# **Call for Evidence Overview**

In the UK, almost 900,000 young people (16 to 24) are not in employment, education, or training (NEET). That amounts to approximately one in eight young people, and this rate has persisted at around 12% or higher for decades. The cost to young people, communities and the UK economy of youth disengagement is significant. Being NEET has persistent adverse effects on people’s prospects as well as substantial costs to the state and society.

Policy Connect and the Skills Commission are gathering written evidence for the inquiry ‘Earning or Learning: A New Agenda for NEET Reduction’. Co-chaired by Lauren Edwards MP, Josh Babarinde MP and Lord Shinkwin, the inquiry will identify opportunities for the government to set the UK towards achieving the lowest NEET rates in the OECD by 2050.

This *Call for Evidence* is an open-ended questionnaire aimed to gather evidence and insights from stakeholders who work with NEET and at-risk of NEET youth. We will use your insights, including any practical case studies, to inform policy recommendations in the inquiry’s report.

The inquiry will explore how current flagship government initiatives (e.g., Youth Guarantee Trailblazers) and potential policy solutions can be designed to maximise the impact on NEET reduction. It will also examine where these initiatives fall short and where additional action from government is needed. The Commission will develop recommendations with a holistic, cross-sector focus to help national and local government drive NEET reduction.

# **Instructions**

We appreciate that you may prefer to respond only to the questions in your area of expertise. The questions are grouped into the following themes:

* Employment Support
* Apprenticeships and Vocational Training
* Early intervention for At-risk individuals @ pre-16 level
* Tackling Health Barriers
* Additional Barriers such as SEND and caring responsibilities
* Confronting Discrimination in Employment, Education and Training
* Devolution, Data Sharing and Coordinated support

Please feel free to send any additional evidence or information that might support our inquiry but has not been covered in our research questions (please do this by attaching a separate document to your email in either Microsoft Word or PDF format). We are also keen to receive papers, data, or reports that you or your organisation have completed. We would appreciate any data submissions, statistics or case studies showing what works and what does not.

The deadline for submission of evidence is [12th September 2025]. Evidence should be submitted via Microsoft Forms or by filling out the word document and sending it to [research@policyconnect.org.uk](mailto:research@policyconnect.org.uk).

For more information about Policy Connect or the inquiry, please [visit our website](https://www.policyconnect.org.uk/sc) or contact the research lead, Alyson Hwang ([alyson.hwang@policyconnect.org.uk](mailto:alyson.hwang@policyconnect.org.uk)).

# **Questions**

### **1 Employment Support and Promoting Youth Hiring**

1. **Which aspects of the current employment support system are working well for young people and need to be continued/expanded? Which aspects need reform?**
   1. Please explain your answer, by including specific examples of recent pilots, programmes or interventions that have shown positive outcomes.
2. **Are there particular employment support interventions that have shown positive outcomes for young people in your region or with groups that are particularly marginalised (e.g., young people with learning disabilities, autism, mental ill health, experience in the criminal justice or care system or from minoritised ethnic groups)?**
   1. How could these be sustained or scaled up to other areas?

1. **What incentives or support would encourage more employers to offer opportunities to young people?** 
   1. Are there changes to legislation, policy, or wider systems that you believe would help overcome these barriers? Please provide examples or suggestions for reforms where appropriate.

### **2 Apprenticeships and Vocational Education & Training (VET)**

1. **What can be done to improve young people’s access to apprenticeships and vocational training and their preparedness for these activities? What improvements could be made to better support them during the duration of these activities?**
2. **What outcomes and metrics should we use to measure the quality of vocational training beyond completion rates? (e.g., progression, youth satisfaction, and alignment with aspirations, or others).**
   1. Please include examples of approaches your organisation has trialed or implemented.

### **3 Early Intervention**

1. **Have you or your organisation (or know of other organisations who have) developed any strategies to engage young people (aged 11-14) who are at risk of becoming NEET?** 
   1. Was it successful? How was success measured?
2. **How well is RONI1 guidance known and used in your institution and other organisations you know? What are the practical barriers to identifying and supporting at-risk young people using early indicators?**

### **Health Barriers**

1. **Have you or your organisation implemented any interventions or programmes to support NEET young people with mental health challenges, physical health conditions, disabilities, or addiction issues? Please provide details about**
   * the type of programme,
   * target group,
   * duration,
   * the results of the intervention and how you evaluate them
   * responses or feedback from the young people who participated
   * any barriers faced when trying to implement this programme
   * any available documentation.
2. **Are there specific policies, practices, or resources you would recommend to better support young people who are at risk of becoming NEET or who are currently NEET due to health issues?**

### **Additional Barriers**

1. **Are there current policies or practices (e.g., benefit rules, school exclusions, apprenticeship funding, a lack of support for transition periods) that unintentionally push young people toward NEET status?**
2. **Are there barriers to education, employment and training specific to marginalised groups (e.g., young people with learning disabilities, autism, mental ill health, experience in the criminal justice or care system or from minoritised ethnic groups)? Are there policies that can help to support NEET young people within these specific groups?**

### **Confronting Discrimination in Employment, Education and Training**

1. **What types of discrimination (e.g., based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, etc.) are most observed in employment, education, and training contexts for NEET young people? In what form do they present?**
2. **Has your organisation or community taken any specific actions to confront discrimination in employment, education, or training? Please describe the types of initiatives, their target groups, any notable outcomes and provide any documentation available.** 
   1. Could these initiatives be scaled?

### **7 Devolution, Data Sharing and Coordinated support**

1. **How can local areas be supported to more effectively identify, monitor, track and support NEET or at-risk young people (age 16-24) through data?**
2. **What changes to current devolution arrangements (e.g., funding models, governance structures, decision-making powers) would enhance the ability of local areas to support NEET young people more effectively?**
3. **What types of support or changes would help service delivery organisations to coordinate better and deliver services to support NEET young people and young people at risk of becoming NEET? (e.g., better data sharing, better coordination between education and employment systems).**

Please feel free to send any additional evidence or information that might support our inquiry but has not been covered in our research questions, by attaching a separate document to your email in either Microsoft Word or PDF format. We are also keen to receive papers, data, or reports that you or your organisation have completed. We would appreciate any data submissions, statistics or case studies showing what works and what does not.