increasing in recent years, rising from 12 per cent of 13-24 year olds in 1975 to 20 per cent in 1998-9, covering slightly more young women than men. It should be remembered, however, that West and Macintyre did not find a correlation between morbidity and social class amongst 15 year olds in western Scotland (Macintyre and West, 1992). In a later report, Sweeting and West argue that cultural factors related to family functioning do help explain many of the social inequalities of ill health amongst the young. In their West of Scotland Study, they found that the poor quality of relationships between parents and young people were associated with lower self esteem, poorer psychological well-being and, amongst young women, more physical symptoms of ill health (Sweeting and West, 1995). This suggests a much more complicated relationship between social background and factors associated with ill health and mental illness.

Young people and suicide

In the UK as a whole, for young people in the 15-24 year old age group, suicide is the second most common cause of death (after road accidents). There are around 19,000 suicides by 10-19 year olds each year - on average around one every 30 minutes. Yet, in half the cases of suicides by young people, there was no previous classification of young people as mentally ill. Rates of suicide in young men have increased alarmingly in recent decades, from ten per 100,000 in the late 1970s to 16 per 100,000 in the late 1980s (a 60 per cent increase). A small decrease has been reported since 1993 (Samaritans, 1998). In-depth studies have been carried out about the growth of unemployment, particularly youth unemployment, and suicides and parasuicides amongst young men (Platt, 1986). A number of studies have pointed to the other social and psychological consequences of unemployment, including poor health and depression, which make their correlation to steep rises in suicide amongst young men in the 1980s 'understandable' (Pritchard, 1992). Another, socially structured, 'at risk' group are young offenders, particularly once they have been caught, convicted and incarcerated (Lloyd, 1990). In 1996-7 the chief inspector's Thematic Review of Younger Prisoners reported a doubling of suicides on the previous year (Macfarlane, 1997).

There are also marked gender differences in the methods used to commit, or attempt to commit, suicide. Young men are more likely to resort to hanging or jumping from high places, whereas young women tend to overdose on paracetamol. Many of the latter do this when there is someone else in the house, which raises questions about whether this should be regarded as a suicide attempt or a cry for help (Hill, 1995; Madge, 1996). Research on suicide attempts and self-harm suggests that the gender difference consistently reported in the case of suicide is reversed for cases of attempted suicide. Amongst suicide attempts by young women, young Asian women are over-represented, something which raises questions about the cultural context in which this occurs (Coleman, 1996; NHS-HAS, 1994).

Mental illness

The extent of mental illness amongst young people is disputed. Yet undiagnosed mental illness or special educational needs may lie behind much underperformance or disaffection within schools prior to school leaving age and disinvolvement after the age of 16. A survey conducted by the Office for National Statistics, in partnership with the Institute of Psychiatry and the Maudsley Hospital, claimed that around ten per cent of children and young people between the age of five and 15 had a mental disorder (Meltzer *et al*., 2000). This survey was based on a large sample of children (10,438), families and teachers, with a sampling frame based on child benefit records. The survey involved lay interviewers administering a computerised structured interview after which the detailed answers were analysed by three child psychiatrists. The results indicated that five per cent of children had conduct disorders, four per cent had emotional disorders and one per cent had hyperkinetic (hyperactive) disorders. These findings are at odds with a two year inquiry conducted by the Mental Health Foundation and published only a year before.

The Mental Health Foundation (MHF) estimated that, of the 14.9 million children and young people under the age of 20 in the UK, one in five (20 per cent) experienced psychological problems. They quote epidemiological studies which indicate that among those aged 4-20 the following problems occur in the following proportions:
- 12 per cent - anxiety disorders;
- 10 per cent - disruptive disorders;
- 5 per cent - attention deficit disorders;
- 6 per cent - enuresis and substance abuse;
- 1 per cent - pervasive developmental disorders (such as autism) or psychosis.

Commenting on the ONS survey, the MHF stand by their findings and stress that, despite differing estimates of the size of the problem, both studies point to the fact that mental illness amongst the young is widespread and that much of it goes unrecognised and undiagnosed. Even the ONS survey indicates that only a third of those diagnosed are in contact with specialist services. As elsewhere in the developed world, despite problems involved with definitions and recording, rates of mental illness have been rising since the Second World War (Mental Health Foundation, 1999). Kurtz claims that nearly a half of all children and young people (49 per cent) may meet the criteria for at least one disorder at some stage in their life before the age of 20 (Kurtz, 1996). The case of 16-25 year olds is particularly problematic in that responsibility for servicing their needs falls between child and adult divisions in both health and social services.

A number of studies help identify the 'risks' of mental illness or 'resilience' in avoiding it, even when living in adverse circumstances (Meltzer *et al*., 2000; Mental Health Foundation, 1999; Rutter and Smith, 1995). Risk and resilience factors are related to characteristics of the child or young person, their family, the communities in which they live and the experiences they have. Boys before the age of puberty are more likely than girls to suffer from autism, hyperactivity and to exhibit conduct disorders. Children with a low IQ or a learning disability, a chronic illness or a 'difficult temperament', are more likely than others to develop a mental illness. Genetic factors are related to some mental illness although this may also be triggered by other factors. Young black men have been found to have more diagnoses for schizophrenia, but this has not been found to be so in the US, raising questions about the possibility of a race bias in the diagnosis (Bhugra, 1997; Smaje, 1995). Risk factors within the family include having a parent: with a mental health problem; who is violent or abusive; has problems with the law; or who has alcohol problems. Volatile or hostile family relationships, physical or sexual abuse, a lack of emotional warmth, or harsh or erratic discipline (including violent punishment) are all associated with depression and conduct disorder and personality disturbance. Parental separation and divorce, or death and loss (including loss of friendship) can also be important. The ONS survey reported that there was a strong association between unemployment and mental illness in young people, with 20 per cent of those in families where the parent(s) had never worked having a mental disorder. Children in families in manual unskilled occupations were three times more likely to have a mental health problem than the children of professional workers. CPAG also report that poverty, unemployment and other adverse social circumstances, including the psychiatric disorder of parents and physical and emotional neglect, have an adverse impact upon children and young people's mental health. Schizophrenia is five times more likely to be diagnosed within working class families than those of other social classes (Dennehy *et*

al., 1997).

Other significant life events are associated with 'community factors', including the experience of disadvantage and poverty, racial discrimination, a disaster, or homelessness. Attending schools with a high morale, good academic opportunities or positive sports and recreational activities, and ones with effective anti-bullying strategies, promotes resilience. So too does the development of personal characteristics such as good communication skills, an ability to reflect and a positive approach to solving problems. These are also associated with good self-esteem and self-confidence. Risk factors are cumulative. Where there is known to be one risk factor present, this increases the chance of developing mental illness by only one or two per cent. However, where there are three factors present this increases the likelihood by eight per cent and when four or more by 20 per cent (Rutter, 1995).

A number of attempts have been made in recent years to examine the possible link between social class background, child poverty and mental health (Quilgars, 2000e). Quilgar's review suggested that, on a series of different measures of mental health and illness, very few positive correlations could be discerned between these and parental social class. However, the 1999 survey on the mental health of children and young people aged 5-15 indicated that the prevalence of mental disorder was correlated with a number of background factors. A range of factors including, class, income, family structure, the qualifications of parents and housing tenure were associated with doubling or trebling the prevalence of mental illness in young people (Meltzer *et al*., 2000). This was so in the cases of:

- families in social class five compared to social class one (16 per cent compared to five per cent);
- families with a gross weekly income of less than £200 or more than £500 (15 per cent compared to six per cent);
- living in social housing compared to owner occupation (17 per cent compared to seven per cent);
- lone parent families compared to two parent families (16 per cent compared to eight per cent);
- a parent with no qualifications compared with those having a degree (15 per cent compared to six per cent).

A number of studies in the 1990s attempted to link health indicators to the current positions occupied by young people themselves, rather than parental social class. Using data from the West of Scotland study, Glendinning and colleagues did find that young men and women on training schemes, those unemployed and young women at home,

were more likely to report psychological stress (Glendinning *et al.,* 1997). West and Sweeting also found poorer health amongst 18-year olds who were unemployed. Those unemployed were also much more likely to report attempting suicide than those in work or on training schemes, with the odds of attempting suicide increasing by a factor of six (West and Sweeting, 1996).

Research has identified some specific groups of children and young people that are at greatest risk of mental health problems. Broad estimated that of children and young people 'looked after', 17 per cent have a long term mental illness or disorder, 35 per cent have deliberately self harmed since the age of 15 or 16, 60 per cent have contemplated suicide and 40 per cent had made at least one attempt (Broad, 1999). Young offenders are also estimated to have high rates of mental illness, with 50 per cent of remanded males and 30 per cent of those sentenced having a diagnosable mental disorder (MacFarlane, 1997). Kurtz estimated in 1992 that a diagnosis of a primary mental disorder could be made for a third of young men between 16-18 years of age who had been sentenced before the courts (Kurtz, 1992). The Howard League for Penal Reform has also estimated that young people on remand are three times more likely to attempt suicide than the general population in custody (Grindrod and Black, 1989).

The 1999 survey also reports that the incidence of mental illness is associated with other factors in the welfare of young people and was likely to impact upon their future life chances (Meltzer *et al*., 2000). These included indicators related to the social functioning of the child, their families, and scholastic achievements and education. Those aged 11-15 with a mental disorder were reported to be more likely to drink alcohol more than once a week, smoke cigarettes and regularly use cannabis. They reported that they had a severe lack of friendship with others and were reported by parents to cause difficulties with other family members. Parents were also more likely to report ill health, including mental health problems. The young people concerned were more likely to be frequently sent to their room, and be frequently shouted at and 'grounded'. Nearly half (49 per cent) had officially recognised special educational needs, with 28 per cent having a statement of SEN. Those with emotional disorders, especially, has been absent from school for more than 11 days in the previous term and those with all disorders were four times more likely to have played truant. All this suggests that mental illness in young people is an important mediating factor in producing low educational achievement, family friction and social isolation.

Risk behaviours involving smoking, and alcohol and drug use and abuse

In Britain, there have been significant increases over recent years in young people engaging in a number of behaviours that are thought to aggravate or cause ill health. Such behaviours are also linked to various forms of social exclusion. Young people who smoke, who start to drink alcohol at an early age, and drink large quantities by their mid teens are also more likely to truant, be excluded from school, and to be disengaged from education, training and employment between the ages of 16-18. What is less clear is whether this is primarily a cause or a consequence of disaffection and non involvement. Risk taking behaviour is also related both to a greater likelihood of being involved in crime, and suffering greater degrees of ill-health later in the life course.

Much of the research in this area concentrates upon smoking, drinking alcohol and drug misuse. Our knowledge of young people's risk-taking behaviours is largely based upon a number of large-scale surveys. (Aldridge *et al*., 1999; Goddard and Higgins, 1999; HEA/BMRB, 1996; ISDD, 1996; Leitner *et al.,* 1993; Parker *et al*., 1998; Ramsey and Partridge, 1999). Particularly important for this summary are longitudinal surveys that have been conducted with cohorts of young people, first in North-West England between 1991 and 1996 (Parker *et al*., 1998) and more recently in Northumbria and West Yorkshire (Aldridge *et al*., 1999). Similar studies have been carried out in the West of Scotland (West and Sweeting, 1996). These surveys concentrate upon self-reported smoking drinking and drug use and give information into 'prevalence' (ever having used), as well as 'current use' of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs. They also provide insight into at what age, and under what circumstances, young people start smoking, drinking alcohol and using drugs and how this relates to other aspects of their lifestyles. This allows researchers to examine the patterns through which risk behaviours are taken up, discarded for something else, or associated with other future behaviours (ONS, 2000).

Smoking rates amongst 11-15 year olds have risen during a period in which they have fallen for adults. Smoking amongst 14 and 15 year olds girls is more common in the UK than anywhere else in Europe apart from Denmark. Rates for boys are at about the average of other European countries (Plant and Plant, 1992). A Department of Health Survey reports that nearly one in five 15 year old young men were regular smokers and nearly a third (29 per cent) of young women were regular smokers at the same age. Regular smoking by 13 year old boys had shown a decline from eight per cent in 1982 to five per cent in 1998, whilst amongst the female sample the percentage had increased from six per cent to nine per cent during the same period (Goddard and Higgins, 1999).

The consumption of alcohol and the use of drugs by young people has also increased markedly in recent years. In the North-West study, most respondents had started to drink alcohol at the age of 10 or 11. Nearly a third (30 per cent) were drinking it weekly

at the age of 14, over a half (57 per cent) by the age of 16, and over 80 per cent by the time they reached 18. In 1995, the Department of Health revised its guidance on *Sensible Drinking* – drinking which would not result in significant health risks. This replaced weekly limits by daily limits of 3-4 and 2-3 units for men and women, respectively. Research indicates that, by the age of eighteen a third of the sample could be classified as heavy session drinkers, consuming 11 units or more the last time they drank (Parker *et al.*, 1998). Amongst 18 year old male drinkers, more than half reported that they drank more than the previously advised 'sensible' weekly drinking limit of 28 units per week, with more than a third (36 per cent) of young women of that age exceeding their suggested limit of 21 units (Parker *et al.*, 1998).

The venues at which young people drink change according age. When they are young, 14 and 15 year olds drink mainly in their own, or friends', homes, although a considerable proportion (around two thirds of drinkers) also report drinking outside on the streets, in parks or other public places. By the age of 16, the vast majority of young people were also drinking in licensed premises such as pubs (approaching 90 per cent of all drinkers). By the age of 17 or 18 this proportion declined as young people gained access to clubs and other leisure venues. By this age drinking outside on the streets covered less than one per cent of the age group.

Some studies that have examined the prevalence of illegal drug use amongst the young have made claims about the 'normalisation' of recreational use. 'Normalisation' refers to the contention that some involvement in using illicit drugs is now the experience of the majority of teenagers (Shiner and Newburn, 1997). Some regard talk of 'normalisation' as an exaggeration, as often 'headline figures' are based upon self-reporting of 'ever having tried' an illegal drug rather than its regular use. The North-West study indicated that over a third of 14 year olds will have tried at least one illicit drug, rising to nearly two-thirds (64 per cent) of 18 and 19 year olds. However, the proportion of the age groups who report use within the past month is substantially smaller - one in five 14 year olds and around one in three by the age of 18. At the age of 18, rates of drug use amongst young men is significantly higher than those for young women although, interestingly, there are no real differences between rates for young people from different class backgrounds. This is confirmed by the 1998 British Crime Survey which studied much wider age groups. This survey also points to a strong link between drug use and unemployment (Ramsey and Patridge, 1999). In the North-West study, rates of drug use by young people self-identifying as black are much higher than whites in all age groups, although Asian groups were much less likely to have tried drugs at all, or to have used them within the past month. Perhaps as an antidote to the often repeated image of teenage drug problems being associated with run down estates full of out-of-work

teenagers, it should be remembered that the British Crime Survey indicates that the highest rates of drug use are amongst a relatively small group of rising urban professionals (Ramsay and Patridge, 1999).

Studies showing how many young people have ever tried an illegal drug have revealed some regional differences, with higher rates being reported in London, parts of Northern England and Scotland (Ramsay and Partridge, 1999). The Home Office study in the North-East and West Yorkshire found that over half of 15 and 16 year olds had tried at least one drug, with more than 60 per cent reporting use by the second year of the survey (Aldridge et al., 1999). When the survey restricted the definition of 'drug users' to those who reported having used an illegal drug in the last year, this reduced the numbers involved by around two-thirds. Where 'drug users' was restricted to those who report use in the last month, this reduced the figures by a further third. Whilst the overall figures remain high, these reduced figures do not really support the 'normalisation' claim. Just under a third (30 per cent in Yorkshire and 35 per cent in Northumbria) report having used an illegal drug in the last month at the age of 16.

The use of school-based surveys has also helped to identify the early age at which young people are first exposed to illegal drugs. As part of the 'NE Choices' project a baseline survey was conducted with just under 2,000 pupils in year 9 (around 13 years old) in ten schools in North-East England in Autumn 1996 (Stead *et al*., 2000). Almost half (47 per cent) had been offered a drug by that age, this included a third who had been offered cannabis, a quarter solvents, around 15 per cent who had been offered magic mushrooms or LSD, and one in ten Ecstasy. About a third had tried at least one drug by the age of 13 (mainly cannabis or solvents), although this was reduced to a quarter if the definition was restricted to those who had done so within the last six months. If taking drugs within the last three months was taken as an indicator of regular use, this accounted for around 15 per cent of 13 year-olds, with a third of these (five per cent) reporting that they had taken drugs within the past week. Much drug taking amongst the young is experimental. Increasingly drug-awareness programmes have become attuned to the fact that they must target younger age groups and be aware of the distinctions between 'ever used' and 'regular users' and an appreciation of different 'career routes' into, and out of, drug use.

The North-West study sample of 18 year olds provides the clearest large-scale analysis to date of 'drug careers'. This study splits the sample into four broad groups in their attitudes and behaviour on drug use. Just under a third (31 per cent) were *current users*; they had used illegal substances, intended to do so again and nominated themselves as 'taking drugs'. A further third (30 per cent) were *abstainers*; they did not take drugs,

never had, and had no intentions of doing so in the future. A further 11 per cent had used drugs but had given up; they were *former triers*. The fourth group of 28 per cent are reported as *in transition* in that they had taken drugs in the past, did not currently identify as a 'drug user', but remained agnostic about whether they will become users in the future. The *abstainer* group reported on by Parker and colleagues was much smaller in size than that reported on by the British Crime Survey. The North-West study claimed less than a third were abstainers compared to the 50 per cent of 16-19 year old abstainers claimed by the British Crime Survey (Ramsey and Spiller, 1997).

Most young people who use drugs do not regard this as problematic behaviour (Perri *et al.*, 1997). Most surveys confirm that the use of cannabis is overwhelmingly 'the drug of choice' for the majority of those using drugs, although many also mention LSD and amphetamines and Ecstasy. Other studies report that Ecstasy use is more common amongst young people in their late teens and is associated with clubs and dance music (Merchant and MacDonald, 1994). The use of cannabis, in particular, is regarded as bringing positive feelings of relaxation. Amphetamines are perceived as improving self confidence and making young people feel sexy, energetic and excited. LSD was reported by young people as the least predictable of the drugs commonly used, although negative experiences with any of the popularly used drugs were reported by less than one in ten users. Even amongst 'abstainers', cannabis was regarded as a safe drug and no more (and often less) dangerous than alcohol or tobacco. Indeed many young people are very aware that, whilst alcohol sometimes makes them violent and aggressive, the use cannabis is calming and less likely to result in violent or anti-social behaviour. Parker reports that young people regard themselves as 'sophisticated about their drug of choice' whilst having negative images of 'drug abusers', regarding these as 'dangerous, diseased, dishevelled injecting 'junkies' and 'saddos' who commit vast amounts of crime to feed their habit. ... Taking hard drugs is an anathema; a Rubicon they will not cross.' (Parker *et al.*, 1998). In the late 1990s, however, there remained worries that more and more young people were using cheap, heroin based, drugs sold under different names and smoked rather than injected. The 1998 British Crime Survey reported significant increases in the use of cocaine based drugs (Ramsay and Partridge, 1999). One study in the North-East suggested that some estates had become flooded with cheap heroin and some young people did not regard smoking it as likely to lead to addiction (Johnston *et al.*, 2000). The use of hard drugs is also often linked to persistent offending. Yet what must also be recognised is that the production, distribution and consumption of drugs is a huge industry. The distribution and sales of drugs offer young people significant employment opportunities and represent a major route to developing alternative careers outside of the legitimate labour market (Johnston *et al.,* 2000). Too often the limited number of studies of 'drug careers' have concentrated only upon drug use in isolation

from other aspects of young people's careers. Yet, often it is related to other behaviours, sometimes other risk behaviours, such as involvement in crime, but also to other more mundane activities. One small scale, ethnographic study in Scotland, for instance, showed that simple events like splitting up with a girlfriend or dropping out of college can sometimes precipitate a change of friendship patterns and leisure activities. This can lead either to infrequent users becoming regular users or to young people changing their drug of choice (Bell *et al.*, 1999).

Drugs are therefore very much a part of the life style of a significant minority of young people, and by and large use is associated with other negative outcomes. Young women who used drugs before the age of 15 were three times more likely to drink alcohol, smoke, and have had sexual experiences. There were also connections between these four risk taking behaviours and family background. All four behaviours were more accepted as 'normal' by young people living in poverty, in poor neighbourhoods, or in disadvantaged family backgrounds. Smoking and illicit drug use were also fifteen times less likely to take place when young men lived in intact families. For young women smoking at the age of 15 was most likely where they lived in single parent households, including ones where a parent had died. Of those young people who had experienced the death of a parent, 27 per cent had had sexual experiences before the age of 16 and 40 per cent were pregnant before the age of 18. Teenage pregnancy was also more common in those living in single parent families at the age of 15, and 3-4 times higher than in intact families. Of course, these are not suggested as directly causally connected. Rather this may be part of a set of factors related to living in poor neighbourhoods.

Young people and their involvement in crime and the criminal justice system

Some Home Office tracking studies have found that criminal activity is alarmingly high, particularly amongst young men, with one in three of this group being convicted of an indictable offence before the age of thirty (Home Office, 1989). Much of what we claim to know about offending behaviour by young people is based, not upon an examination of the characteristics of convicted offenders, but on 'self report' studies of large samples of young people in the general population. The most quoted of these was carried out by Graham and Bowling in 1992 and published in 1995 (Graham and Bowling, 1995). This was based on a national random sample of 1,721 young people aged 14-25 and a booster sample of 808 young people from ethnic minorities. Respondents to the main survey were asked to admit whether they had committed one of a list of 23 different offences or whether they had used controlled drugs. A second stage involved in-depth interviews with a small sample of 'desisters' – young people who had offended in the

past but claimed not to have done so within the past year.

The Home Office now conducts more regular surveys of young people. The Youth Lifestyles Survey covers a sample of nearly five thousand young people aged 12 to 30 years of age with the most recent published in October 2000 (Campbell and Harrington, 2000). Key findings from this survey include:

- Youth crime is widespread, with the majority of young men (57 per cent) and 37 per cent of young women admitting to committing at least one offence at some point in their lives;
- Almost a fifth of those sampled admitted to one or more offence in the last 12 months. Men (26 per cent) were more likely to admit to offending than women (11 per cent). Those in the 14-21 age group were the most likely to be offenders;
- Most youth crime does not result in young people being dealt with by the youth justice system. Only four per cent of young men and one per cent of young women reported that they had been cautioned or taken to court;
- The average age of offending was 13.5 for boys and 14 for girls
- Most admitted to only one offence in the last year, but 10 per cent of offenders were responsible for nearly half of all crime;
- Offending amongst boys aged 14-17 increased by 14 per cent between 1992/3 and 1998/9 but fell during the same period for 18-25 year olds by 6 per cent;
- Types of offending varied with age with fighting and criminal damage predominating amongst 12 and 13 year olds but declining in later teenage years;
- Amongst 12 to 17 year old boys factors associated with persistent offending included drug taking, educational disaffection, and the influence of family and friends. Persistent offending was five times more common amongst this age group taking drugs than those who did not;
- Drug use amongst 18-30 year old men was also the factor most predictive of persistent offending.

In England and Wales, the peak ages of offending are in the mid- to late-teens with different peak ages for different offences. Offending is most likely to start at age 15 for male and female (a year later than, for instance, running away, truancy and drinking alcohol). Drug taking is more likely to start a year later. In England and Wales, most early offences are, what Graham and Bowling describe as, 'expressive property crime' (vandalism). Sixteen is the peak year for acts of violence (male and female). Involvement in property offences amongst young men is more likely in the late teens and early 20s. Young women's involvement in this is earlier (although much less). Offending amongst young women declines in their late teens. This is not the case for young men,

where offending remains constant between the ages of 18-25, and, in the case of property crime, increases in the late teen years.

Some authors suggest that, based upon a number of longitudinal studies conducted in a number of different countries, we do know a considerable amount about the causes of youth crime (Boswell, 1995; Fergusson, 1993; Hagell and Newburn, 1994; McCord, 1979; Pulkkinen, 1988; Robins, 1975; Wadsworth, 1979). These are associated with a series of 'risk factors' clustered around issues to do with the family, education, the community and peers (Farrington, 1996; Utting, 1997). It should be emphasised, however, that some of the studies on which this analysis is based are quite dated, with one, much quoted, British source, being based on 411 boys born in south London in 1953 and studied between the ages of 8 and 32 (Farrington, 1995).

Family factors associated with young offending include having a teenage mother, experiencing harsh or erratic discipline or neglect, conflict between parents, separation from at least one biological parent, and having a parent whose own attitudes condoned lawbreaking. Condoning parents have also been reported as significant in a number of other studies. In the Graham and Bowling self-report study, those living with both biological parents were least likely to report being offenders (Graham and Bowling, 1995). However, more significant were family relationships, including parents getting on badly with their children, not knowing where they were, or who they were with when they were away from home. Fifteen and sixteen year olds who reported that they got on badly with either their mother or father were much more likely also to report that they offended. Where bad relationships with parents resulted in young people spending at least one night away from home, this was associated with respondents also reporting offending behaviour in the case of nearly half the young women and three quarters of the young men. The relationship between these factors is highly complex. For instance, on the one hand offending may lead to a worsening of family relationships to such an extent that the offender runs away from home. On the other hand, if a young person has run away from home, they may engage in offending as a means of quickly obtaining money or provisions on which to survive.

Educational factors associated with offending suggest that children who perform poorly in primary school, those who indicate a lack of commitment to school (through, for instance, truancy), and those involved in persistent bullying were more likely to be offenders (Utting, 1997). Graham and Bowling also report an association between offending and school factors such as school work being below average, being involved in truancy or being excluded from school (Graham and Bowling, 1995). They reported that more than a third of males and a quarter of females skipped school for at least a day

without permission. Amongst this group, offending was three times higher than amongst those who did not truant. Temporary exclusion was reported by just over one in ten young men, three quarters of whom also reported offending. All of the males in the sample, and five out of eight of the young women, who had been permanently excluded also reported offending.

Utting reports on a number of community factors associated with offending, including living in a household with a low income, or living in a poor neighbourhood with various forms of community disorganisation. This latter factor was indicated by a high turn-over of residents and harassment of ethnic minorities (Utting, 1997). Jamieson *et al*., in their study in Scotland, report that most of their sample thought that, overall, most of the adults in the communities in which they lived, disapproved of offending behaviour (Jamieson *et al*., 1999). However, a significant minority reported that some adults who were also involved in offending, saw it as 'getting one over' on the police, and that some behaviour, particularly minor offending, was seen as acceptable, or at least, understandable.

The other major factor associated with offending, found in numerous studies, is being associated with a peer group who also offend. Graham and Bowling report that more than two-thirds of male offenders had friends who were also in trouble with the police and that a third of female offenders had friends who offended. Only a sixth of female offenders had no friends who were also in trouble with the police. However, although based on a small sample, Jamieson *et al*. report that many of those who persist in their offending were oblivious to the views of their friends and peers, especially when they were also involved in drug misuse. Friends were reported as hostile both to their drug habits and to their offending.

There are a number of protective factors which are thought to reduce the likelihood of young people becoming involved in crime or related to their non-involvement. Utting, for instance, emphasises opportunities for involvement and feeling valued at home, in school and in the communities in which young people live. Connected to this is the importance of recognition and due praise being given for achievement at home and at school and the opportunities to develop social skills and thinking skills. It was through this more balanced appraisal of their behaviour that potential young offenders learned to recognise the widespread damage offending behaviour might cause.

The Audit Commission also reported that the cost of youth crime to public services alone was around £1billion and much of the processing of youth crime, although costly, was slow, inefficient and ineffective (Audit Commission, 1996). In some areas it took 170

days between arrest and sentence with the average in England and Wales being 121 days (nearly four months). During this time many offenders went on to commit many other offences. Other estimates have suggested that, when such elements as private insurance and damage repair are taken into account, the total cost of youth crime is over £7billion a year. The Prince's Trust have estimated that the cost in Scotland alone is £730m (Prince's Trust, 1997). Clearly, vast amounts of money are being spent to deal with the consequences of youth crime. Being tough on crime and the causes of crime had, therefore, considerable potential to prevent wasteful public expenditure, through reducing the amount of youth crime and diverting those responsible for committing it from further offending.

Conclusions

This chapter has reviewed evidence on eight sets of vulnerable groups who are often overlooked in large household surveys. Research evidence about these groups is, however, important to our understanding of the complex ways in which some young people are disadvantaged, are socially excluded and experience negative outcomes in attempting youth transitions.

Chapter 1 outlined a range of different policy developments spanning a number of different Government departments and agencies, including the Department of Health, the Home Office, The Youth Justice Board and the Drug Prevention and Advisory Service. Each of these is associated with a whole raft of different policies and initiatives commanding very significant amounts of public expenditure. Much of this is designed to prevent social exclusion in young people. Following the PAT 12 report, there is now a commitment within Government to co-ordinate policy in a more systematic way

Chapter 5: The future of socially excluded young people in the medium term

So far we have considered the factors pre-disposing to being NEET at age 16-18 and the current circumstances of those in this situation. This chapter considers the consequences of having been NEET aged 16-18 on the lives of people in their twenties and thirties. For example we are interested in the proportions of individuals who are unemployed or in low paid work, who are still involved with, drugs, alcohol and crime. We also investigate other consequences of social exclusion at age 16-18, having a young family, and poor health.

Unemployment and associated costs

Being outside education employment or training at ages 16,17 and 18 has future consequences for the individual and society. It is a major predictor of later unemployment. By age 18 only a little over a third of those without jobs and less than a quarter of those looking after have reached Level 2 qualification (YCS COHORT 8, Sweep 2, SEU Report). This lack of education is associated with higher levels of unemployment at age 20-24 and 25-29. At age 20-24, 30 per cent of those with less than Level 2 qualification are unemployed compared with under ten per cent of those with Level 4 and just over ten per cent of those with Level 5 education. At age 25-29 over 20 per cent of those with less that Level 2 education are unemployed compared with under five per cent of those with Level 4 or 5.

Analyses presented in the SEU Report using the 1970 British Birth Cohort showed that over 40 per cent of socially excluded 16-18 year old young men were unemployed at age 21 compared with ten per cent of other young people. None of the previously excluded group had any training in their current job compared with 20 per cent of others. Of women who were NEET at 16-18 years old, 30 per cent said that family commitments were a barrier to employment compared with less than five per cent of other young women at age 21. Nearly 60 per cent said that they had full-time home care responsibilities, and nearly 70 per cent were not in full-time or part-time work, compared with just over 20 per cent of other young women.

As reported in Burgess *et al*. (1999) although a considerable US literature exists on the short-term effect of youth labour market experiences, relatively little attention is paid to the longer term impact. However, there is persistent evidence that young people who experience unemployment accumulate less work experience and hence may earn less in

the future. The limited literature, which focuses on the impact of early labour market experiences on long-run career outcomes, tends to focus on the effect of education and training and ignores early unemployment or family care. However Gardecki and Neumark (1997) examine the consequences of initial periods of 'churning' or 'floundering about' in the labour market to assess whether faster transitions to stable labour market relationships would lead to improved adult labour market outcomes. This work is based on one cohort of the national Longitudinal Survey of Youth and concludes that outcomes at age late twenties and early thirties are largely unrelated to early labour market experiences for both males and females.

In Britain there is less evidence on the impact of early labour market experiences on future careers, and much of the work on the effects of youth unemployment concentrates on psychological rather than economic outcomes, for example Clark *et al*. (1999). There is also a considerable amount of work on the scarring effects of unemployment generally but not particularly addressing youth unemployment.

Burgess *et al.* (1999) conclude that high aggregate unemployment when a cohort is aged 16-18 has mixed effects on subsequent unemployment. Relevant to this review they find that for the low skilled there is a lasting adverse effect.

Costs

The costs of medium term unemployment and lower paid work at ages 20-30 will be calculated on the same basis as the lifetime costs of lower earnings to the individual and the cost of benefit payments to the state for unemployed people. Because the period of unemployment at this age is uncertain it seems most sensible to include it in the overall lifetime costs on which more work has been done.

Effect of New Deal

The evaluation of New Deal for Young People has been extensive. A more holistic approach undertaken at the Gateway stage seems vindicated by early survey results of entrants to New Deal (Bryson *et al*., 2000). This shows that a fifth of the sample reported a health problem or a disability, expected to last for a year or more; a fifth reported basic skills problems since the age of 16; and a quarter had no formal qualifications. The vast majority of those recruited to NDYP were male (71 per cent) and white (83 per cent) although Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were over-represented amongst female participants at 9 per cent of the total. This is broadly in line with those entitled to join the programme rather than a programme bias. Almost a half (48 per cent) were living in

social housing with the same proportion living with parents who were responsible for their housing costs. One in seven, however, were living with a partner only a quarter of whom were in employment. One in ten had children of their own. However, participant 'New Dealers' regarded the main barriers to employment as being the lack of jobs in the areas in which they lived, although lack of personal transport was also seen as a major barrier by a quarter of those surveyed. From the start of New Deal there has been pressure on Gateway providers to move their clients through the process as quickly as possible. Yet early research found that a quarter of those surveyed had remained on Gateway for longer than the prescribed period of four months, indicating the range and severity of the issues being addressed (Bryson *et al.*, 2000). This more holistic approach seems vindicated by early survey results of entrants to New Deal (Bryson *et al.*, 2000). This shows that a fifth of the sample reported a health problem or a disability, expected to last for a year or more; a fifth reported basic skills problems since the age of 16; and a quarter had no formal qualifications. The vast majority of those recruited to NDYP were male (71 per cent) and white (83 per cent) although Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were over-represented amongst females.

Research by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (Riley and Young, 2000) suggests that the New Deal has a beneficial impact on youth employment. As a result of the programme, young people experience shorter spells of unemployment and find jobs quicker than they would have done otherwise. Although some young people subsequently become unemployed again fairly soon, overall youth unemployment has reduced.

Costs

Returning to education or employment reduces the medium term costs of unemployment by the proportion of young people who obtain work or start to attend courses. Returning to education, however, does involve further costs in the cost of the provision of the course and in the earnings foregone while attending the course, although it is likely that the subsequent earnings gains are sufficient to make this 'investment' worthwhile.

Growing out of drug abuse and crime

Although substance abuse and crime are associated with being NEET at age 16-18, both are also activities more prevalent among younger rather than older adults. By age 20-30 some will already have reduced their participation in such activities although there is evidence that those who were NEET are still more likely to be involved even at this age than those who were not NEET. Important predictors of offending behaviour among 18-30 year old men is that they used drugs at least once a month, drink at least five times a week, had been excluded from school, had no qualifications and have delinquent friends or relatives (Flood-page *et al*., 2000). Exclusion from school and lack of qualifications are associated with being NEET so this pattern continues through the next decade for young men. There was also a strong cumulative effect of risk factors such as: using drugs at least once a month, no educational qualifications, delinquent friends or acquaintances, drinking at least five times a week, and being excluded from school. Thus, 52 per cent of men aged 18-30 with four or more risk factors were offenders, and 30 per cent of those with three or more risk factors, compared with around two per cent of those with no risk factors.

Generally, however, the rate of people who are guilty or cautioned for offences falls from 90 per 1000 for men aged 18, to 20 per 1000 at age 31-39, and from just over ten per 1000 for women aged 18, to around two per 1000 at age 31-39. In the medium term therefore it is men who continue to offend but in the long run, over age 30 few continue to be involved with crime.

The types and levels of offence change with age according to findings from the Youth Lifestyles Survey 1998/99 (Flood-Page *et al*., 2000). At age 18-21, 35 per cent of men admitted to having committed at least one offence in the last year although this fell to 19 per cent of 26-30 year old men. For women, 15 per cent had offended in the last year at age 18-21 compared with seven per cent of 26-30 year olds. Approximately a quarter of the offences committed by 18-30 year old men were for buying stolen goods and this remained relatively stable over the different age bands. Fraud increased from 15 per cent at age 18-21 to 44 per cent of offences at age 26-30. Theft from the workplace increases but fighting and selling stolen goods decline with age. For women, buying stolen goods is relatively consistent at around a quarter of offences at all age bands from 18-30.

Although the Youth Lifestyles Survey does not link directly the outcomes for young people NEET at age 16-18, it does provide information on indirect links. For example, it found a relationship between educational qualifications achieved and the likelihood of

offending. In the analyses quoted, among men aged 17-30 with no qualifications on leaving full-time education, 29 per cent had committed three or more offences and/or had committed at least one 'serious offence'. A 'serious offence' includes stealing a car or motorbike, burglary, snatch theft, pick-pocketing, threatening for money or possessions, assault or hurting someone with a weapon. Men who completed their full-time education with some qualifications were less than half as likely to have committed such offences, 11 per cent. The corresponding proportions for women with no and some qualifications are eight per cent and three percent respectively. Men and women who continued in education beyond age 18 had the lowest rate of offending, seven per cent and two per cent, respectively. School experience continued to have an influence on the likelihood of crime at ages 17-30: those who had truanted at least once a month having rates of offending of 21 per cent for men compared with eight per cent for non-truants. For women aged 17-30 and nine per cent of those who truanted offended compared two per cent of those who had not. Similar differences were reported for people who had been excluded from school: 23 per cent of men and 12 per cent of women aged 17-30 had offended in the last 12 months compared with 11 per cent of men and three per cent of women who had not been excluded. Lack of educational qualifications, truancy and exclusion are all associated with being NEET at age 16-18.

Current lifestyles also had an effect on offending. Twenty per cent of men aged 18-30 who had used drugs in the past 12 months had also offended compared with eight per cent who had not used drugs. The corresponding percentages for women were seven per cent of drug users compared with two per cent of others. Regular drinkers were also more likely to have offended in the past 12 moths. Twenty-one per cent of men aged 18-21 had offended in the last year compared with seven per cent of irregular or non-drinkers. Interestingly, by age 22-30 for men and over age 15 for women there was no relationship between drinking and offending.

Costs

The costs of prosecuting a young person are set out on page 45 of the Audit Commission Report (1996). It states that it costs around £1,250 for the police to identify a young offender and a further £2,500 to prosecute an offender successfully. The cost heads in outcomes include caution, caution plus, discharge, attendance centre, supervision/probation, and finally custody. A caution costs about £1,200 compared with over £9,000 for custody.

It should be noted that these costs relate to young offenders rather than adults. For the purpose of the medium-term impact the costs for adults are required.

A useful list of the costs to be included in counting the cost of crime is contained in a Crime Concern report (1994). If a house is burgled, it may be damaged and property stolen. The householder will need to take time off work to inform the police, and other authorities. The police will investigate the crime, visit the house, record the information and pursue their enquiries. If the offender is caught there may be court action followed by probation or custody.

If there is insurance cover, a claim will be processed by the insurance company. The householder may require support from health and social services and in extreme cases residential care.

All these involve financial loss or consumption of resources. The costs outline give the most obvious but also include other less direct costs:
- Loss of revenue from housing made non lettable because of vandalism;
- Arson of a school means alternative accommodation must be found;
- Shops in areas with pickpockets may attract fewer customers.

Crime also has considerable social costs: physical injury, psychological stress, altered life choices. Although difficult to cost, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board do value such experiences and their figures can be used for calculating such costs.

Other consequences of social exclusion

i)   Poor health and depression
Analyses presented in the SEU Report using information from the 1970 Birth Cohort who were 18 in 1988, showed that at age 21 those who had been out of education, employment or training at ages 16-18 were more likely to suffer from poor health and depression. Among men 15 per cent of those defined as socially excluded reported poor health compared with ten per cent of other young men, and 25 per cent reported depression compared with ten per cent of other young men. The corresponding percentages of poor health among socially excluded young women and others were 25 and 15; and for depression were 35 and 25 respectively.

Costs

The medium term costs of people being in poor health or depressed at age 21 include:

- Costs to the health services of doctors visits, hospital stays, treatments, drugs.
- Costs to the individual of lost promotions, lower earnings, job loss, stress, pain.

ii) Early motherhood

Being outside education, employment or training is also associated with early motherhood for women. Earlier we have discussed the group of women who are mothers in their teens and over-represented among the NEET population at age 16-18. At age 21 nearly 40 per cent of women who had been NEET at age 16-18 had two or more children compared with less than five per cent of those in education, employment or training at that age. Approximately 60 per cent had experienced teenage pregnancy, again compared with five per cent of non-NEET young women, and among those who had experienced six months or more of non-participation at ages 16-18, 71 per cent were parents by age 21 compared with 16 per cent of other young women.

Hobcraft and Kiernan (1999) also use the National Child Development Study to examine outcomes at age 33 for a number of measures of adult social exclusion and conclude that there are clear associations between age of first giving birth and such adult outcomes. Becoming a mother before age 23, and any experience of childhood poverty clearly lead to greater likelihood of adverse outcomes in later adulthood. The effects of childhood poverty are generally weaker and early motherhood has the main effect. Early mothers who were poor sometime during their childhood are over four times as likely to have been a lone parent and to lack a telephone in their accommodation, over three times more likely to live in social housing and to have no qualifications, and more than twice as likely to be claiming means-tested benefits, to be cigarette smokers and to have high malaise scores. Of women who had their first child aged under 20, 43 per cent were in receipt of means-tested benefits at age 33 compared with 21 per cent of all women with children. For women who had their first child by age 22, 34 per cent were in receipt of benefits at age 33.

Costs

The medium term costs of early motherhood include:

- Lost earnings
- Child health services
- Benefit payments to some
- Divorce costs for some.

Chapter 6:   Long term effects of social exclusion at age 16-18

This chapter aims to set out the long-term consequences of being NEET at age 16-18. The NEET population are likely to have less continuous and lower paid employment than their contemporaries. This means that their life-time earnings and ability to contribute to pension schemes are likely to be affected. Being unemployed when they are bringing up their own children is also likely to have an impact on the achievements and prospects of their children.

Lifetime employment prospects and associated costs

Empirical results corroborate theoretical literature to suggest that education confers significant wage advantages to individuals (Blundell *et al*., 1999). Evidence for the UK suggests that the average estimate of the gross rate of return to a year's additional education ranges between five and ten per cent. Returns for different groups and different qualifications may vary considerably around this figure. A recent UK study (Dearden, 1998) found that the average annual return from an extra year's education was 5.5 per cent for men and 9.3 per cent for women.

In terms of people who are NEET at age 16-18, many have few or no educational qualifications and this is likely to be considerably lower their lifetime earnings. For example men who leave school with five or more GCSE grades A–C (or equivalent) receive an average return of around 21 per cent greater that those who leave with none. The corresponding figure for women is 26 per cent (Blundell *et al*., 1999).

The above are the differences resulting from differences in achieved formal education, but Blundell also discusses the effect of other forms of training. Provision and participation in training outside education tends to widen the skills gap at the end of formal education rather than compensate for earlier educational differences. A vicious circle for those without initial qualifications results in them lagging further and further behind in the labour market.

Analysis from the 1998 LFS shows that the average gross weekly earnings for those with no qualifications were £271 for a man and £197 for a woman; for those with Level 2 qualifications they were £350 and £251 respectively, and for those with Level 3 qualifications this rises to £399 for men and £290 for women. Over a working life gross weekly earnings are greater at every age group for those with more than five GCSEs compared with those with less than five. The benefit is cumulative. Those who were NEET at age 16-18 were more likely than others to have no or low levels of educational

qualifications so these differences in earnings over the years relate to the gaps between those who were NEET at age 16-18 and others. It is part of the long-term costs faced by the NEET population.

In a discussion of the paid and unpaid roles of women Davies and Joshi (1994) produce some relative measures of the lifetime earnings in different circumstances. For example they show that for a middle earning couple, the man's lifetime earnings are more than double those of his wife even if they have no children. This is partly based on the assumptions that they have made in simulating the work and wage histories. To some extent the work histories of those who were NEET at age 16-18 may resemble those of women with lower wages throughout their working lives. The interrupted work histories of women caring for children may resemble the interrupted work histories likely for those who were NEET at age 16-18 resulting from their increased susceptibility to unemployment if a man and childcare breaks if a woman.

Pension provision

The likely outcomes in terms of pensions for those who were NEET at age 16-18 are likely to be similar to those of women. Few are likely to have sufficiently secure well-paid jobs to build up occupational pension rights or make substantial contributions to other non-state schemes. There is a considerable literature on the difficulty women have in ensuring an adequate income in retirement as a result of their often broken careers as they look after children or elderly parents. They also experience lower wages when they do work, and a broken employment record and lower wages mean fewer and lower contributions to pensions. For example two-thirds of men have non-state pensions but three-quarters of women do not.

To some extent women can rely on their husbands for pension provision, although this is less true now with the increase in divorce rates. Similar difficulties are likely to face those who were NEET at age 16-18 as their lifetime employment is likely to be broken by spells of unemployment as well as informal care, and their wage level is likely to be lower than their contemporaries throughout their working lives. DSS uses a dynamic modelling simulation system PENSIM to predict pension payments. It could be used to estimate the different level of pension provision for people NEET at age 16-18 compared with their other contemporaries.

Estimates of pension income mostly depend on simulation of current pension rules on hypothetical working lives so that Evans and Falkingham (1997) set out the pension outcomes people with a variety of work histories. For example:

Work histories	Pension as a percentage of average earnings
Men	
Men: On average earnings with continuous full-time work aged 16-64	35.7
On 50% of average earnings from 18-64	26.1
With two periods of unemployment of one year at age 25 and 29 otherwise full-time on average earnings	34.9
With 14 years of unemployment from age 50 otherwise on average earnings	29.6
Women	
Women: On average male earnings with continuous full-time work aged 18-59	33.6
On 50% average earnings, half time work between ages 25 and 40	22.5
On 50% average earnings half-time work between 25 and 40 and 2 gaps for children for 3 years each at ages 22 and 28	22.6

A similar exercise undertaken by Hutton and Kennedy (1995) simulated the state pension income of men and women in different circumstances. The state pension at that time of a man in continuous full time work was £136.22 per week and this compared with a pension of £72.15 for a woman with three children who had worked part-time. A woman who had started working full-time, then had children and gone part time, then had a spell on income support, returned to part-time and finally full-time work earned a state pension of £96.37.

To some extent the work histories of those who are NEET at age 16-18 can be considered to be similar to those of women. Young men who were NEET at age 16-18 are most likely to experience spells of unemployment than others, and the work they do obtain is less likely to be well-paid and with access to occupational pensions. So their

ability to accumulate contributions to the state pension or to any other form of pension is reduced relative to others. Any earnings related pension will be lower.

Dependency in old age – costs of lack of pension provision

Differences in pension incomes;
Dependency on income support;
Lack of income to pay for nursing or care in old age;
Inability to pay for house maintenance.

Inter-generational costs

Machin (1998) shows that intergenerational mobility is limited in terms of education and earnings. For example, 34 per cent of sons and 37 per cent of daughters of men in the lowest quarter of the earnings distribution also end up in the lowest quarter. A study by Ermisch (2000) shows the effect of parent's employment on the educational achievements of children and shows that children of more highly educated parents tend to have higher educational attainments and a lower probability of being economically inactive. Also having lived in a lone parent family during childhood was associated with lower educational achievement and a higher risk of early childbearing for daughters if the single parent became a stepfamily. Teenage motherhood is particularly likely to lead to adult social exclusion including use of income-related benefits, poverty, poor physical and mental health according to Hobcraft and Kiernan (1999). The children of such parents are likely to experience childhood poverty and this is most clearly associated with adverse outcomes in adulthood. The combination of childhood poverty and early motherhood further increases the likelihood of poor outcomes.

The low educational achievements and lack of employment of the NEET population would seem therefore to jeopardise the chances of their offspring gaining good educational qualifications and sustainable employment.

Analysis of NCDS showed that during the 1980s, young men (aged between 23 and 33) were twice as likely to be unemployed for at least one year if their father had been unemployed at age 16 SEU report.

Chapter 7:   Conclusions

This literature review was undertaken as part of a larger project designed to provide some estimate of the cost of young people who are disengaged from education, training and employment between the ages of 16-18, often referred to in the literature as "NEET". It was designed to be an aid to the development of a companion report *Estimating the cost of being 'not in education, employment or training' at age 16-18* (Godfrey *et al.*, 2002)

Recent interest in young people aged 16-18 not in any form of education, employment or training dates back to the 1980s when sociologists in South Wales painstakingly tried to trace young people who the Careers Service records indicated were unemployed or, more enigmatically, were "destination unknown" (Instance, 1994). This group was defined at the time as "status zer0". On the election of the 1997 Labour Government there was a growing interest in "social exclusion" - a short-hand term for syndromes of disadvantage which were often complex and multi-faceted. There was also a broad acceptance that within the processes of social exclusion were features that meant that early patterns of disaffection and disadvantage led to later unemployment as well as other forms of anti-social behaviour (such as involvement in crime) which had very significant public expenditure cost. The early reports of the Social Exclusion Unit were on Truancy and School Exclusion, Rough Sleeping, Poor Neighbourhoods and Teenage Pregnancy (SEU 1998a,b,c, 1999a). The fifth SEU report, *Bridging the Gap*, examined young 16-18 year olds not in any form of education, employment or training. The SEU report used the acronym NEET to describe this group and this has also been followed throughout this report. But whilst the main focus of the SEU report was describing what was known about the group and making recommendations for policy change, it was also clear that the interest in young people who were NEET was driven by a much wider social inclusion agenda. This wider interest is also manifest in this report in that we are concerned to examine long term effects of being NEET at ages 16-18.

This report summarises evidence gathered from a number of different sources. Firstly, it provides a critical examination of a wide range of different large data sets through which estimates of the size of the NEET group can be made. These include the Youth Cohort Survey, the Labour Force Survey and the Survey on English Housing together with other, more specialised data covering issues such as crime and mental health. Secondly, we review other evidence that helps understand the main risk factors associated with being NEET, the over-representation of some groups and the evidence about the longer term consequences of being NEET.
One serious difficulty in constructing a model of routes into and out of the NEET group is

that policies and practices change, sometimes in quite a radical and far reaching manner. Often the aims of such changes have been to reduce the size of the NEET group or to attempt to ameliorate the worst long term effects. One of the main aims of the re-focusing of the Careers Service in the late 1990s, the development of the Connexions Service in the new century, and the piloting of Educational Maintenance Allowances (EMAs), for instance, was to work most intensely with the NEET group and seek to re-engage them. Similarly New Deal for Young People and other unemployment and training measures are designed to offer routes back for those who progress from NEET to later, and often longer, periods of inactivity and/or unemployment. Nor is the impact of policy-change restricted *directly* to working with the target groups of unemployed young people. Policy and practice changes have also been directed towards other groups known to be over-represented within the NEET group such as young people "looked after", those excluded from school etc.. This report provides an illustrative account of much of this changing policy context. If such policy changes are successful and effective they will have an impact upon the size of the NEET group, routes into NEET, and the longer term consequences of being NEET. Such policies and practices are, however, developed and delivered at considerable public expenditure cost.

Estimates of the size of the NEET group
The size of the NEET group as estimated by the DfES for the end of 2000 is around 170,000 or nine per cent of the age group (DfES, 2001f). This estimate is based on Labour Force Survey (LFS) and administrative data. This report reviews the LFS and the Survey on English Housing (SEH), both being large household surveys and thus will not include within the sample those not living in households (hostels, leaving care schemes etc.). The SEH provides different overall estimates and an examination of regional differences. Estimates of the size of the NEET group from the SEH are around 11 per cent of the age cohort, with variation between regions between 17 per cent in the North East to seven per cent in East Anglia. This report also reviews the Youth Cohort Study (YCS). The DfES, however, bases its estimates on LFS and administrative records cognizant of the dangers of basing estimates upon survey data alone. Other large surveys reviewed include the Survey on English Housing (SEH) and the Labour Force Survey (LFS). These are large *household* surveys and thus will not include within the sample those not living in households (hostels, leaving care schemes etc.). They provide different estimates of the size of the group and also help highlight some major differences between the regions. For instance, analysis of the SEH suggests the size of the group is 11 per cent of the age cohort with regional differences between 17 per cent in the North East and seven per cent in East Anglia.

Groups over-represented within the NEET group

One of the main purposes of this review was to examine routes into and out of NEET. This helps identify other groups of young people that the research literature shows are over-represented within the NEET group.

The main body of this report has attempted to summarise research on the following groups of young people:

- Young people "looked after" (in care);
- Teenage parents;
- Young carers (caring for other family members);
- Young people with chronic illness, disabilities or special needs;
- Young people with mental illness;
- Risk behaviours amongst young people, including smoking, drinking alcohol and serious drug misuse;
- Suicides amongst children and young people;
- Young people involved in crime and the criminal justice system.

In reviewing the research evidence on each of these groups a variety of different data sources has been used. Sometimes the estimate of the size of each group can be extremely difficult. Sometimes official records are collected about the size of the group but the research on the long term effect of being a member of such a group is based on small samples. For instance, we know with some certainty that the number of young people "looked after" (in care) in England is just over 55 thousand. However, studies of the educational qualifications obtained by those "looked after" and their later labour market experiences is often based on specialised surveys carried out in a limited number of geographical areas. On the basis of this we can estimate that around three quarters of this group reach school leaving age without attaining any formal qualifications and they are highly over-represented amongst the young unemployed, the homeless, teenage parents, and those in young offenders institutions and prisons. These poor outcomes were summarised as part of a wide-ranging review undertaken for Government by Sir William Utting in 1997 *The Safeguards Review*. Following this report, provision for those "looked after" was radically overhauled first under the *Quality Protects* programme and later under the Children (Leaving Care) Act - the latter being implemented for the first time in September 2001.

At the time of the 1999 Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) report on teenage pregnancy, it was estimated that there were 90,000 conceptions to teenagers every year, including 7,700 to under 16 year-old girls and 2,200 to girls under the age of 14. Teenage pregnancies were also spatially clustered in some local authorities and wards within authorities often associated with high social deprivation. Before the programmes of actions following the SEU report, teenage pregnancy was highly correlated with dropping out of school or college, with low or no school qualifications, and no involvement in education, training or employment.

Estimates of the numbers of young carers have varied from between 10,000 and 210,000 with one of the latest estimates suggesting a figure of around 32,000. Young carers are more likely to be young women than young men. Being a young carer is also associated with periods of absence from school and considerable underachievement in schools qualifications at the age of 16. If the caring role continues after the age of 16 it is correlated with the young person becoming NEET. Some small scale studies suggest that, given support and extra time in post-16 education, young carers can go on to be educationally successful.

The extent of mental illness in young people is disputed. A survey by the Office for National Statistics claims that around 10 per cent of children between the ages of five and fifteen have a mental disorder. The Mental Health Foundation claims that around 20 per cent of children and young people under the age of twenty experience psychological problems. There is some evidence that it also associated with social class, family poverty and being brought up by a lone parent who is poorly qualified. "Looked after" children are also highly over-represented amongst those young people with mental health problems. A number of studies also relate mental health problems to smoking, drinking and regular drug use. It is difficult to separate these factors from one another and all are also known to be associated with being NEET. The impact of mental illness alone is difficult to calculate.

Youth crime is known with some certainty to be widespread. The most recent 2001 Youth Lifestyle Survey indicated that 26 per cent of young men and 11 per cent of young women committed at least one offence in the previous twelve months (Flood-Page *et al.*, 2000). Young offending is highly correlated with truancy and school exclusion and a number of other family and community factors. Being a young offender is also likely to cause, and be caused by, becoming NEET whilst aged 16 to 18. Where young people become involved in the criminal justice system this is highly likely to impact upon their potential involvement in education, employment, or training. The cost of processing youth crime alone stands at £1billion and some estimates suggests the wider cost of

youth crime is over £7billion. However, only four per cent of young men and one per cent of young women reported that they had been cautioned or taken to court. Much of the cost of crime is, therefore, borne by private households and communities.

Risk factors and routes into disengagement

In examining groups over-represented amongst young people who are NEET, an attempt is made in the report to estimate how many young people are involved, and the degree to which it is linked with disengagement from education, employment and training between the ages of 16 and 18. More particularly we look at the main risk factors associated with being NEET and the major routes into disengagement. These include:
- Family disadvantage and poverty;
- Having a special educational need;
- Truancy and exclusion from school before the age of 16;
- Low, or no, educational achievements at the age of sixteen;
- Having poor health (including mental health problems);
- Teenage pregnancy;
- Having parent(s) who are unemployed;
- Membership of some minority ethnic groups;
- Drop out from post-16 education;
- Drop out from government sponsored training.

Some main findings related to these risk factors are well known. For instance, the majority of those NEET had not simply stopped doing anything upon leaving school. A third had previously been enrolled on a course of post-16 education before dropping out and a further 40 per cent had dropped out of government sponsored training.

Young people who are NEET between the ages of 16 and 18 are likely to come from social, family and educational background in which they have suffered from a variety of different forms of disadvantage. Young people from unskilled manual backgrounds are more than five times more likely to be NEET than young people from managerial/professional backgrounds. Members of African Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi ethnic groups are more likely to be NEET than their white contemporaries.

The Social Exclusion Unit have estimated that one in four young people living on "difficult to let" estates gain no GCSEs, five times the national average.
Much of the disengagement from education, employment and training is linked to earlier patterns of educational disaffection. A third of those who were persistent truants or who

were excluded from school were likely to be unemployed and NEET at the age of 18. The number of young people with statements of special educational need has been rising in recent years and accounted for 3.1 per cent of the school population in 2001 (DfES, 2001b). However, 61 per cent of these are being educated in maintained mainstream schools, 36 per cent are in either special schools or pupil referral units and three per cent are in independent schools. Some authors have claimed that attendance at a special school can itself be a form of educational disadvantage (Barnes, 1991). It was claimed that children attending special schools are less likely to have specialised subject teachers and less likely to do well in GCSE examinations and that this has consequences for the likelihood of them being employed in later life. Having poor health and/or being registered as disabled also increased the likelihood of young people being NEET.

Amongst young women, disengagement from education, employment or training between the ages of 16 and 18 is linked to teenage pregnancy. Forty per cent of young women who had been NEET aged 16-18 were mothers of at least two children at the age of 21 compared to less than five per cent of their contemporaries. Of those young women who had been NEET for six months or more aged 16-18, over 70 per cent were mothers at the age of 21.

Longer term consequences

The report also reviews evidence about the relationship between being NEET between the age of 16 and 18 and its likely effect throughout the later life course. This involved a review of the research evidence on the likely experience of unemployment, involvement in drug or alcohol misuse, poor health, parenting at an early age, and involvement in crime. NEET, and the factors correlated with it, are also linked to the likelihood of lower earnings through the life-course even when the person later finds work. This report examines whether the research evidence can demonstrate a clear correlation between being NEET and these later behaviours so that this too could be taken into account in measuring the longer-term cost of disengagement aged 16-18. It also examined some of the policy development seeking to re-engage young people after the age of 18 and the costs of these. Re-engagement policies for the young unemployed over the age of 18 include the New Deal for Young People, for instance, and other initiatives dealing with issues such as drug dependency, poor health (including mental health) or crime. Evidence from the early years of New Deal for Young People seems to confirm that those unemployed for over six months suffer from multiple problems and barriers to employment.

Many of those unemployed at the age of 18 have low or no qualifications and this will also significantly impact on any later earnings if employment is obtained. Almost half of those who were out of work at the age of sixteen were also out of work at the age of 18. Because young people who are unemployed lack work experience, even when they find employment their levels of pay are likely to be lower. Periods of unemployment and lower levels of pay when in work will also mean a lower pension entitlement.

Persistent offending amongst 18-30 year olds is highly correlated with exclusion from school, having no or low qualifications, regular drug and alcohol misuse. Evidence on persistent offenders confirms the culmination of risk factors leading to social exclusion;

Early parenting had long term consequences for both the mother and the child. Becoming a mother before the age of 23 and the experience of childhood poverty is strongly linked to adverse consequences in later life.

Conclusions

This review was undertaken to aid the development of a model to help in the estimation of the cost of young people not being involved in any form of education, employment or training between the ages of 16 and 18. This model is further developed in 'The cost of young people aged 16-18 not in education, employment or training: Cost estimates' (Godfrey *et al*., 2002).

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