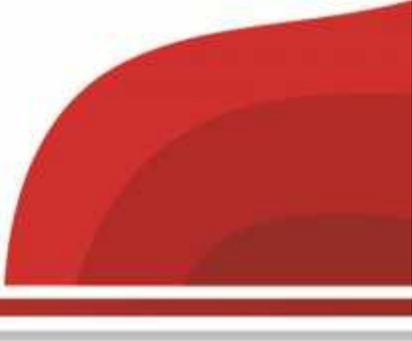


# Conwy County Borough Council

**All Wales Local Government Study: Young People Not in Education,  
Employment or Training**

**August 2014**

## Background



- Following consultation the Auditor General for Wales decided that one of his studies would focus on whether local authorities were improving the life chances of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- The Auditor General also undertook a national value-for-money study on young people who are NEET. The two studies are closely linked. National reports were published in July 2014.
- The study focused on whether the Welsh public sector is well placed to enable better outcomes for young people who are, or are at risk of becoming, NEET.

## Study questions



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- Overarching question: ‘Are there lessons for councils to learn from efforts to secure better outcomes for young people who are, or are at risk of, becoming NEET?’
- Three sub-questions underpinned the overarching question
  - Do councils understand the need to improve outcomes for young people NEET or at risk of becoming NEET?
  - Are councils planning sufficiently well to deliver effective local action?
  - Do councils do enough to ensure provision of effective services to support young people NEET or at risk of becoming NEET?
- Fieldwork involving documentary analysis, interviews and focus groups was conducted in a sample of 10 councils (including Conwy County Borough Council).

## National study conclusions – review of councils



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- We concluded that councils are clearly committed to further reducing the proportion of young people who are NEET, especially those aged 16 to 18, but planning is variable and councils have made less progress in understanding the costs or evaluating the effectiveness of interventions
  - Councils are clearly committed to improving outcomes for young people and understand the social costs of not doing so, but their understanding of the financial cost of achieving their goals is weak
  - Despite a relatively good evidence base, the quality of councils' strategic planning is variable and accountability arrangements are sometimes unclear
  - Although outcomes for young people have improved, a lack of routine evaluation means that the contribution of individual interventions is often unclear, the contribution of partners is variable and the views of young people have relatively little influence on councils' work

## Local findings



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- There were a number of local findings about Conwy some of which are included in the national report:
  - The national report was published July 2014
  - Conwy references.....
    - Work with Denbighshire Council to map the needs of 19-24 year old young people who are NEET.
    - Work with partners to secure EU funding for an officer based at Coleg Llandrillo to co-ordinate services for 19-25 year olds.
    - Continuation of successful schemes once EU funding has ended.
    - Youth Council evaluation of work experience.

## Does Conwy understand the need to improve outcomes for young people NEET or at risk of becoming NEET?



- NEETs reduction is a priority for the Council.
- Governance arrangements are in place to address the issue.
- Conwy Council has a clear understanding of the local policies it needs to address NEETs.
- The Council and its partners find the wide range of Government funding streams and initiatives for NEETs confusing and this hinders effective planning.
- Although the Council uses new technology such as social media to support NEETs initiatives these technologies are used in an ad hoc rather than a planned and strategic way.

## Is Conwy planning sufficiently well to deliver effective local action?



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- The Council has a clear evidence base to underpin its plans.
- Data analysis is influencing plans, such as the shift in focus to older NEETs where numbers are increasing.
- Gaps in data have been identified and are being addressed.
- The CAG2 is well attended by partners and facilitates effective planning across organisations.
- There are positive examples of information sharing though scope to further improve is recognised.
- The Council does not always effectively co-ordinate initiatives between Council departments.

## **Does Conwy do enough to ensure provision of effective services to support young people NEET or at risk of becoming NEET?**



- The Council evaluates the effectiveness of many of its NEETs projects.
- The Council works with schools, further education establishments and work-based learning providers to identify those at risk and prevent early disengagement.
- The Council (and the LSB) routinely works with the Youth Council to identify and address issues affecting young people, including NEETs, such as the quality of work experience.
- Drop-out rates from training or employment are low at age 16/17.

## National study conclusions



- The Auditor General also undertook a national value for money study on young people who are NEET. The two studies are closely linked.
- The Auditor General concluded that the Welsh Government is well placed to help to reduce the numbers of 16-18 year olds who are NEET but is less well placed to reduce the number of 19-24 year olds who are NEET and determine value for money.

## National study conclusions



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- The key findings are:
  - The Welsh Government’s approach is based on sound evidence and engagement with councils and some major partners but lacks a thorough assessment of the resources required to meet its objectives.
  - If implemented successfully, the Welsh Government’s Framework and Implementation Plan is likely to help to reduce the overall number of 16-18 year olds who are NEET, but significant risks remain.
  - The Welsh Government has clear mechanisms to monitor progress and hold councils and most national stakeholders to account but councils have not adopted its targets despite being committed to reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET.
  - The Welsh Government has not developed sufficiently clear plans to deliver its commitments to effective evaluation and shared learning and to assess value for money of the substantial public expenditure in this area.

**Any questions?**

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