

Supporting disadvantaged young people into meaningful work

An initial evidence review to identify what works and inform good practice among practitioners and employers

Becci Newton, Alice Sinclair, Claire Tyers, Tony Wilson

Institute for Employment Studies

IES is an independent, apolitical, international centre of research and consultancy in public employment policy and HR management. It works closely with employers in all sectors, government departments, agencies, professional bodies and associations. IES is a focus of knowledge and practical experience in employment and training policy, the operation of labour markets, and HR planning and development. IES is a not-for-profit organisation.

Institute for Employment Studies
City Gate
185 Dyke Road
Brighton BN3 1TL
UK

Telephone: +44 (0)1273 763400
Email: askIES@employment-studies.co.uk
Website: www.employment-studies.co.uk

Copyright © 2019 Institute for Employment Studies

IES project code: 5733

Acknowledgements

The authors, Becci Newton, Alice Sinclair, Claire Tyers and Tony Wilson are indebted to Eleanor Stringer at Youth Futures Foundation for her support and strategic guidance to the review. We also wish to thank all the respondents to the Call for Evidence who provided a rich source on the nature of current provision which indicated some very promising interventions in respect of supporting young people. We are sincerely grateful for the feedback on the early draft received from peer reviewers: Sam Windett at Impetus, Professor Anne Green, Birmingham Business School and Meg Kaufman, Centre for Cities. Finally, we express our thanks to the other members of the research team, Jessica Bell, Tara Smith, Bethany Mason and Julie Vanderleyden, who were persistent and attentive in leading the academic and policy evidence searches and extracting relevant evidence for this report.

About the Youth Futures Foundation and this review

The Youth Futures Foundation aims to transform how young people are supported into meaningful employment. We believe that to change how services for young people are delivered and funded, we need better evidence about the impact of the work with young people on the outcomes that we care about. With young people likely to be particularly affected by the economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is even more important that policy and practice is informed by what we know about what works in helping disadvantaged young people to secure jobs.

The Youth Futures Foundation commissioned IES to undertake a rapid evidence assessment to identify what existing evidence was published about supporting disadvantaged young people to achieve employment outcomes, to inform the Youth Futures Foundation's strategy and generate useful findings for the sector working young people. This report was commissioned by Youth Futures, and written by the Institute for Employment Studies, to identify the main evidence that already exists. It was a 'rapid evidence assessment' and included evidence that:

- was about interventions targeting young people aged between 16 and 24, particularly those facing barriers
- measured the employment outcomes of participants
- was able to make a causal estimate of the impact on outcomes, i.e. it could account for what would have happened without the intervention.

We hoped that this would provide some pointers for Youth Futures Foundation, and the rest of the sector, on what types of interventions are most promising when trying to improve employment outcomes.

Next steps

This is the first such review commissioned by the Youth Futures Foundation. As a funder, we will seek to undertake robust evaluations of promising interventions in order to add to the evidence base. We will also examine existing research and data to generate useful, practical findings for the sector.

We are interested in feedback from organisations working in this field on what further evidence will be useful, for example, looking at different age groups, outcomes or specific types of intervention.

April 2020

www.youthfuturesfoundation.org

info@youthfuturesfoundation.org

[@YF_Foundation](https://www.instagram.com/YF_Foundation)

Contents

Executive summary	6
Method.....	6
What works	7
1 Introduction	13
1.1 Method	13
1.2 Structure of this report	15
1.3 Well evidenced interventions	16
1.4 Response from call for evidence.....	18
2 What works.....	19
2.1 Identification and engagement.....	19
2.2 Advisory support.....	22
2.3 Increasing capability and reducing barriers.....	25
2.4 Employer focused strategies.....	34
2.5 Retention and progression strategies	36
2.6 Nature and scale of impact	38
2.7 Evidence on economic and social returns.....	45
3 Conclusions.....	49
Appendix 1: References	51
Appendix 2: Examples from the call for evidence	56
Appendix 3: Glossary	59
Appendix 4: Detailed method.....	61
The Youth Futures Foundation target group and target outcome	61
Call for evidence	63
Analytical framework.....	63
Search terms.....	63
Review of reviews	64
REA delivery	64
Standard of evidence and quality assessment	64
Appendix 5: Table of sources and quality.....	66

Executive summary

The Youth Futures Foundation has been established to support those young people who are a long way from the labour market to move towards and into sustainable, meaningful employment. This initial evidence review aims to assist the Youth Futures Foundation to understand the existing, high quality evidence base about what works (and does not work) for these young people. The focus on high quality evidence meant that impact assessments were prioritised.

The Youth Futures Foundation aims to support young people between the ages of 14 and 24 years, who face two or more barriers to accessing employment, including: being out of work or learning; care experienced; economically disadvantaged; have special educational needs or disabilities; having care responsibilities; being from an ethnic minority that experience disparities in the labour market.

The primary long-term outcome of interest for Youth Futures is sustained participation in meaningful work. Intermediate outcomes include those that contribute towards this long-term outcome, such as education, training or experience of working, although it is worth noting that these were only included in this review where there was also evidence of later employment. Youth Futures is also interested in understanding the impact of non-formal learning and wider socio-economic factors on outcomes, such the impact of social capital on a young person's ability to secure meaningful work, but this is outside the scope of this initial research.

Method

The evidence base reported here was based on a three stranded approach:

- A rapid evidence assessment: academic databases were interrogated using agreed search terms, and identified both interventions and reviews.
- Search and review of relevant UK and international publications – sourced through a range of policy and research websites and contacts within youth employment research and policy.
- A public call for evidence, co-launched with Youth Futures, aiming to draw out recent and relevant examples of practice from employability providers and recent policy evaluations in the UK.

The particular focus of the search was interventions targeting young people aged between 16 and 24. Shortlisted evidence was evaluated against the NESTA standards of evidence and was reviewed for quality prior to inclusion in the review. Evidence that met standard 3 – 'You can demonstrate causality using a control or comparison group' – was prioritised.

The report uses an analytical framework as its organising structure. This covers:

- identification and engagement of young people;
- advisory support;
- increasing capability and reducing barriers;
- employer focused strategies; and
- retention and progression strategies.

What works

Nature and scale of impact

There are a number of challenges in measuring the impacts of youth employment programmes. First, the review found few studies that met the above criteria. Most of those that did were evaluations of large-scale government initiatives, or programmes delivered in the United States. Despite actively seeking to identify promising projects from the voluntary and community sector, none of the identified or submitted evaluations were able to demonstrate causality using a comparison group. This means that the findings are drawn from the studies of these government-led programmes or US-based programmes.

Most non-causal evaluations report progress on outcomes before and after the intervention, and often report high achievement rates. In the higher quality evaluations included here, an impact on employment was found, but the additional impact was often only around 10 percentage points (and often less). In other words, many of the participants would have gone onto get jobs without the evaluated support.

Secondly, many interventions offer 'bundled' packages of support with different services delivered at advisor or individual discretion. This means that there can be significant variation in support and outcomes achieved, and difficulties in measuring the impact of different elements. This means it is challenging to understand the features of interventions that are most powerful: those that combine multiple services, those that profile their customers, those that follow them up, and/or those that measure impact in the medium and long-term.

Thirdly, impact indicators vary widely between programmes – with for example literature about young people 'not in education, employment or training (NEET)' tending to aggregate all positive measures (jobs, training, and education), statutory employment programmes focusing on employment entry, and no consistency in how retention, progression and job quality is measured – in fact it is rare for job quality to be considered at all.

These factors all reiterate the importance of improving the quality of programme evaluation, and of setting realistic expectations on how we define and measure success.

The literature identifies that young people face adverse employment conditions compared to other age groups, which make positive job outcomes harder to achieve. There are however some clear areas of good practice that will optimise the chances of success when supporting disadvantaged young people into employment which are summarised here.

Identification and engagement

Finding and attracting the 'right' cohort of young people to participate in an intervention can be challenging. Those facing multiple and complex barriers can be described in some literature as 'hard to reach' and 'hard to help' in other studies. There was stronger literature on what works for identifying and engaging young people aged 16-18 than for those aged over 18, because it can be easier for 16-18 year olds to slip under the radar.

For under 18s, some themes emerged around **identifying and engaging** young people in support. For example, early warning and tracking systems to ensure young people in need of support can be identified are thought to be important by some researchers and policy bodies, though their effectiveness in accurately identifying individuals at risk is not well documented. For example, The Centre for Vocational Education Research, which undertakes high quality studies on young people's transitions recently noted: 'In general, it is difficult to identify individual characteristics at age 14-16 that could be used to strongly predict those who are more likely to experience particularly poor labour market outcomes at age 25, especially those who end up NEET.' (Dickerson et al, 2020).

On engagement, a common theme in the literature for this group is to **categorise their motivations** to learning and/or work as a starting point to understanding what may be effective. A meta-assessment of relevant research and evaluations argues that it is critical that young people at risk are offered opportunities, activities and services that interest them in order to attract them to voluntarily engage with support. These 'magnets' include: *cultural magnets* such as music, sports or arts; and/ or *financial magnets* for example cash vouchers or payment for regular attendance.

For older participants, the lack of high quality evidence is likely to be because they are of an age where they are often required to engage with statutory employment services in order to access financial support (so benefit conditions and the threat of sanctions often drive engagement). However, evidence on practice in voluntary programmes submitted through the evidence call suggests similar factors as set out for those aged 16-18 years.

Advisory support

There is a broad consensus in the literature that effective support for young people furthest from the labour market is underpinned by intensive advisory support and personalised information, advice and guidance. The literature points to two factors in particular: the provision of **one-to-one advisory support**, and **continuity of adviser** throughout an intervention period.

Effective advisory support often focuses on breaking down actions into a series of small achievable steps in order that participants and their advisers can observe the changes being achieved – 'action planning'. As a result, personalised packages of support have

grown in prominence. The starting point for any personalised package is an effective initial assessment of an individual's strengths and barriers, which is updated as individuals move through their action plan.

Increasing capability and reducing barriers

The literature identifies two broad approaches to employment support for young people: human capital centred (focused on training and development as a precursor to employment); and 'work first' (where rapid entry to work is prioritised, through shorter-term support like job search assistance and work experience).

Both approaches can deliver results – with evidence showing that 'second chance', full-time education programmes for the younger age group particularly and shorter training to meet basic industry standards can work well, as can intensive support to search for and rapidly enter work. The evidence for classroom-based training, particularly for older participants, is not as encouraging and some believe workplace experiences are more effective for this group. There is also general agreement about the need to mix training with experience of the world of work to achieve both education and employment outcomes.

As a result, there is a strong consensus that integrated, comprehensive and holistic approaches to tackle unemployment locally are more effective for disadvantaged groups than just focusing on work search or on skill acquisition for example. Combinations of support that include help to prepare for work, to gain work experience, improve workplace skills and address other barriers appear both common and effective.

Employer focused strategies

Overall, there is limited high-quality evidence on what works in delivering employer focused support.

One intervention that does not work is public sector job creation programmes – ie public bodies simply taking unemployed people onto their payroll – where a range of studies show poor results. In contrast, evaluations of **wage subsidy programmes targeted at young unemployed individuals** suggest positive effects on progression into unsubsidised employment. Subsidised wage schemes provide a financial incentive for employers to hire young people, in recognition that young people will have relatively low initial productivity levels; and, in some cases, an incentive to young people to overcome the costs of making the transition to work.

In numerous countries job creation schemes known as **Intermediate Labour Markets** have been implemented. These create or subsidise temporary jobs specifically designed to support disadvantaged groups to develop their work skills, earn a wage, manage any work-related barriers and then make a transition to unsubsidised employment. They therefore aim to address some of the shortcomings of public sector job creation while retaining the benefits of improving work skills, confidence and job readiness. Evidence

shows these can be effective in supporting young people's progression into unsubsidised employment.

Retention and progression strategies

When they enter employment, young people can find it hard to sustain this position and can churn between employment and unemployment or between short-term jobs. In-work support can help them to develop 'job skills' and an understanding of how to operate in the world of work. Equally, support to help employers understand about the new workers' needs can help support their retention in work. However, the evidence base for in-work support is weak. The evidence typically covers support offered to young people rather than employers or line managers and supervisors in organisations.

Where in-work support has been integrated into programmes, the available evidence which includes a mix of qualitative and impact studies suggests it has been an effective element, particularly for those with more significant labour market disadvantages. So while the impact of in-work support itself has not been evaluated, it is reasonable to conclude that it can improve outcomes.

Costs and economic and social returns

Given that relatively few studies robustly measure net impacts, it follows that fewer still measure the value for money of provision. Where economic analyses are taken forward, it tends to be large-scale/high profile government sponsored interventions.

For example, a 2010 review of the costs and benefits of interventions aimed at workless youth identified just 14 studies that considered both of these. However, the data these were based on were often qualitative rather than quantitative, perspectives were short-term and estimates were not made on a consistent basis (SQW, 2010).

There are some indications in the literature about the level of investment per person made by funders in these types of programme however this information is not systematic. These data suggest that costs may be around £2,200 per person for bundled support packages including Activity Agreements and the Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds, to upwards of £10,000 per person for a long-term residential support programme. The intermediate labour market jobs created by the Future Job Fund required an eventual per person investment of £3,100 from government¹.

Improving this evidence base is critically important, as given the significant costs of failure even seemingly small positive increases in employment may deliver lasting positive fiscal, economic and social impacts.

Conclusions

The first conclusion that must be drawn from this review is that the evidence base is not strong enough to draw robust conclusions on what works specifically for those young

¹ These figures are drawn from the evaluation reports and reflect costs at the time of delivery

people furthest from the labour market. This reiterates the importance of the work of organisations like the Youth Futures Foundation to try to improve this picture. However, despite this challenge, the consistency of messages about what is effective does provide some reassurance. Similarly, the analysis framework provides a useful means of drawing together the evidence, although the evidence does not fall discretely into the categories identified as interventions often provide packages of support in order to overcome multiple and complex barriers.

In particular, this review identifies common lessons and good practices around:

Accurate identification: Trying to identify at risk young people as early as possible, possibly through tracking systems

Effective engagement: Using magnets, including *cultural magnets* such as music, sports or arts; and *financial magnets* for example cash vouchers, to ensure that provision looks different to compulsory education and encourages take up

Effective assessment and profiling: Accurately understanding an individual's needs in order to personalise support packages

A trusted, consistent advisor: Young people need to believe support could make a difference to them achieving their personal goals and overcoming their contextual, personal and situational barriers. A consistent advisor can help sustain engagement, develop reflection/ action cycles, and help keep momentum towards the end goal.

Delivery of personalised support packages: including options for:

- Employability skills, job search skills, work experience;
- Capabilities – agency, self-efficacy, a goal and resilience to achieve it;
- Vocational and basic skills; and
- Addressing barriers including health and wellbeing, independent living, housing, etc and developing life skills.

Strategies focusing on employers: These are less common, but there is some evidence that targeted use of wage subsidies and intermediate labour markets (ie creating temporary, paid jobs where individuals receive additional support) can be effective.

In work support: The evaluation evidence is somewhat weaker on this, but suggests a stronger case for those with more significant labour market disadvantages.

Implications for the Youth Futures Foundation

The authors suggest that in looking at future commissioning, the Youth Futures Foundation may wish to consider in particular how it may be able to improve the evidence base in three areas:

- Improving the evidence base for interventions that reflect and build on the above principles, so including voluntary sector provision that combines intensive advisory

support with personalised packages of support, employer engagement and transitional in-work support.

- Testing the effectiveness of specific interventions where there is promising evidence for other disadvantaged groups, including:
 - Individual Placement and Support, which is a Level 5 intervention² that has proven highly effective for older participants with mental health conditions and could be relevant for younger people with additional needs; and
 - Intermediate labour market programmes, which have shown some promising results, including for long-term unemployed young people during the last recession.
- Identifying opportunities to ensure that those further from work are able to access more 'mainstream' employment and skills support – in particular within Apprenticeships and Supported Internship programmes, where a range of initiatives are testing additional support to widen access and where a more systematic approach to design, implementation and evaluation could be beneficial.

² An intervention that has proved causality more than once using a control/comparison group and that has developed manuals, systems and procedures to ensure consistent replication and positive impact.

1 Introduction

The Youth Futures Foundation (Youth Futures) has been established to support those young people who are a long way from the labour market to move towards and into sustainable, meaningful employment. This initial evidence review aims to assist the Youth Futures Foundation to understand the existing high quality evidence base about what works for the group it intends to benefit. To achieve this, studies that involved a counterfactual impact assessment were prioritised.

The Youth Futures Foundation target group is aged between 14 and 24 years, and at the age of labour market entry experiences multiple obstacles to entering and sustaining employment. These obstacles can be systematic or individual and cover combinations of: disadvantage and the experience of poverty, health conditions and disability, race/ethnicity/ cultural background, learning difficulties/ disabilities/ cognitive function impairments, being post-addiction/ in recovery, history of offending, having caring responsibilities (adult or child), being in care/ care leaver, having limited qualifications/ low skills and other factors. In setting the scope for this initial evidence review, the Youth Futures Foundation was aware that effective interventions may not specifically target those with multiple barriers but that their group of interest may have received support from 'universal' services.

The primary outcome of interest concerned sustained participation in meaningful work. For this reason, the review focused on the 16-24 year age band since initiatives that measure employment outcomes are more likely to be found for this age group. Secondary outcomes of interest centre on health and wellbeing. Notably the Youth Futures Foundation stressed the importance of scoping the evidence base to establish *what does work not as well as what does*.

1.1 Method

At an early stage, the Youth Futures Foundation and IES co-launched a call for evidence (academic, policy and other) to ensure the widest coverage was achieved. This was accompanied by a rapid evidence assessment, which generated academic literature from agreed databases using an agreed set of search terms. In parallel, the websites of relevant bodies were interrogated. These included: UK/ devolved governments, research-centres/ think-tanks, trusts/ foundations, and international bodies, eg OECD, World Bank, Eurofound, and Cedefop. Finally, both sources were used to identify systematic and comparative evidence reviews that captured features of effective practice for the target group. Once a long list of sources was established, this was sifted for quality and relevance to develop a shortlist of documents for the review.

Our review focused on **Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs)** for young people. ALMPs are usually government-funded programmes that take an active approach to help those out of work to find work – for example through jobsearch support, training, subsidised employment, work placements and so on. (This is in contrast to ‘passive’ policies like tax, welfare and regulation.) Within this, there are two key approaches identified in the literature:

- ‘Work First’ – which prioritises entry to work at the earliest opportunity and therefore focuses on shorter-term support like targeted job search assistance, work preparation activity and work experience; and
- Human capital – which seeks to increase skills and qualifications and to reduce the effects of particular disadvantages before assisting individuals to find work.

Where appropriate, we have drawn out relevant distinctions between how these two approaches have been applied.

The NESTA standards of evidence were applied as part of the quality sift (as shown in Table 1). Evidence judged as Level 3+ was prioritised for inclusion, subject to meeting quality standards in respect of methodology. This means that the evidence would have made an attempt to demonstrate causality. Some material was also included that met Level 2 studies where this could be contextualised within existing effective practice. Other quality factors assessed included: the independence of the evaluation; quality and robustness of the research method including randomised controlled trials (RCTs)/ Quasi-Experimental Designs (QED) models and associated reliability; and completeness of the evaluation evidence – whether both impact and process evaluations were available in order to understand causality as well as how the interventions caused the effect. The methodologies of the comparative and systematic reviews were assessed for robustness.

Table 1: The NESTA Evidence Standards

Level	Description
1	You can describe what you do and why it matters, logically, coherently and convincingly
2	You capture data that shows positive change, but you cannot confirm you caused this
3	You can demonstrate causality using a control or comparison group
4	You have one + independent replication evaluations that confirms these conclusions
5	You have manuals, systems and procedures to ensure consistent replication and positive impact

Source: NESTA, downloaded from website 11.11.19

The focus on a high standard of evidence and on employment outcomes had implications for the evidence available to the review. Within the academic searches, a balance had to be struck between searches restricted to a limited number of search term combinations which generated vast volumes of literature, and those that applied tighter criteria which generated a very narrow evidence base. Provision such as internships and traineeships had to be excluded as these added excessively to volume, while not focusing on the target group of young people facing multiple or complex barriers, ie these articles were not relevant to this review. Moreover, known internship interventions that offered in order

to target relevant young people, such as Supported Internships in England, have not been subject to high quality impact assessments. However, the authors acknowledge the value of these programmes in providing access to employment – with support – for young people with disabilities and learning needs, who without this, are often left behind in the labour market.

The focus on employment outcomes meant that early intervention studies which identified education or training as the primary outcome were not included. While these sources are of interest to the Youth Futures Foundation and others seeking to address youth unemployment, they cover an extensive literature that would need to be explored as part of a study focused on education and training outcomes. Moreover, there is a tendency that employment programmes capture these employment outcomes more consistently than education or community focused provision; therefore much of the evidence focused on often statutory programmes supporting people to find work rather than projects tackling unemployment offered by community (non-statutory) providers.

We also included a **Review of Reviews**. This approach seeks to draw information from prior evidence assessments on relevant themes that were undertaken in periods before the timeline for inclusion for this study. The reviews included systematic reviews which focused on high quality evidence as well as narrative reviews, where the evidence on qualitative and non-causal studies.

An initial conclusion is that few sources consider the long-term impact of provision for the group of interest: there is a strong rationale for the Youth Futures Foundation seeking to improve the evidence of what works in helping those furthest from the labour market to sustain meaningful work.

1.2 Structure of this report

At the outset of the work, we developed an analytical framework, based on our prior knowledge of what works for young people more generally (see Figure 1) and this proved to be an effective framework to use to organise and critique the evidence. The evidence does not fall discretely into these categories as interventions often provide packages of support in order to overcome multiple and complex barriers. In addition, the nature of the shortlisted evidence (with more systematic and comparative reviews and fewer academic and policy papers about interventions) meant that evidence had already been grouped. However the domains identified were aligned to key tenets and principles found in the literature.

The report therefore takes each of the domains in turn and considers the evidence on what does and does not work in order to generate lessons for the Youth Futures Foundation.

1.3 Well evidenced interventions

We found five well evaluated interventions that met the required standards of evidence and matched well with the client group (and also covered the two key phases in the 16-24 age band). These were:

- Activity Agreement (AA) Pilot (16 & 17 year olds) introduced in 2006 and operated until March 2011:** This initiative, which targeted young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), spanned 4-5 years of delivery from April 2006, and over time became increasingly focused on the most vulnerable. The programme was led by Connexions Services³, and involved the offer of a financial incentive and programme of activities (personal development, help to address obstacles, careers advice, and short training courses) for a time-limited period in order to support transitions to EET. Outcomes measured included entry into employment, work-based training and full-time education. The three month post-participation net impact of AA⁴ was an approximate 13 percentage point shift away from NEET or employment in jobs without training (JWT) towards work-based training and studying⁵. The commissioner (Department for Education) commissioned a follow-up survey in 2009 to understand longer term impact. This was completed in Autumn 2009 and involved a randomly selected sample within defined 'activity outcomes' from the initial survey. Because of the rolling nature of the intake the post-participation time-point varied between respondents. This survey did not provide evidence that positive impact had been sustained, which may in part result from the method. Additionally, while the impact survey method was led and quality-assured by one organisation in the evaluation consortium, it was countered by another consortium member, who subsequent to the analysis and findings put forward evidence on a differential recovery in the labour markets in which the pilot had operated which may have also affected likelihood of impact being sustained. The Department for Education agreed to include this labour market analysis in the appendices of the report.
- Job Corps was designed in the mid 1960s and remains operational:** An intensive and comprehensive residential training programme for 16-24 year olds in the US, with participation lasting on average around 18 months, though allowance is made for participants to continue in support for up to three years. Its goal is to help disadvantaged young people become 'more responsible, employable, and productive citizens' (Johnson et al, 1999). Key components cover academic education, vocational training, residential living, health care and health education, counselling, and job placement assistance. The impact found in the National Job Corps Study was that it improved outcomes for disadvantaged young people, giving

³ The then national level service for careers guidance and supporting young people NEET

⁴ Measured via a rolling survey of the monthly intake +3months after participation between January 2007 and March 2008

⁵ This may be judged a relatively short period over which to establish impact but many programmes measure at +13 week and +26 week points so it shares commonality with that.

them the instructional equivalent of one additional year in school. It had large effects on the receipt of credentials it emphasised most: GED and vocational certificates. It also had a significant benefit to earnings and employment rate, at least in the short term following completion, but not in the longer term (after four years) except for older participants aged 20-24 years. Specifically, Schochet (2001) found that Job Corps generated what amounted to a 12 per cent net, average gain in average weekly earnings amongst participants although the actual gain varied between groups.

- **New Deal Young People (18+ years) was introduced in 1998 and operated until 2002:** The Review of Reviews consistently found references to the effectiveness of NDYP, a Government-funded programme launched in April 1998 and aimed at young claimants aged between 18-24 years. The provision could be shaped to individual needs. It aimed to help young people to find lasting jobs and to increase their long-term employability. Through NDYP, young people could access an intensive support process to find a job, known as the 'Gateway', which could last up to four months. If they remained in the programme after this, they could take-up one of four options: subsidised employment; full-time Education and Training; voluntary sector option or environment task force option. An impact assessment estimated that NDYP achieved a reduction in the order of around 30,000 of long-term unemployed young people (40 per cent).
- **Future Jobs Fund (age 18+) was introduced in 2009 and was offered until 2012:** A government funded intermediate labour market programme introduced in October 2009 and operational for around a year for long-term unemployed young people (and some disadvantaged older people), comprising six months of subsidised employment alongside training, employment and jobsearch support. The impact assessment found that two years after starting the programme participants were 11 percentage points more likely to be in unsubsidised employment than the comparison group.
- **Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds which was announced in 2011 and operated until March 2016.** This was heavily evaluated and provides information on how the intervention was structured, what was effective and captured counterfactual impact. It shows considerable similarities to the Activity Agreements, except in respect of how it was commissioned and delivered. The Youth Contract combined a national model designed by Department for Education and delivered through local authorities in England (the body with statutory responsibility for young people NEET) linked to outsourced private providers selected by the Department, with a devolved model designed and delivered by Core City Regions. Disadvantaged young people, proxied by low qualification levels amongst other factors, were offered individualised support in order that they would achieve EET outcomes. The programme achieved a 12 percentage point increase in overall engagement in learning and training among national participants.

1.4 Response from call for evidence

The call for evidence generated some insightful submissions from a range of mostly voluntary sector-led programmes. This provided up-to-date information on initiatives that – while mostly not evaluated against a comparison group, making it hard to attribute causality – do suggest positive effects for relevant groups. Many of these emulate features of good and effective practice established by the review and it will be worthwhile to consider in some cases whether the evaluations of these models might be revisited once final outcomes are available. Notably, many of these examples have a place-based focus, which is likely to be important in supporting the Youth Futures Foundation target groups. Appendix 2 contains brief summaries of some submitted projects and summaries where others were identified as offering relevant examples of practice.

Figure 1: Analytical framework

Domain	What works and strength of evidence in...
Identification and engagement	Defining, identifying, reaching, engaging, enrolling 'disadvantaged' young people not in work; outreach, targeting, inter-agency work to identify those at risk; financial and non-financial incentives
Advisory support	Planning for, preparing and navigating the employment market (including careers, jobsearch/ matching/ brokerage, transitions)
Capability	Job-specific and employment-related skills (including employability, basic skills, training)
Barriers	Managing/ overcoming specific barriers, eg health, impairments, caring, transport, language
Employers	Engaging, changing behaviour, incentivising employment
Retention/ progression	Workplace support to stay/ progress in work; address under-occupation, under-employment, insecurity

Interventions, impact, strength of evidence

2 What works

This chapter presents the evidence base on what works to assist those young people furthest from the labour market to sustain meaningful work. The evidence is grouped around key themes drawn from the analytical framework. The chapter considers the measures of sustained employment used by interventions as well as the scale and nature of impact interventions achieve.

It is worth stating at the outset, that policy has a tendency to focus on education and training ('human capital' approaches) as the best route to support those aged under 18 with an increasing focus on employment as the route for those nearing or over 18 years. The overlap between poor educational outcomes and labour market disadvantage means that policymakers see improvement of skills and qualifications as an intermediate outcome for younger age groups at a disadvantage in the labour market, but programmes focused on these often do not measure the impact on the later employment outcomes.

What works and for whom?

Youth Futures Foundation is particularly interested in young people facing complex barriers to employment, for example, ethnic groups with historically low rates of participation in the labour market, or those with special educational needs or long-term health conditions.

The evidence review sought to identify what worked particularly for young people facing complex barriers. However, this was often not captured by the evidence. In part, this is because many of the evaluated interventions served a range of young people, and partly that the evidence was rarely nuanced enough to be able to draw out findings for different populations.

Some of the case study examples in the appendix discuss projects targeted at particular young people. However, these did not have robust estimates of the impact that included counterfactual comparisons.

2.1 Identification and engagement

The focus of many studies on the younger part of the age group has been to **define** the set of factors that lead to disadvantage in the labour market. Situational factors that increase risks include low socio-economic status, low parental attainment level, being in care or a carer, having disabilities or health conditions including mental health. Behavioural factors that increase risk include involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour, low level or lack of parental support, truanting and being excluded from school, teenage pregnancy and poor school performance in early years (Pring et al., 2009; Machin, 2006; Kriticos and Ching, 2005; Rathbone/ Nuffield Foundation, 2008; Maguire

and Thompson, 2007, cited by Newton et al, 2010). Gracey and Scott (2010), among many others, note that disengagement can begin from a very early age – from the age of 10 or even younger.

The range of circumstances faced by young people mean that authors have spent time **categorising their motivations** to learning and/ or work as a starting point to understanding what interventions may be effective (eg Speilhofer et al., 2009; Vernon, 2006 citing Dwyer, 1996, cited by Newton et al, 2010). For example, Speilhofer et al (ibid) suggest there are three groups, with differing levels of motivation for learning/ training but that it is taking account of these differing motivations that will provide the impetus for effective interventions. However, these descriptive accounts did not necessarily feed into the design of interventions to support the groups identified.

There is an established set of phases for young person re-engagement programmes. For example, programmes that can be considered ‘early intervention’ will be commenced before young people are entitled to leave compulsory schooling. These aim to ‘stem the flow’ to becoming ‘NEET’ by improving the experience in compulsory education. While these interventions are not considered by the current study – because the age range of interest is 16-24 years and the focus on interventions effective at achieving sustained employment – early work to minimise the effects of personal, situational and behavioural barriers should not be overlooked. This is because, as noted in Cedefop (2016) *“Compared to prevention, compensation measures are more complex to design and implement. The target group is more heavily disengaged and the gaps to compensate are wider”*.

For those who have already left education, there is a need to **identify and engage them in support**. Cedefop (2016) highlights the importance of early warning and tracking systems to ensure young people in need of support can be identified. It illustrates this with an example drawn from Denmark whereby Youth Guidance Centres have responsibility to lead preventative work in schools with those at risk of dropping out or becoming NEET, and who continue this work until a transition into a positive destination is achieved. England developed tracking systems that emerged from work around the time the Raising the Participation Age policy was being introduced (2010). Local authorities became responsible for both preventing young people entering the NEET status (in partnership with local schools and education providers) as well as re-engaging young people who were already NEET. The Department for Education supported them to develop systems to address this as part of developments towards the Raising Participation Age (RPA) policy. The main focus of this was a duty to track young people during the transition between school and the 16-19 phase with information sharing between schools and post-16 providers. In addition, as part of trials to support the implementation of RPA, the Department supported local authorities to Risk of NEET Indicators (RONIs) tailored to their local NEET populations (ie the main dimensions of risk locally). An example of this in Newcastle is documented by Social Finance (2016). While some authors (eg Social Finance) have argued that RONI tools can help shape interventions to support those most at risk, there are no impact assessments to understand their effectiveness in achieving this. Moreover, other authors contest there is little to suggest any effect from the use of RONIs. For example, the Centre for Vocational Education Research, which undertakes

high quality studies on young people's transitions recently noted: 'In general, it is difficult to identify individual characteristics at age 14-16 that could be used to strongly predict those who are more likely to experience particularly poor labour market outcomes at age 25, especially those who end up NEET.' (Dickerson et al, 2020).

In designing interventions to support young people consideration needs to be given to whether information systems can provide the detail required. For example, the national model of the Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds (Newton et al, 2014) aimed to support young people who had not achieved Level 2 qualifications before leaving education and entering the NEET category. To do so, it offered personalised packages of support led by keyworkers who negotiated and agreed activities with young people. It achieved a 12 percentage point impact on transitions to employment, education and training (EET). However, while the Client Caseload Information System (the tracking system in England) captured movement out of education into NEET, it did not systematically capture information on qualification levels. Therefore, and in common with other programmes targeted at young people outside the labour market, this necessitated **outreach activities** to first identify and then enrol young people who met the entry criteria.

Once identified young people must be engaged. Steer (2000, cited by Newton et al, 2010) led a meta-assessment of relevant research and evaluations and argues that it is vital that young people at risk are offered opportunities, activities and services that interest them in order to attract them to voluntarily engage with support. He terms these 'magnets' and suggests these cover: *cultural magnets* such as music, sports, or arts, and/ or *financial magnets* for example cash vouchers or payment for regular attendance. He goes on to state that residential trips, use of leisure facilities and access to technology (computers and recording equipment) have also proven as successful magnets, along with youth workers who have charisma, leadership skills and the ability to relate to young people. Similarly, Walker et al (2017, cited by Newton et al, 2010) report a provision that used 'sport' as a magnet to attract and retain people in a programme of support that went on to deliver welfare and education provision.

Personalised package of support through the Activity Agreements Pilot

The Activity Agreement Pilot provided an example of a multi-magnet approach proving effective. This offered a financial incentive of £30 per week for up to 20 weeks to vulnerable young people aged 16-18 years. In return, young people agreed to undertake personalised programmes of support, education and training selected from a menu of choice, or using discretionary funds to access bespoke provision, to help them progress into work, learning or apprenticeships (ie training). To do this, they worked with an advisor across the period of their engagement on the pilot to agree an action plan and take steps, which could include training and development, towards their 'goal' EET destination. The impact of the Activity Agreement three months following participation was an approximate 13 percentage point shift from non-activity or employment in jobs without training to work-based training (better quality employment) and education. (Hillage et al, 2008; Maguire and Newton, 2010 and 2011; and Tanner et al, 2010)

The theme of identification and engagement is often less well covered in the literature concerning those aged 18 and above. This stems from the types of evidence that met the quality standard for this REA, whereby impact assessments were judged to be crucial. These are not frequently seen in the evaluation of third sector initiatives where reaching out to disadvantaged young people is often a critical aspect of delivery. Instead, studies focused on supporting welfare recipients where these forms of impact assessments are more common were prioritised. For this group, because they are of an age where they are expected to engage with welfare services in order to access financial support identification is less well covered in the research. This also brings them in scope of conditionality in respect of benefits receipt and many developed countries operate a system of financial sanctions where claimants do not comply with the state's expectations for the range and nature of job seeking activity individuals should undertake. However, the evidence – presented below - suggests statutory employment support for post-18s can share common features with support for under 18s.

2.2 Advisory support

There is a broad consensus internationally that the youngest people furthest from the labour market, at risk of or unemployed, inactive or NEET, require intensive support and personalised information, advice and guidance (Dooley and Vallejo, 2007, Maguire et al., 2010; Cedefop, 2010). This can be delivered through the provision of **one-to-one advisory support** and **continuity of adviser** throughout an intervention period.

For example, in the Activity Agreements Pilot, and in the Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds, both of which offered personalised packages of support, keyworkers acted as an intermediary between young people and options for provision and activities that could be linked to young people's goals. The evaluation of the Activity Agreement Pilots tested the theory that for an agreement to work, the keyworker must be able to access provision that meets young people's needs, and to do this effectively a) they need to be fully informed about the range of provision available to them, b) they may need to negotiate with the young person about what provision best suits them/ is most appropriate, and c) the provision needs to be responsive and available (ie at the most appropriate point in the young person's activity plan). Continuity of adviser throughout the intervention period meant that key workers could engage, support and help young people make progress towards EET outcomes. The net impact of this was an approximate 13 percentage point shift from NEET and work without training to EET including work-based training such as apprenticeships.

For those aged 18 or over and participating in usually statutory employment programmes, the emphasis in many OECD countries is on assisted job search to support a rapid move into work (ie 'work first'). With this approach, the role of the staff administering these services becomes one of 'personal advisor' with an emphasis on building a relationship and rapport with participants, and tailoring interventions around participants' needs and circumstances. Moreover, Green and Hasluck (2009) report that "*qualitative evidence suggests that some sub-groups (eg ethnic minorities) particularly appreciate the 'human touch' and being treated as an 'individual'. Intensive personal support is most helpful for the most disadvantaged groups: for example, three-quarters of customers on the Working*

Neighbourhoods Pilot liked the one-to-one relationship with the PA (Dewson et al., 2007, cited Green and Hasluck (2009)).” For those aged 16-18 years, the focus can be different with education being prioritised over work, often as an intermediate outcome to improve chances of gaining better quality employment however the role of a trusted adviser is equally important.

Action planning is similarly a common feature of good and effective practice. In universal provision, the action plan can be conceptualised as the agreed steps a participant will take to achieve the planned outcome of employment. The key worker or adviser needs to work with young people in order to form an assessment of their needs and interests, and then plan and negotiate a series of steps or activities that will support young people to progress towards work. The evaluation of the Youth Contract for 16-17s (Newton et al, 2014) captured information on how this was achieved.

Action planning models in the Youth Contract 16-17 year olds

The Youth Contract was delivered by local authorities in England and aimed to support young people NEET with low qualifications and other disadvantages to transition into positive destinations. Personalised programmes of support were offered for time limited periods, with action planning as a key feature of the approach and the means to individualise the support:

Example 1: Early meetings between young people and their advisers focus on aspirations and enable an assessment of needs and circumstances. The outcome is the generation of an action plan. The detailed content within each young person’s plan depends on the complexity of the challenges facing them. It may only require information on the particular apprenticeship, college course, or training place to be secured. However, where more complex needs have been identified, the plan will include details of a number of development opportunities to be pursued prior to placing the young person with a provider of re-engagement activities.

Example 2: Where young people need intermediary support before progressing onto full-time EET a local area devised three support strands: i) intensive support ii) literacy and numeracy intervention iii) work placement support. The individual needs of young people are assessed using a diagnostic tool that considers an holistic range of aspirations and barriers. The subsequent action plan is supported and monitored at weekly meetings and other ‘catch-up’ sessions with the young person. Bespoke work placements are secured for YP when they are ready for transition.

The Youth Contract achieved a 12 percentage point increase in overall engagement in learning and training among national participants.

Newton et al, 2014

In programmes for those with higher or more complex barriers, actions may be broken down into a series of small achievable steps in order that participants and their advisers can observe the changes being achieved (Hasluck and Green, 2007). As a result of action plans, personalised packages of support have grown in prominence.

Emphasis in employment support approaches

As noted in chapter 1, the approaches taken in ALMPs tend to be broadly divisible into one of two groups:

‘Work first’ provision, that prioritises rapid entry into work – for example through intensive jobsearch support, careers advice, CV development, employability skills support, work placements and/ or wage subsidies; and

‘Human capital’ provision – which aims to increase skills and reduce the effects of obstacles and impairment as a precursor to an entry to work. This type of provision can focus on developing basic and soft skills as well as vocational and technical skills as a precursor to job search and labour market entry.

For those aged over 18, for whom statutory employment programmes often apply, evidence suggests that flexibility of support and multi-agency working are important in order to recognise the tendency for barriers to work to be cumulative and therefore complex (Hasluck and Green, 2007). However, the literature on ‘what works’ usually then focuses in on (often tentative) evidence on what works in addressing particular barriers or supporting broad groups (eg homelessness, health conditions) rather than understanding cumulative effects. This can often lead to fairly broad-brush findings – for example that help with childcare is important for lone parents, while condition management support is helpful for disabled people and those with health conditions.

As part of their international comparative review, Eichhorst and Rinne (2016) touch on the effectiveness of youth-focused ALMPs. While they agree with Card, Kluve and Weber, (2010) and others (including O’Higgins (2001) and Piopiunik and Ryan (2012)) that the effectiveness of these programmes can appear somewhat limited, they also believe that *‘there is compelling evidence pointing towards the important role of profiling, early interventions and following-up with those young people who are most vulnerable, both with respect to activation at an early stage of unemployment (e.g. Martin and Grubb, 2001; Quintini et al., 2007) and early in life (e.g., Heckman, 2000; Rodriguez-Planas, 2012) (cited by Piopiunik and Ryan (2012)).’* There is recognition in the literature that youth-targeted statutory employment programmes tend not to perform as well as those for other age groups. It is suggested this is due to the adverse labour market conditions young people experience compared to other age groups (Caliendo and Schmidle, 2015).

The challenge for many authors reporting on youth and other age statutory employment support programmes is the **compulsory nature of support once individuals enter into the welfare system**. However, some also report advantages of a facilitated period of mandatory engagement and support. For example, Hasluck and Green (2007) cite the New Deal for Young People (NDYP) as effective intervention and one that involved a period of mandatory engagement. It achieved a net reduction in the order of 40 per cent in long-term unemployed youths. They find that the provision of advice and guidance by Personal Advisers (PAs) was a critical success factor as those entering the programme had few ideas about the nature of work they wanted to go into nor of how to find it. As such, through the ‘Gateway’, PAs provided in effect an induction and assessment covering what young people could access as part of the programme, an assessment of

need and development of an action plan which could include accessing careers advice, job search support, and support on personal and situational barriers, on financial problems with general support and encouragement throughout. Their findings indicate: *“Many young people reported that the Gateway has intensified their job search activity, mainly attributable to the support from PAs leading to new job search techniques and improved motivation and self-confidence. Others had intensified their job search in order to avoid the necessity to join an option or to avoid benefit sanctions (O’Connor et al., 2001).”*

While the literature highlights some concerns that **job search support** in statutory employment programmes may lead to young people accepting jobs that are unsuitable, even so *“job search assistance can be effective in improving the matching of job applicants in times of economic growth, and it can also be a useful complement to training and work experience programmes”* (O’Higgins 2001). Similarly, Piopiunik and Ryan (2012) identify that while few evaluations of youth-targeted public employment services based on jobsearch support show positive net effects, some do – and in particular NDYP. According to these authors there is also some evidence of the positive effect of compulsory interviews for the long-term unemployed. Notably, Caliendo and Schmidle (2015) assert that there are decreasing marginal returns for those receiving intensified jobsearch assistance: *“too much job search activation can result in zero or negative employment effects, suggesting that they do not provide the optimal solution for all youth”*.

More specifically, on the issue of the effectiveness of **conditionality in statutory youth employment support programmes**, results in terms of sustainable employment are poor according to Caliendo and Schmidle (2015). For example, while young people may respond positively to the threat of sanction in terms of short-term employment outcomes, this can also lead to them leaving the labour market. There is also evidence that those who are most vulnerable are also those most at risk from sanctions and that people find alternatives to social support and at the same time lose their access to employment support – a worrying situation for the most vulnerable. Overall these authors find that *“harsh monitoring and sanctioning schemes result in negative employment outcomes”*.

In contrast, programmes that prioritise support over conditionality appear important for vulnerable groups, including disabled people and those with health conditions. For these groups, the opportunity to build a relationship of trust with an adviser, and opportunities to take-up individualised training and support options, enabled individuals to build confidence and to feel encouraged to move into or towards work (Clayton et al, 2011).

2.3 Increasing capability and reducing barriers

Education and training

As noted above, there are multiple sources of evidence that assert personalised packages of support are necessary for disadvantaged groups (eg Cedefop, 2016; Green and Hasluck, 2009). This conclusion has been reached as a result of observing the

effects of NEET provision and the main types of ALMP: work first and human capital (ie education or training) focused. On the latter, ie those **provisions emphasising increasing human capital as a precursor to work**, the rather negative headline is that there is little evidence from either the US or Europe that full-time public education programmes for disadvantaged young people lead to positive outcomes, particularly for those not in school. A review of a range of different ALMPs (Martin and Grubb, 2001) found that *'The most dismal picture emerged with respect to out-of-school youths: almost no training programme worked for them'* (page 15) and concluded that *'if young people leave the schooling system without qualifications and a good grounding in the 3Rs, it is well-nigh impossible for labour market programmes to overcome these handicaps later on'*. The authors therefore advocate early intervention in primary and secondary education, something with which few in the field would disagree.

However, there is also clearly a **need to support those who are currently struggling with mainstream schooling or other barriers**, and the picture is not entirely negative. As one review states: *'Youth disconnected from work and school, including those who also have serious disadvantages such as early-child bearing, homelessness, or involvement with the criminal justice system, have the most difficult challenges succeeding in adulthood, but there is some evidence that they can benefit from comprehensive and integrated models that combine education, occupational skills, and support services.'* (US Department of Labour, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services, 2014, page 16), ie training can benefit them if it is also combined with support to help them overcome their obstacles to employment. However, determining the type of training and support that best serves the needs of these young people is more complex.

Outcomes from purely school-based training versus mixed work and classroom training, for example, differ, although these differences are not always straightforward. One review of different training programmes (Caliendo and Schmidle, 2015) found that whilst school-based training had either positive or no effects on employment, it had negative effects on formal education participation⁶. In contrast, mixed training led to less positive employment outcomes, but with less of a trade off in terms of education outcomes. Career Academies provide an example of a middle ground. These enrol a few hundred students within a larger high school. Academy students take general academic courses but also receive occupational training specific to some sectors (eg healthcare, IT, financial services) and work experience. An evaluation of the initiative suggests that there are earnings gains for those participating. Notably, the earnings of 'at risk' young men from the treatment group were 20 per cent higher than those in the control group up to eight years after entry to the program although impacts were larger for young men than young women on the programme (Edelman & Holzer, 2013).

In international comparisons, countries with a dual system, where the majority of school leavers take an apprenticeship or traineeship before becoming fully employed, perform better on a range of employment measures than countries with highly standardized school-based vocational learning (O'Higgins, 2001 and Piopiunik and Ryan, 2012). These

⁶ Due to participants being locked into training - see section 2.6 for further details on the lock in effect)

authors do not present findings for subgroups of young people, such as those facing disadvantage however Piopiunik and Ryan, *ibid*, find: *'Inactivity – like unemployment – is associated with national institutional attributes: the mass apprenticeship countries (Switzerland, Germany, Austria, and Denmark) have NEET shares below the EU average.'* Their key point is that providing an adequate level of education before young people enter the labour market is an important determinant of later employment outcomes. A number of authors (eg Caliendo and Schmidle, 2015, Eichhorst and Rinne, 2016) have concluded that vocational education is particularly beneficial for young people with lower academic attainment, for example: *'While participation in career and technical education at the secondary level does not appear to have an impact on the likelihood of obtaining employment after high school, it is associated with higher earnings'* (US Department of Labour, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services, 2014). In contrast, extending or prolonging academic schooling for such young people may lead to an increased risk of dropout (Eichhorst and Rinne, 2016).

There is strong consensus that **integrated, comprehensive and holistic approaches** to tackle unemployment locally are better than just focusing on skill acquisition (eg Wilson, 2013, Hasluck and Green 2007). Combinations of support covering work first, skills and focused on reducing barriers appear both common and effective. Findings from Impetus (2014) indicate that such support packages should focus on building six core capabilities: self-awareness, receptiveness, drive, self-assuredness, resilience and feeling informed. Combining several interventions in one programme also increases the likelihood of success of a given intervention type. When evaluating such interventions, however, it is rarely possible to identify the one specific component or combination of components that always works (Kluve, 2014). Similarly, there is only limited evidence about which specific components of learning or training programmes work in dealing with specific areas of disadvantage.

Examples of 'bundled' interventions of this type in the literature include:

- Youth Build from the US which combines work experience with vocational skills training, leadership development, service to the community, and the fostering of civic engagement and activism. It offers training and construction experience for young people who are not in school and aims to increase basic skills and alongside work experience at work sites, training credential earning and job finding. The programme has led to a range of positive outcomes⁷ (discussed in Miller et al, 2018).
- Year Up from the US is one-year programme that offers 18 to 24 year olds a range of services and 21 weeks of paid vocational training in one of five occupational areas It provides several months of training for work in sectors like IT and business

⁷ YouthBuild had positive effects on some important outcomes. The program led to a sizable increase in high school equivalency credential receipt. It also increased survey-reported employment rates and wages and earnings, but did not increase employment as measured with administrative records

management. Evidence from an RCT (by Roder and Elliott) suggests that programme graduates earned up to \$4,000 more than controls 24 months after the start of training (discussed in Edelman & Holzer, 2013)⁸.

- New Deal for Young People from the UK (discussed in Hasluck and Green, 2007). This offered an up-to-four month intensive period of support jobsearch which could be followed by an option to take-up voluntary work or education and training amongst other options for those who remained unemployed.
- Activity Agreements from the UK (Hillage et al, 2008; Maguire and Newton, 2010 and 2011; and Tanner et al, 2010). These offered a range of services including support on barriers, training, development of employability skills and careers guidance and support.

There is also general agreement about the need to mix training with experience of the world of work to achieve both education and employment outcomes. *'While the overall evaluation evidence on employment and training programs has been mixed at best, we also believe that programs and curricula that offer a combination of skill development and paid work experience have often shown the strongest results at improving employment outcomes for these [disadvantaged] youth'* (Heinrich and Holzer, 2011. pg14, cited in NDTi, 2014). *'... work experience programs that include some level of academic and vocational training, job search and placement assistance, and other supports have been shown to have strong impacts on school attendance and academic outcomes.'* (US Department of Labour, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services, 2014, page 17)

Programmes which include **work experience and on the job training** appear to perform better than those that do not and are likely to be more attractive to disconnected youth (Wilson, 2013). The most successful programmes are those that place trainees with private-sector employers rather than those that offer temporary placements in public-sector job creation projects, probably due to the sustainability of those jobs (O'Higgins, 2001). One review concludes that employment focused training provision should (Wilson, 2013):

- be workplace rather than classroom-based;
- reflect local labour market needs and involve employers in its design and delivery;
- build in support for the transition into work; and
- include support with building key employability skills such as time management, building confidence, addressing low numeracy/ literacy skills.

In addition, **workplace engagement** prior to post-study employment has a range of benefits (Preparing for Adulthood, 2014). There is evidence that part-time working whilst studying is positively related to a reduced risk of NEET status after completing education, whilst school mediated employment engagement activities reduce the risk of becoming NEET as an adult (Mann 2012, cited in NDTi, 2014). Similarly, part-time work during

⁸ These interventions could not be included in our well evaluated interventions group, because the range of evaluation material, spanning detailed process and impact reports, were not available.

school has been shown to reduce the likelihood of, and time spent in, post-school unemployment (Robinson, 1999, cited in NDTi, 2014). Supported internships and access to individually tailored and flexible work experience with on the job personal support have also specifically demonstrated positive outcomes for young people with learning disabilities (Kaehne, 2014 and Beyer et al 2008, cited in NDTi, 2014). Given these positive findings about the experience of work alongside education, it is important to note that part-time employment amongst teenagers in Great Britain has rapidly declined: the proportion of British 16 to 17-year-olds combining full-time education with part-time employment has fallen from 42 per cent in 1997 to 18 per cent in 2014 (Hughes et al, 2016)

Further insights are available about other important programme design elements. Whilst these are not always from literature specifically addressing disadvantaged young people, it is likely that they will have still some relevance to this group. Recommendations include:

- using small scale, targeted programmes⁹ (Wilson 2013)¹⁰;
- implementing tight targeting and eligibility (Martin and Grubb 2001 and Wilson, 2013) although it must be noted that where young people have extensive or multiple barriers, programmes with a limited timeframe, for example, may not be suitable, or may not be long enough to result in an education, employment or training outcome (Newton et al, 2009b describing the Activity Agreement Pilot);
- using alternative curricula including on-the-job learning, an emphasis on soft skills, work-based and practical learning (Rathbone/Nuffield, 2008, cited in Newton et al, 2010; Maguire et al., 2010);
- making greater use of informal learning. (Rathbone/Nuffield, 2008, cited in Newton et al, 2010; Maguire et al., 2010);
- ensuring a safe environment. For disadvantaged youth this may mean addressing discipline issues such as bullying (Haywood et al, 2009, cited in Newton et al, 2010);
- focus on achievement and young people's strengths rather than on what they do not yet possess (Haywood et al, 2009, cited in Newton et al, 2010);
- flexibility in delivery including part-time, evening and weekend courses, and flexible start dates including roll-on, roll-off provision (Rathbone/Nuffield, 2008, cited in Newton et al, 2010; Maguire et al., 2010).

⁹ Wilson notes: "Small" is not precisely defined in these reviews, but is generally used in contrast to large-scale, national programmes that are not closely targeted or aligned to local labour market needs or personalised to the needs of particular groups of young people.

¹⁰ A particular example from Sweden in the 1990s showed that larger scale programmes, accessible to the increased number and associated range of young people who were unemployed at the time, were less effective than smaller, more tightly targeted ALMPs pre-recession (Calmfors, Forslund and Hemstroem, 2002). Whilst not a finding specific to young people, it is likely this same principle will apply.

Having a **flexible approach** can be particularly beneficial for those furthest from the labour market as it allows programmes to work equally with young people with a range of disadvantages and who are at different stages in their readiness to move forward. In the UK, Activity Agreements was the first initiative that had allowed service deliverers to work with young people to determine their own learning and training needs. Following weekly meetings with their Personal Adviser, young people agreed a programme of activities which could include job related activities such as work experience, personal development activities and college-based activities. This flexibility in programme design was perceived to be a 'major breakthrough' in helping young people to engage (Maguire et al, 2008). As the AA moved to work with increasingly vulnerable groups: *'the demand for individualised programmes of learning appeared to increase, in order to meet the complex needs of vulnerable and long-term inactive groups of young people'* (Maguire and Newton, 2011).

Flexible provision in AA was also combined with referrals to specialist support services when required (eg when issues were centred within the young person such as a severe lack of confidence or health barriers). A qualitative investigation of the programmes young people developed and experienced showed how actions plans varied by young people's starting points.

Individual experiences of the Activity Agreement Pilot

The Activity Agreement Pilots offered young people individualised programmes of support alongside a financial incentive, which aimed to support them into positive EET destinations and achieved an approximate 13 percentage point net impact on EET outcomes at three months post participation. The Activity Agreement involved young people in goal setting with a Connexions adviser (key worker), and developing and taking forward an action plan.

Young people's experiences were captured in a programme theory evaluation, an approach that aims to establish what works for who, in what circumstances. This sought to interrogate **how** the programme worked for different subgroups. Young people's programmes of activity were captured first through research interviews using a visual mapping tool to understand what they had experienced and what they had thought of it. Researchers then shared the maps (with young people's permission) with their Connexions adviser who explained their thinking in setting in place these journeys across the 20 week programme.

Young people's activity maps were then analysed by the researchers and judged to fall into four broad categories depending on the degree to which they had a goal and the extent to which they faced multiple barriers:

- Those which built up an incremental pathway towards an agreed work or learning outcome. These were generally young people who had a work or learning focus at the start of their AA (although they might not necessarily have a very specific objective within that aim).
- Those which were more 'scattergun', with the young person trying out lots of different activities in order to form a clearer idea of what they wanted to do. This was most common among those who had no clear focus at the start of their AA. Often these maps began to crystallise into a more coherent set of activities, from around 10-12 weeks onwards.
- Those which started off with a burst of activities (usually related to a specific course or job search activity) and then appeared to 'tail off' into few activities bar Adviser meetings and job search activities such as looking at vacancies and sending off CVs. This was more common among those who were set on finding a job.

- Those which took several weeks to get started on activities other than the regular Adviser meetings. Often these maps belonged to young people who had severe problems with self-confidence and self-esteem, about whom Advisers were concerned in terms of their general level of engagement with the AA itself, and/ or who faced multiple barriers to progression.

Each of these approaches appeared well tailored for the needs of these different sub-groups taking part in the pilot.

(Abridged from Newton et al, 2009a)

An evaluation of this initiative concluded that *'what works is therefore not a set programme but series of 'tricks of the trade' that Advisers come to learn. The key skillset of the Advisers for this programme was finding the right type of approach for each young person. Based on the individual's needs, including their health and home life, Advisers configured activities that allow them to explore their interests, increase their skills, and/ or stabilise their situation'* (Newton et al 2009b).

Solutions for re-engaging and training young people at risk need to put **communication with young people** at the centre of policy (Haywood et al. 2009). Reflecting this, many NEET programmes as seen earlier (eg NYDP, Youth Contract 16-17 year olds) assign a key worker to young people as part of a wider programme of activities, whilst others use mentoring programmes to support young people. It has been argued that it is only by influencing the attitudes of young people that their earning and job prospects can be improved, with extended mentoring programmes one way to do this (Martin and Grubb, 2001). In the Youth Contract initiative, for example, key workers were critical to soft skills acquisition, particularly confidence in young people's ability to progress. Having ongoing support was also important in providing continued assistance with barriers. If false starts were made key workers could help to lead a re-engagement process. These factors combined to help retain NEET young people in learning or training (Newton et al 2014).

Some **mentoring** studies have demonstrated positive effects on education outcomes (eg Rodriguez-Planas, 2017¹¹ and Mangan and Trendle, 2019¹²), or better transitions to adulthood (Woodgate et al considering those leaving care¹³). Mangan and Trendle, *ibid*, indicate that mentoring is a high cost option and the scale of the impact it can achieve alone has not been identified. However, it can be a useful component of wider programmes for some young people. However, one review found some studies that showed positive effects of mentoring on earnings (Edelstein & Lowenstein 2014a). Mentoring is recognised as one of the components of successful mixed approach programmes (OECD, 2010 cited in Wilson 2013). A range of programmes involve mentoring in some capacity or rely on advisers to monitor progress, help students overcome barriers and identify additional service provision. One example, the Workforce Development System in Washington State was able to demonstrate positive earnings

¹¹ Describing the Quantum Opportunities Project in the US.

¹² Describing an Australian initiative working with indigenous youth entering traineeships.

¹³ Mentorships for young people leaving care led to in terms of higher education, employment and QoL

effects, using mentoring as part of a broader suite of training, work experience and skills provision (SQW Consulting, 2010)¹⁴. In the UK, the Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds led to higher engagement levels for its target group - young people who were NEET and possessed no (or one) GCSEs A*- Cs, young offenders and young people in care. A key worker provided appropriate mentoring and advocacy to the young person and establishing an agreed engagement pathway and action plan (Newton et al 2014).

One way in which to develop the relationships with advisers or mentors is through the offer of **residential support**. In the successful Job Corps programme residential advisors and counsellors acted "*as mentors and surrogate parents to students*" (Johnson et al, 1999) and delivered a social skills training programme which students found beneficial. This combined with academic and vocational training and development focused on life skills, health and wellbeing and job placement assistance which could last up to three years. The programme achieved a 12 per cent net gain in weekly earnings amongst participants. Other residential programmes have also demonstrated successful outcomes (eg the National Guard Youth Challenge¹⁵ described in US Department of Labour, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services, 2014, is a highly structured residential programme for economically disadvantaged high school drop-outs. Using an experimental design, after three years Challenge participant's employment and earnings and receipt of a GED were significantly higher than a control group of youth who did not go through the programme).

The literature indicates that young people facing specific disadvantages are likely to need **individualised components** to any training programmes which reflect their specific needs. Training programmes should therefore address wider barriers to employment and tackle multiple disadvantages. One review, Wilson (2013), recommends that this is done by:

- linking training to other available support;
- assessing wider needs early on;
- working with partners to address identified needs; and
- assigning a case manager to those with multiple barriers.

Whilst many disadvantaged groups are therefore likely to share the need for some types of support, the nature of an individual's personal circumstances and potential barriers to employment may need programmes to focus on specific or additional areas. One review (Edelstein and Lowenstein, 2014) found that young people in foster care, like other disadvantaged groups, required support to develop the soft skills necessary to succeed in work environments (eg interpersonal skills, emotional regulation, conflict resolution and

¹⁴ A long term net employment impact of 10.3 per person and net quarterly earnings impact of \$317 were estimated for the programme using a non-experimental methodology. The net impact of Secondary Career and Technical Education was a long-term net employment impact of 5.4 per person and net quarterly earnings impact of \$416.

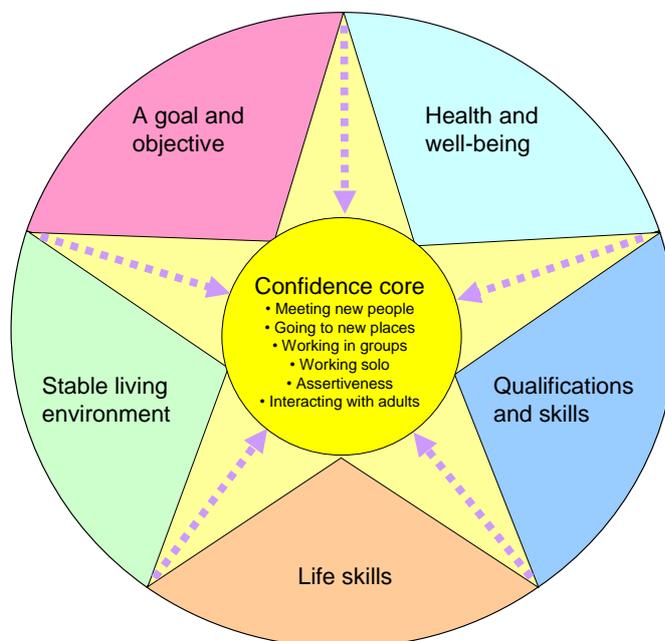
¹⁵ This is a highly structured residential programme for economically disadvantaged high school drop-outs. Using an experimental design, after 3 years Challenge participant's employment and earnings and receipt of a GED were significantly higher than a control group of youth who did not go through the program.

self-advocacy). However, the review also concluded that for care leavers more support in finance, employment, healthcare and decision-making was necessary to help them successfully live independently, and that this support needed to be available even after they have transitioned out of care.

A review of the support for young people with mental health problems (NDTi, 2014) suggests that access to work experience is likely to be particularly important for these young people, potentially even more so than for other disadvantaged groups. This is because the opportunities for such experiences, including part-time work or work experience may have been disrupted by their mental health problems and their attitudes to work shaped by their employment history (individuals with inconsistent employment ‘described worries about controlling emotions or behaviours on the job’ (Vorhies et al., 2012, cited in NDTi, 2014).

The evaluation of the Activity Agreements explored the effect of providing tailored, packages of provision to young people, and found that through addressing barriers and developing capability, young people gained increased confidence and this supported their progression to EET destinations (see Figure 2 below). The Activity Agreement achieved a net impact of approximately 13 percentage points in respect of moves away from NEET and work without training, into EET destinations including employment with training.

Figure 2: Confidence at the core progression model – from the Activity Agreement Pilots



Source: Newton et al, 2009b

2.4 Employer focused strategies

It has long been recognised that programmes that focus on creating temporary **public sector job opportunities** show poor outcomes for youth employment (see Martin & Grubb, 2001, Popiunik & Ryan, 2012, Caliendo & Schmidl, 2015, Eichorst & Rinne, 2016). *"The results for the young unemployed participating in public work programs are rather discouraging. Very similar to the results for the adult working population, we find overwhelmingly zero or negative effects. Hence, it is very questionable whether these programs are an adequate solution – even in challenging economic situations."* (Caliendo & Schmidl 2015, page 16).

In contrast, evaluations of **wage subsidy programmes targeted at young unemployed individuals** suggest positive effects when well-targeted, although take-up can be low. Subsidised wage schemes provide a financial incentive for employers to hire young people, in recognition that young people will have relatively low initial productivity levels; and, in some cases, an incentive to young people who may need transitional support or be unwilling/ unable to work for the wages offered. These are usually offered for a fixed period of time, after which the participant should have the skills to obtain unsubsidised employment (either with the same or a different employer). A recent review of youth unemployment programmes in Europe identified eight studies on wage subsidy programmes, most of which showed positive employment (in terms of unsubsidised work) and wage effects, although the scale and duration of these impacts is not documented in this evidence (Caliendo & Schmidl, 2015). Where there were no effects, these were in countries experiencing periods of economic uncertainty. However, some authors have noted a lack of information regarding the long-term effects of wage subsidies (Kluve, 2014) and a lack of information regarding substitution effects (ie workers hired due to the subsidies are hired at the expense of those to whom subsidies do not apply) (Kluve, 2014, Caliendo & Schmidl, 2015).

Subsidised employment in the New Deal for Young People programme (1998-2002)

Subsidised employment was available as one of the options in the New Deal for Young People (NDYP) for those who remained unemployed after 16 weeks of job search help. The other options included full-time education and training (FTET) or work in the Environment Task Force (ETF) or Voluntary Sector (VS). A review of New Deal programmes found evidence for the success of the subsidised work element; a survey of participating employers found that over 60 per cent of NDYP recruits had been retained at the end of the subsidy period and just over half (51 per cent) remained with their NDYP employer after nine months (Hales et al., 2000, cited in Hasluck & Green, 2007). The subsidised employment option proved more effective than either the ETF and VS options (Beale et al, 2008); those in subsidised employment were more likely to have left NDYP after 18 months and more likely to have been in employment than participants on ETF or VS (Bonjour et al, 2001, cited in Hasluck & Green, 2007). Participants' perceptions were also more favourable towards the subsidised employment option. However, there were some concerns raised regarding this option, notably the low level of pay in many cases, the lack of active job search amongst many young people while in a subsidised job, and the requirement for employers to provide training which impacted on their willingness to participate (Hasluck & Green, 2007).

In numerous countries newer forms of job creation schemes – **Intermediate Labour Markets** - have been implemented which aim to address some of the shortcomings of public sector job creation by creating ‘transitional’ jobs that support disadvantaged groups to improve their confidence, build their skills and then make the transition to unsubsidised work. These also often utilise the growth of smaller community-based projects (Ali, 2013). One example of this is the Future Jobs Fund (FJF), a UK programme led by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in partnership with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). This initiative brokered with employers in public and charity sectors to create temporary jobs (of six months duration) in a genuine work environment with continuous support. The programme was available to people in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and in essence transferred the out-of-work benefits that young people would have received to employers. Jobs created had to be new, to avoid displacement, and generate social value. Between October 2009 and March 2011, just over 105,000 jobs were created under the FJF at a cost of approximately £680 million.

Impact of the Future Jobs Fund

A counterfactual impact analysis conducted by DWP and peer-reviewed by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (NIESR) found that the impact of FJF on the chances of participants being employed and/or off benefit was substantial, significant and positive; two years after starting the programme, participants were 11 percentage points more likely to be in unsubsidised employment compared with the comparison group (DWP, 2012). An independent evaluation found that FJF had a noticeable impact on the youth labour market by creating jobs when few were available; on average 22 per cent of young JSA benefit leavers who had been claiming for six months or more went into FJF jobs, whilst there was relatively little impact on the adult labour market (Fishwick, 2011). The same evaluation used advanced statistical techniques to model sustainment patterns for a year of work after completing an FJF job. This predicted that 86 per cent of job entrants would retain their job for three months or more following FJF, and 56 per cent would stay in work for one year or more. In qualitative interviews, FJF customers reported that the scheme had played a vital role in supporting them to gain subsequent employment (Allacker & Cavill, 2011). Participants saw the good supervision they received within the workplace as a critical success factor.

“FJF has been successful in preparing customers for work and, for many participants their reported experiences had been to such a high standard, that they could not think of any improvements to the scheme.” (Allacker & Cavill, 2011)

While the evidence for wage subsidies and FJF identified for this review looks promising, it should be noted that the target group in the research is often unemployed youth in general (or, in the case of the FJF, those becoming longer-term unemployed during a major recession). This review did not identify evaluation findings specific to the most disadvantaged youth.

The review also did not identify any research specifically on **engaging with employers**, except for in the supported employment model of Individual Placement and Support (a programme for those with mental health problems), discussed in the next section. Some

authors discussed the need to engage employers in the design of ALMPs in order to obtain widespread support for the schemes and ensure that they are relevant to local labour needs (eg O'Higgins, 2001). Two successful training programmes aimed at disadvantaged youth, Job Corps in the US and the Joven programme in Chile, both built close links with employers to ensure their offerings were in line with employer demands (see O'Higgins, 2001). Developing such links with employers, however, is not always easy and can prove time consuming. In a training programme for marginalised youth in London, staff complained that they lacked the resources to establish the sort of placements with employers that would provide strong exit routes for their customers (Walker et al, 2017). Whilst the programme led to an improvement in soft outcomes (eg self-esteem), this did not translate to employment outcomes. Similarly, a systematic review of what works for young people transitioning from care noted one intervention where staff found it difficult establishing connections with employers (General Accounting Office, 1999, cited in Woodgate et al, 2017).

Recommendation from the sector: employer engagement in Talent Match

The Talent Match programme was designed to target young people (18-24 years) furthest from employment who often had multiple barriers to work. It was delivered in 'NEET hotspots' although the implementation of a place-based approach varied between areas. The provision in each funded area was delivered by a partnership, mostly led by a voluntary sector provider. Talent Match offered integrated support covering employability, addressing practical and personal barriers to young people who were long term unemployed and had at least one additional barrier. While successful at supporting young people to transition into work, lessons include that the quality of work achieved requires consideration.

Exploratory research, ie research that cannot assert causality, into employer engagement in Talent Match, led by Green et al (2015), indicates the importance of building these relationships. In some cases, TM partnerships sought to enshrine established good practice in employers including through workplace charters. Employers may be involved in strategic activities of TM in four main ways: 'direct involvement on the core partnership; through membership of a TM employer forum or sub-group; through providing strategic or operational advice to a delivery organisation; and finally through more arms-length involvement in guiding specific TM activities, for example, how to engage with employers. A single employer may be involved in more than one way and at different times'. Benefits are seen to result for both individuals taking part in TM as well as the engaged employers. These include for individuals gaining 'an insight into what employers want and [this] reminds them that while TM is focused on the needs and aspirations of beneficiaries, these needs and aspirations do not exist in a vacuum, and employers play a key role in fulfilling these aspirations. For employers, involvement can give them a new perspective on the lived-experiences of often marginalised young people, who, with some support, can become part of their workforce of the future.' Green et al (2015) – source generated through evidence call.

2.5 Retention and progression strategies

In-work support can be especially important for young people since they will often lack 'job skills' or an understanding of how to operate in the world of work. However, there is

relatively little evidence on the effectiveness of this as distinct from other employment strategies. For example in the Employment Zone pilots¹⁶, individuals who had been through the NDYP and not secured a job would receive up to 13 weeks of in-work 'Aftercare' on gaining employment, consisting of moral support, advice, financial support and help in negotiations with employers. Evidence from its evaluation suggests that young people particularly benefitted from such in-work support (Griffiths & Jones, 2005, cited in Hasluck & Green, 2007).

In 2014, a review by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) looking at what helps young people with mental health problems into employment highlighted the importance of **supported employment** for this group, most notably Individual Placement and Support (IPS). Since IPS has been found to be effective for adults with mental health problems (Bond et al, 2006, cited in NDTi, 2014) Bond et al (ibid) identify the ways in which specific of the IPS principles particularly prove beneficial to young people. IPS services are typically delivered by supported employment teams that operate within community mental health agencies. When a client expresses a wish to work, an employment specialist works with them to identify their goals and preferences and then provides support, coaching, résumé development and interview training to help them obtain employment and, once in a job, in-work support. It is known as a 'place-and-train' model of support (Burns et al., 2007, cited in NDTi, 2014). Some of the work of an employment specialist includes job development; a process in which employment specialists build relationships with employers in businesses that have jobs that are consistent with client preferences. In an RCT conducted in six European countries, including the UK, IPS was found to be more effective than other vocational services¹⁷ for every vocational outcome measured, with 85 (55%) patients assigned to IPS working for at least 1 day compared with 43 (28%) patients assigned to train-then-place vocational (the business-as-usual) support services (Burns et al., 2007, cited in NDTi, 2014). However, as IPS provides a number of forms of support for clients, it is unclear what the impact of in-work support is *per se*.

The NDTi (2014) review identified the need for supported education for young people with mental health problems as well as supported employment. Thinking more broadly, support to progress in education or training may be just as important as in-work support for disadvantaged youth, for whom non-completion rates of post-secondary education are high (Haskins et al. 2009, cited in Edelman & Holzer, 2013). The NDTi (2104) review notes two studies where **IPS was combined with supported education** to positive effect; in one it enabled a significant proportion of young people with a first episode of psychosis to gain or retain open employment and mainstream education (Rinaldi et al, 2010, cited in NDTi, 2014); in another it produced better work outcomes for homeless

¹⁶ Employment Zones were communities with a high share of unemployed people compared to the rest of the UK

¹⁷ Vocational services were the 'control service' and represented the best alternative vocational rehabilitation service available locally - the typical and dominant service in the area. All services provided high quality vocational rehabilitation according to the 'train-and-place model', consisting of an assessment of the patient's rehabilitation needs and the provision of a structured training programme aimed at combating deficits related to illness and training in appropriate work skills (eg, reintroduction of a daily routine for attending the centre, time management, or information technology skills).

young people compared to standard services (Ferguson et al, 2011; cited in NDTi 2014). Another positive example of support during education includes the Opening Doors demonstration project in the US which aimed to help low-income students earn college credentials and improve their pathways to better jobs and further education. This initiative supported the formation of small 'learning communities' amongst student peer groups in community colleges and provided financial aid linked to academic performance alongside mandatory counselling for students with weak performance. An evaluation of Opening Doors found it improved performance and persistence (Richburg-Hayes, 2009, cited in Edelman & Holzer, 2013).

Before concluding this section, it is worth highlighting that further evidence on the effectiveness of in-work support may become available in coming months. This includes a pilot supported by the Department for Work and Pensions in the West Midlands, an overarching evaluation of Talent Match, as well as pilots to support progression in work supported by the Better Work Network. These do not have a specific focus on young people; improving the evidence on the in-work support that works best for young people would be valuable.

2.6 Nature and scale of impact

Many of the interventions mentioned in the report offer 'bundled' packages of support, with different services for young people that operate at different stages of their journey towards employment. As these are not single interventions, it makes sense to understand the impact of these in a separate section of the report. Some of these, including NDYP, Job Corps and Activity Agreements, have undergone extension evaluation so are described in turn below.

NDYP was the most widely evaluated of all the New Deal programmes and targeted claimants aged 18-24. It was offered between 1998 and 2002 and comprised an intensive job search support process, known as the gateway, and options including voluntary work, and education and training for those remaining unemployed after four months in the gateway. Its evaluation provided a substantial body of evidence regarding delivery and impact (Hasluck & Green, 2007). Most of the evidence on impact came from macroeconomic studies looking at cohorts of NDYP between 1998 and 1999. One of these estimated a fall in the order of around 30,000 of long-term unemployed young people (40 per cent) compared to the situation in the absence of NDYP (Anderton et al, 1999, cited in Hasluck & Green, 2007). Whilst this is clearly a positive finding, it does not tell us about anything about the impact of NDYP on the sustainability of outcomes nor whether people moved into meaningful employment. In addition, the impacts differed for different groups of customers. Data from the New Deal Evaluation database (Hasluck & Green, 2007) showed that young men were more likely to leave NDYP for unsubsidised jobs than women. Enhancements in employability, developed through individualised support delivered through continuity of adviser were factors identified in achieving these outcomes. Crucially, the impact was reduced for disadvantaged young people; participants with a disability had the lowest proportion of exits to unsubsidised jobs of any customer group, and those without qualifications or with low level qualifications were much less likely to leave NDYP for a job than those with qualifications at NVQ level 2 or

above. However, despite the lack of clear impacts, there were signs that improved employability (arguably, an intermediate outcome) resulted from participation.

The National Study of **Job Corps** used an RCT design and tracked participants for a number of years following their involvement in the residential training programme aimed at disadvantaged youth (Schochet et al, 2008). The residential programme offered education and training, personal development and careers guidance/mentoring across a period of up to three years. The study looked at a range of outcomes, including education, employment and non-EET measures such as criminal activity and self-assessed health. The evaluation found Job Corps improved outcomes for disadvantaged youth, giving them the instructional equivalent of one additional year in school and large effects on the receipt of credentials it emphasises most: General Education Development (GED) and vocational certificates. It also had a significant benefit to earnings and employment rate, at least in the short term (Schochet et al, 2008, p.1883). Earnings gains were found for groups of students at special risk of poor outcomes such as very young students, females with children, and older students without a high school credential at enrolment, as well as for groups at lower risk (Schochet et al 2001). Job Corps significantly reduced criminal arrest and conviction rates and had small beneficial impacts on self-assessed health status, but no impacts on illegal drug use. However, no earnings gains were found for Hispanics or those aged 18 to 19 at programme application (although gains were found for the very young, aged 16-17). Also, crucially, administrative data on earnings (ie tax data) which tracked study participants for several years following enrolment showed that these earning gains did not extend beyond four years compared to those of the control group, except for older participants aged 20-24. Some of the reasons put forward for this were that older students remain in Job Corps longer, receive more hours of vocational training while enrolled, and are more highly motivated and well-behaved (Schochet et al., 2003). Whilst sustained earnings increases is not the same as *sustained meaningful work*, the National Job Corps study is one of only a few studies to follow participants for this long.

The quantitative evaluation of **Activity Agreements** measured impacts by comparing participants with a group of NEET young people with similar characteristics who lived in areas where AA did not operate. The support programme focused on a personalised package of support combined with a financial incentive to participate in activities that would support young people to move into positive, EET destinations. The short-term (ie three month) post-participation impact was to generate an approximately 13 percentage point shift in outcomes away from non-activity or employment in jobs without training and towards work-based training and studying which was a small but nevertheless positive impact (Tanner et al, 2010). Two years post-participation, there was no impact on the number of young people NEET but a continued impact on participation in work-based training or studying towards a qualification; 48 per cent of participants reported doing some studying or work-based training between the time of the first and follow-up interview, which was about eight per cent higher than for the controls (Tanner et al, 2010). Overall, the Activity Agreements had an impact (of about nine per cent) of moving young

people who would have been in work with no training into education, work-based training or a job involving training.

This follow-up evidence is particularly useful for our review as it indicates that the intervention had a *sustained* impact on participation in work-based training or studying towards a qualification. The evidence from follow up also indicated a move towards *more meaningful* or *better quality jobs*; those that were employed following Activity Agreements were less likely than the comparison group to be in semi-routine jobs, more likely to be in jobs with training and more likely to have completed a qualification (Tanner et al, 2010). However, it is worth noting that the qualitative evaluation of Activity Agreements found that vulnerable groups had lower EET outcomes than other groups (Maguire & Newton, 2010).

The three examples above, with their widely different evaluation designs, demonstrate some of the challenges in ascertaining from the literature what works in supporting disadvantaged young people into sustained, meaningful work – in particular around impact indicators, measuring ‘what works’ within bundled provision, and estimating the additional impact of interventions.

Impact indicators

First, the impact indicators used in studies vary widely, with:

- differences in the types of outcomes measured;
- a focus on hard outcomes and a lack of information on intermediate outcomes;
- differences in the time periods of studies, with few long-term studies.

The types of outcomes measured in the papers were wide ranging but mainly concerned earnings, whether in EET, educational gains or movement off welfare benefits. A minority of papers looked beyond EET and related outcomes to consider impacts on health and behaviour, such as criminal activity and drug use. The Job Corps evaluation is one example of this (see Schochet et al, 2001). Another is an evaluation of a mentoring programme in the US, the Quantum Opportunity Programme (QOP) for disadvantaged youth in ninth grade, which looked at ‘risky behaviours’ of participants (eg binge drinking, drug use and criminal activity) (Rodriguez-Planas, 2017). This found QOP effective at reducing the risky behaviours of high risk youth with ‘bad peers’, but not those without such peers, who showed increased risky behaviours in their late teens, possibly due to the bad influence of others they met on the programme. A better understanding of the impact of programmes aimed at youth unemployment on non-EET outcomes is warranted for two reasons: improved health and reduced risky behaviours may affect the likelihood of employment outcomes, and represent secondary outcomes of sustained meaningful work.

Few of the studies and reviews included here examined other intermediate outcomes such as improved self-esteem and confidence. However, given the lower starting point of disadvantaged youth on some of these measures, understanding how interventions impact these softer outcomes is key. The lack of emphasis placed on soft outcomes achieved within Activity Agreements was widely criticised by programme staff in the third

pilot of these, which focused entirely on disadvantaged youth (Maguire & Newton, 2010). It was felt that even where Activity Agreements did not achieve EET, they were successful in pioneering personal development opportunities and sustained contact with support services, both of which provided the groundwork for future progression. An evaluation of a programme for disadvantaged youth in London which included work-related skills and attitude training alongside mentoring, found positive impacts on several “soft” beneficiary outcomes (eg self-esteem, self-efficacy, and perceived marketability) even though findings regarding the hard outcome of employment were mixed (Walker et al, 2017). The following scales were adapted for the programme evaluation led by Walker et al (ibid), which may provide useful information to those designing interventions and their evaluation:

- self-esteem (3-items, Rosenberg 1965);
- self-efficacy (3-items, Schwarzer and Jerusalem 1995);
- self-mastery (5-items, Marshall and Lang 1990);
- perceived marketability (3-items, Eby et al. 2003);
- employability ambition (6-items, Rothwell et al. 2008);
- emotional wellness (8-items, Chesney et al. 2006);
- personal skills, which consisted of three aspects: (1) technical skills (3-items), (2) employability skills (3-items), and (3) higher-order skills (3-items, Robinson 2000); and
- programme satisfaction, consisting of two aspects: (1) autonomy support (11-items), and (2) competence support (4-items, Lim and Wang 2009).

Cited in Walker et al (2017), while this report’s authors are not recommending these outcomes as there are many others that could be considered, we believe there would be value to identifying a set of common indicators for the Youth Futures Foundation supported project in order to support comparative analysis on what works and what works the best for what groups.

Very few of the studies and reviews looked at job quality, or whether work was meaningful. Understanding the quality of jobs obtained is particularly important for programmes aimed at youth, as youth-heavy sectors typically show higher turnover rates (Edelman & Holzer, 2013). Where job quality was assessed, different indicators of quality were invariably used. For example, the evaluation of Activity Agreements looked at ‘jobs with training’ as one of its outcomes, which may be seen as a proxy for higher-quality jobs. The evaluation of QOP used jobs with health insurance as an indicator of quality and found positive benefits in this regard (Rodriguez-Planas, 2017). A number of the studies used earnings as an outcome, which could also be regarded as an indicator of job quality (with higher earnings suggesting higher quality). However, quite what the increased earnings mean is rarely discussed in the literature. For example, an early evaluation of Job Corps found that while a number of participants moved into jobs following the

programme, most moved into jobs that did not pay well enough to enable them to escape from poverty (Grubb, 1996, cited in O'Higgins et al, 2001).

The length of time over which impacts were measured also varied, which makes it difficult to compare how effective programmes are at sustaining benefits. As many of the interventions discussed run over several weeks or months, it is particularly important for their evaluations to take a long-term perspective; measuring impact too soon will likely show negative results as participants are still 'locked in' to the programme and unable to obtain employment. 'Lock in effects' are often seen in research on training (Kluve, 2014, Wilson, 2013). A review of training for low skilled youth suggested that one of the reasons for training programmes appearing to be relatively less effective than job search interventions is the short timeframe over which impacts are measured, often just a year or two (Wilson, 2013). Reviews have found that studies of longer duration show more positive results (Wilson, 2013, Kluve et al, 2019), although this does not mean that benefits are permanent (Wilson, 2013).

“Last, but not least, we show that evaluation design matters: most importantly, our meta-regression models show that the timing of outcome measurement is clearly correlated with reported effect size magnitude and statistical significance. This result shows the importance of evaluating programs in the medium- and long-term to gauge their success.” (Kluve et al, 2019, p.252)

Few studies have looked at impacts for as long as the National Study of Job Corps, which identified that initial gains in earnings did not persist beyond four years (and up to nine years), except for the oldest group of youth (Schochet et al, 2008). A study on NDYP identified that the positive benefits of NDYP declined significantly between years two and four (Beale et al, 2008, cited in Wilson, 2013). In contrast, the evaluation of QOP found that many of the benefits for youths with ex-ante high-predicted risk were sustained for up to 10 years following random assignment (Rodriguez-Planas, 2017). Sustainability *within the same job* has rarely been examined, although it is unclear whether this represents a better outcome for disadvantaged youth or not.

Evaluating the component parts of interventions

Secondly, within the evaluations of 'bundled' interventions there has been little attempt to identify the features or components of the interventions that have the most impact. One of the papers from the National Study of Job Corps identified that nearly all of the positive impacts on earnings related to completing a vocational program or attaining a GED (Gritz & Johnson, 2001). Students who participated but failed to achieve either of these derived no benefit from Job Corps. However, the authors recognised that the effect on earnings may have been as much a function of being in the programme for longer and receiving more of the residential services (including social skills training) as completing these milestones.

A recent large scale meta-analysis has been conducted, which looked at 113 impact evaluations of youth employment programmes worldwide (Kluve et al, 2019). This

identified 3,105 effect size estimates¹⁸, of which around a third were positively significant. The average effect sizes were small, for both employment-related and earnings-related outcomes, but this was attributed to effect sizes varying significantly across different intervention types and/ or programme features. The interesting finding from this paper is that there was no clear evidence that one programme/ a certain combination of interventions yielded better results than others. However, the review did identify the features of interventions that are most powerful: those that combine multiple services, those that profile their customers, those that follow them up, and those that measure impact in the medium and long-term. This has implications for the design of programmes for the intended the Youth Futures Foundation constituent group.

“Hence, while there is no specific combination of services that always works, programs that add complementary services to the main intervention, regardless of what those are, tend to do better... We conjecture that the success of youth employment programs rests on their ability to respond to multiple needs and constraints facing a heterogeneous group of beneficiaries.” (Kluve et al, 2019, pp.237)

The importance of combining different elements of support has been highlighted by many authors as being important to ALMPs and job training programmes (eg Martin & Grubb, 2001, US Department of Labour, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services, 2014), particularly for disadvantaged youth (Heinrich and Holzer, 2011, cited in Edelman & Holzer, 2013). It makes sense that profiling customers, ie using information about individual participants to direct them to the services that best fit their needs, is powerful. Whilst not all of the evaluations of youth programmes include analysis of between-group differences, those that do often find significant differences, such as the evaluations of NPYD, Job Corps and Activity Agreements discussed above. The recent meta-analysis found no systematic differences in reported effect sizes related to the age or gender of beneficiaries for which it was estimated, but programmes that focus on vulnerable populations more often reported large effect sizes (Kluve et al, 2019). However, it is important to bear in mind that disadvantaged youth are not a homogenous group, as they comprise a number of sub-groups, which often have differing needs. What works for some may not work for others.

Most of the literature included in this review did not comment on the order of delivery of any bundled interventions. The evaluation of Activity Agreements showed the importance of not defining the order a priori but rather being flexible to the needs of the customer (Newton et al, 2009a). Activities did not necessarily have to be incremental; there was a role for trying things out and changing track if the young person found they did not want to pursue a particular course of action. Having a broad enough menu of choice to provide the flexibility for young people to do this was crucial, so that they did not feel ‘boxed in’ to a particular pathway. The same report (Newton et al, 2009a) noted that it was important to get the pacing of support right. Too fast could be a problem for some, more vulnerable groups. Similarly, when the pace of NDYP and movement through the Options was

¹⁸ See glossary for an explanation

deliberately increased, this was found to help those closest to the labour market and not those most disadvantaged (Hasluck & Green, 2007). The Individual Placement and Support (IPS; Preparing for Adulthood, 2014) intervention, discussed earlier in the report, which is a ‘place then train’ model which aims to get people into work first and then offer support, has been found to be more effective for adults with mental health problems than ‘train then place’ interventions (NDTi, 2014). As such, the ideal timing and sequence of interventions seems to be very much dependant on the individual and their particular needs. Nonetheless there is general agreement that intervening early is better than later in order to avoid NEET in the first place (Kluve, 2014, Martin & Grubb, 2001).

Measuring additional impact

Finally, the above section sets out where we have robust evidence on the impact of interventions. However it should be noted that relatively few studies overall conduct such impact assessments, ie over and above what would have happened without support (so-called deadweight). Those that do so tend to find that changes in *net* employment are often substantially lower than the headline outcome rates that are reported in descriptive analysis, and rarely higher than a 10 percentage point impact on the likelihood of employment.

Furthermore, even where studies do measure deadweight they often do not measure wider substitution and displacement effects, whereby others in the labour market potentially lose work because it is offered to those who complete programmes. Because of this, one review concluded that *“the favourable picture created by the current generation of research studies should come with a health warning: total programme benefits are overestimated to an unknown but probably substantial extent.”* (Piopiunik and Ryan, 2012, p.21). However, programmes aimed at vulnerable youth have been found to have the largest effect sizes (Kluve et al, 2019) and even small impacts are likely to be meaningful for these groups who are at the greatest distance from labour market.

These factors all reiterate the importance of improving the quality of programme evaluation, and of setting realistic expectations on how we define and measure success.

Table 2.1 provides an insight into the impacts achieved for participants of the Activity Agreements. It illustrates how impacts are derived from the additional effect of the intervention. The Activity Agreements impact study used a survey methodology with a propensity-score matched comparison group drawn from national administrative records. Having identified a suitable comparison group, the measurement of impact is the rate of (positive or negative) outcomes for participants minus the rate of these outcomes for the comparison group. For example, 14.3 per cent of participants took up work-based training compared to 11 per cent of the comparison group. The estimate of impact is three percentage points (that is, 14 per cent minus 11 per cent). This means that 3 per cent of participants took up work-based training who otherwise would not have.

Table 2.1: Impacts demonstrated by the Activity Agreements

	AA Participants %	Comparison Group %	Difference
Personal development activities	30	4.4	25.6*

Work-based training	14.3	11	3.3*
Work with in-house training	7	7.9	-0.9
Other work without in-house training	16.9	26.5	-9.6*
Voluntary work	7.2	5.5	1.7
Studying for NQF qualification	23.6	18.3	5.3*
Studying for other qualification	4	1.8	2.2*
None of the above in the 12 months	28.8	41.8	-13.1*
<i>Bases (weighted)</i>	<i>1013</i>	<i>1013</i>	
<i>Bases (unweighted)</i>	<i>1013</i>	<i>2291</i>	

Note: significant differences between participants and the comparison group are marked with an asterisk.

Source: Tanner et al (2010)

2.7 Evidence on economic and social returns

The final focus for this review is to capture information on costs of provision and the returns that can be expected, although there are some considerable limitations to the available evidence. Given that relatively few studies robustly measure net impacts, it follows that fewer still measure the value for money of provision. And even where attempts are made to establish value for money, the differing approaches means that benefits can be judged to be overestimated; this is particularly the case for social return on investment where benefits to wider society are inferred from wider data (eg on education, health and criminality) rather than being captured direct from intervention evaluation.

Costs of delivering interventions

This review identified the costs of most of the major interventions discussed so far in the report but in some cases we were only able to obtain broad estimates. Over its first two years for example, £60m was budgeted by government to deliver the Activity Agreements. As the intake over this period was 10,887, this would have equated to a cost of £5,511 per person. However, the intake was lower than anticipated and there is no evidence to suggest that the full amount budgeted was used. The synthesis report of Activity Agreements concluded that they were “*not inexpensive*”, given the average caseload of 15 individuals per adviser and the average length of time young people stayed on the programme of between 12 and 14 weeks (Hillage et al, 2008).

For the Youth Contract there was considerable variation in the price per head across different areas, as where the funding was devolved in the three core city areas, Local Authorities used different delivery models and determined different payments by result (PbR) regimes from the national model, which also involved PbR. The available evidence suggests that the planned investment was up to £2,200 per person although the actual spend varied considerably because not all young people sustained re-engagement –

which meant providers were not paid for this non-outcome. The funding models were criticised for being too backloaded which constrained innovation in delivery. This type of complaint is common in the PbR literature.

The average FJF employer payment was approximately £6,850 per participant (DWP, 2012). However, when costs were considered net of outcomes, the investment made by the government in the programme amounted to £3,100 per individual participant.

The figure for Job Corps, a more intensive residential programme, was substantially higher than for all of the other interventions at \$16,500 per participant (Schochet et al, 2008). In the evidence obtained, no information was available on the costs of the NDYP. Not all of these interventions were subjected to cost-benefit analyses so it is unclear how the outcomes of the different levels of investment compare.

Economic and social cost-benefit assessments

A 2010 review of the costs and benefits of interventions aimed at workless youth identified just 14 studies that considered both of these, and that all lacked appropriate findings for conclusions to be drawn (SQW, 2010). Costs and benefit data tended to be of a qualitative nature rather than quantitative and the perspective taken was usually long-term. Where there were estimates of costs and benefits, these had not been made on a consistent basis, which led the authors to conclude: *"In view of the dearth of estimates of monetary benefit and costs, let alone compatible estimates, it is difficult to see any prospect of estimating reliable BCRs (benefit cost ratios) on the basis of current knowledge of youth interventions."* (SQW, 2010, page 19).

Similarly, a review of training for young people with low qualifications found that while the research enabled some conclusions to be drawn on the net impacts of programmes (that is, whether participants are more or less likely to enter work or to increase earnings) there was far less evidence to support general conclusions on whether interventions pay for themselves (Wilson, 2013).

A review of ALMPs in Europe also found that most of the evaluation studies under consideration did not address the issue of costs-effectiveness of the respective programmes (Caliendo & Schmidl, 2015). To address this shortfall, it compared the cost of ALMPs for young people (using data from the Eurostat database) with the costs of not having them in the labour force (using estimates by Eurofound, 2011) in order to understand how the different approaches compare. It concluded that job creation schemes are relatively high cost compared to their effectiveness and that job search activities are relatively low: *"The per capita cost of wage subsidies amount to about 40% of foregone earnings, 30% of foregone earnings in case of training programs, about 35% for job creation schemes and 10% for job search programs. The costs of wage subsidies are quite sizeable, but given their above average effectiveness, they stand out relative to similarly costly job creation schemes that are often found to result in zero or negative employment effects. In contrast, the low relative costs of job search measures in combination with their relatively high effectiveness suggest that they are commonly cost-effective."* (Caliendo & Schmidl, 2015, page 18)

The lack of evidence on value for money is in part due to the difficulty in undertaking these analyses. Benefits may not be easily observed, and where they can be observed it can be challenging to attribute them to specific interventions (Wilson, 2013). Moreover, policy-makers and managers of interventions often give a higher priority to process and delivery issues than they do to impact and value for money (SQW, 2010). Some of the interventions discussed in this report have been subject to cost-benefit analyses and are described in turn. These demonstrate the different types of analyses undertaken and the difficulty in drawing conclusions from them.

A social return on investment (SROI) analysis of the Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds was conducted which estimated the lifetime returns to the qualifications participants would gain as a result of their re-engagement in training and education, using average success rates based on similar cohorts from the existing evidence base. This used the maximum spend of £2,200 per person in the calculations. The returns explored were earnings, health improvement, and crime reduction, relative to the estimated costs of delivery (Newton et al, 2014). The findings were that the benefits generated by the Youth Contract outweighed the costs of the programme, with an estimated net benefit of £12,900 per participant.

Analysis conducted on Job Corps showed that the benefits obtained by the programme could not be assumed to persist into the future (Schochet et al, 2008). Earnings based on tax data, which was examined for nine years post enrolment, showed that the benefits obtained through Job Corps disappeared between 1999 and 2003 (roughly years five to nine), suggesting that few additional programme benefits accrued after year four. A benefit-cost analysis found that all measured benefits during the four-year survey period - including the benefits of increased earnings, reduced use of other services (education and training programmes and public assistance), and reduced crime - were less than \$4,000, whilst the programme cost \$16,500 per participant (Schochet et al, 2008). However, the benefits exceeded costs for the oldest youth, aged 20 to 24, because the impact on earnings for them was shown to continue beyond four years. Also, the benefits for participants themselves were clear; they received a weekly cash payment as well as free meals and a cash allotment for clothing which, together with their initial earnings gains, exceeded the earnings forgone while they are enrolled in Job Corps (Schochet et al, 2008). As such, Job Corps was effectively redistributing resources toward low-income youth.

A cost-benefit analysis of FJF looked at three scenarios; where benefits do not extend beyond the two year period measured in the impact analysis (the baseline estimates), where they exceed this period by one year and where they exceed the stated period by two years (which are more optimistic but also less reliable) (DWP, 2012). As part of the sensitivity analysis, it also considered the impact of substitution effects. The report concluded: *“There is considerable uncertainty regarding the costs and benefits of the FJF programme. However, it is notable that under all of the scenarios considered in this analysis, the programme is estimated to result in a net cost to the Exchequer and a net benefit to participants, their employers and society as a whole.”* (DWP, 2012, p.65)

The baseline estimates were that participants would be £1,600 better off as a result of the programme, that participants' employers would be approximately £6,850 better off per participant and that the net cost to the Exchequer was £3,100 per participant, making the benefit to society £7,750 per participant. In terms of the cost to the Exchequer, this accrued because the cost of the FJF employer payment was expected to outweigh the benefits associated with a net increase in tax revenues and net reductions in benefit expenditure, operational costs and NHS expenditure. However, the report noted that the accuracy of its estimates was dependent on the robustness of the impact estimates from which they were derived, the validity of the assumptions upon which they were based, and that they excluded some of the non-pecuniary benefits associated with FJF participation (eg improvements in participants' confidence) and any additional training costs incurred by FJF employers.

These three examples highlight the complexity involved in conducting cost-benefit analyses and the different approaches taken in different studies. They also highlight the importance of understanding cost-benefits from a range of perspectives and, crucially, treating any findings with caution, given that they will be based on a number of assumptions. More research into the cost-benefits of programmes supporting disadvantaged young people is warranted and it would be valuable for these to consider differential returns for subgroups within this population.

While not explored by this study, there is an established literature on the lifetime economic and social costs that result from being NEET or unemployed at a young age (eg Coles, 2010). Not taking action results in high costs for individuals and societies. Improving this evidence base on cost-benefits of specific interventions is therefore critically important.

3 Conclusions

The first conclusion that must be drawn from this review is that the evidence base is not strong enough to draw robust conclusions on what works specifically for those young people furthest from the labour market. There are a range of reasons for this.

- The policy/ practice discontinuity at the age of 18 – with an emphasis on human capital pre-18 and on rapid work entry after 18.
- The prevalence of universal programmes offering bundles of support, with associated difficulties of establishing what precisely works for vulnerable groups – it is the combination of individual components in these bundles that appears effective.
- Weak evaluation approaches and limited funding for evaluation – with relatively few well-evidenced programmes, but a range of others with weaker impact evidence but similar designs.
- Duration of evaluation – with few studies tracking long-term sustained employment outcomes and variations in measures of sustained employment.
- Generally limited or no tracking in evaluations of the causal pathway from re-engagement in education, training and personalised support packages to sustained employment.
- Alongside these challenges sits the methodological difficulty of locating high quality impact studies targeted at vulnerable groups through a rapid rather than systematic review (search terms either too loose or too stringent).

Despite these challenges, the consistency of messages about what is effective provides some reassurance. Packages of provision will work effectively for the most vulnerable, as long as they are suitably tailored and personalised. General messages about effective practice include:

- **Accurate identification:** Trying to identify at risk young people as early as possible, possibly through tracking systems.
- **Effective engagement:** Using magnets, including *cultural magnets* such as music, sports or arts; and *financial magnets* for example cash vouchers, to ensure that provision looks different to compulsory education and encourages take up.
- **Effective assessment and profiling:** Accurately understanding an individual's needs in order to personalise support packages.
- **A trusted, consistent advisor:** Young people need to believe support could make a difference to them achieving their personal goals and overcoming their contextual, personal and situational barriers. A consistent advisor can help sustain engagement, develop reflection/ action cycles, and help keep momentum towards the end goal.

- **Delivery of personalised support packages:** including options for:
 - Employability skills, job search skills, work experience
 - Capabilities – agency, self-efficacy, a goal and resilience to achieve it
 - Vocational and basic skills
 - Addressing barriers including health and wellbeing, independent living, housing etc and developing life skills.
- **Strategies focusing on employers:** These are less common, but there is some evidence that targeted use of wage subsidies and intermediate labour markets (ie creating temporary, paid jobs where individuals receive additional support) can be effective.
- **In work support:** The evaluation evidence is somewhat weaker on this, but suggests a stronger case for those with more significant labour market disadvantages.

In looking at future commissioning, the Youth Futures Foundation may wish to consider in particular how it may be able to improve the evidence base in three key areas:

- Improving the evidence base for interventions that reflect and build on the above principles, so including voluntary sector provision that combines intensive advisory support with personalised packages of support, employer engagement and transitional in-work support.
- Testing the effectiveness of specific interventions where there is promising evidence for other disadvantaged groups, including:
 - Individual Placement and Support, which is a Level 5 intervention¹⁹ that has proven highly effective for older participants with mental health conditions and could be relevant for younger people with additional needs
 - Intermediate labour market programmes, which have shown some promising results, including for long-term unemployed young people during the last recession.
- Identifying opportunities to ensure that those further from work are able to access more ‘mainstream’ employment and skills support – in particular within Apprenticeships and Supported Internship programmes, where a range of initiatives are testing additional support to widen access and where a more systematic approach to design, implementation and evaluation could be beneficial.

This review also suggests that there is a particular need to ensure that interventions are rigorously evaluated, and that their net costs and benefits are assessed. Given the significant costs of failure, even seemingly modest impacts on net employment can deliver lasting positive fiscal, economic and social impacts. The ongoing early stage work on the DWP Employment Data Lab in this regard is a development worthy of note.

¹⁹ An intervention that has proved causality more than once using a control/comparison group and that has developed manuals, systems and procedures to ensure consistent replication and positive impact

Appendix 1: References

- Ali, T (2013) *The UK Future Jobs Fund: The Labour Party's Adoption of the Youth Guarantee*, Post Keynesian Economic Study Group Working Paper 1106.
- Allaker, J and Cavill, S (2011) *Customer experience of the Future Jobs Fund: Findings from a qualitative research study*. Department for Work and Pensions. In-house Research Paper No. 1.
- Beale I, Bloss C, Thomas A (2008) The longer-term impact of the New Deal for Young People. Department for Work and Pensions. Working Paper No 23
- Caliendo M and Schmidl R (2015) Youth Unemployment and Active Labor Market Policies in Europe. IZA Discussion Paper Series No. 9488.
- Card D, Kluve J and Weber A (2010) 'Active Labor Market Policy Evaluations: A Meta-Analysis' *The Economic Journal*, 120, F452-F477.
- Cedefop (2010) *Guiding at-risk youth through learning to work: Lessons from across Europe*, Luxembourg: Publications Office. .
- Cedefop (2016) *Leaving education early: putting vocational education and training centre stage*, Volume II Evaluating Policy Impact, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016.
- Centre for Youth Impact (2018) Can you bottle a good relationship? Learning about mentoring in the Talent Match programme, Big Lottery Fund
- Clayton, S, Bamba, C, Gosling, R, Povall, S, Misso, K, Whitehead, M (2011) 'Assembling the evidence jigsaw: insights from a systematic review of UK studies of individual-focused return to work initiatives for disabled and long-term ill people'. *BMC Public Health*, vol. 11, n. 170.
- Coles B, Godfrey C, Keung A, Parrott S, Bradshaw J (2010) Estimating the Life-time Cost of NEET: 16-18 Year Olds Not in Employment, Education or Training, Research undertaken on Behalf of the Audit Commission, Department of Social Policy and Social Work and Department of Health Sciences, University of York.
- Dickerson A, Morris D, McDool E (2020) Post-Compulsory Education Pathways and Labour Market Outcomes, CVER, University of Sheffield
<http://cver.lse.ac.uk/textonly/cver/pubs/cverdp026.pdf>
- Dooley M, Vallejo C (2007) *Educational policies that address social inequality: Spain case study report 3*, EPASI Project.

- DWP (2012) *Impacts and Costs and Benefits of the Future Jobs Fund*, Department for Work and Pensions, London, November 2012.
- Edelman PB and Holzer HJ (2013) *Connecting the Disconnected: Improving Education and Employment Outcomes among Disadvantaged Youth*, Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper No. 1412-13.
- Eichhorst, W and Rinne, U (2016) *Promoting youth employment in Europe: Evidence-based policy lessons*, IZA Policy Paper No. 119.
- Fishwick, T, Lane, P and Gardiner, L (2011) *Future Jobs Fund: an independent national evaluation*, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion.
- Gracey S, Scott K (2010) *Changing the NEET Mindset: Achieving more effective transitions between education and work*, LSN.
- Green, A and Hasluck, C (2009) 'Action to reduce worklessness: what works?' *Local Economy* 24 (1), 28 – 37.
- Green A, Atfield G, Barnes SA (2015) *Employer Involvement and Engagement Talent Match Case Study Theme Report*, Sheffield.
- Griffiths, R and Jones, G (2005) *Evaluation of Single Provider Employment Zone Extensions to Young People, Lone Parents and Early Entrants: Interim Report*, Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No 228, Corporate Document Services.
- Gritz, R, M and Johnson, T (2001) *National Job Corps Study: Effects on earnings for students achieving key program milestones*, Battelle Memorial Institute report submitted to US Department of Labour.
- Hasluck C and Green A (2007), *What works for whom? A review of evidence and meta-analysis for the Department for Work and Pensions*, DWP Research Report no 407, London: Department for Work and Pensions.
- Haywood N, Walker S, O'Toole G, Hewitson C, Pugh E, Sundaram P (2009), *Engaging all young people in meaningful learning after 16: A review*, Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC).
- Hillage, J, Johnson C, Newton, B, Maguire, S, Tanner, E and Purdon, S (2008) *Activity Agreements Synthesis Report DCSF-RR063*.
- Hughes D, Mann A, Barnes S, Baldauf B, McKeown R (2016) *Careers education: International literature review*, Education Endowment Foundation.
- Impetus (2014) *Ready for Work: The capabilities young people need to find and keep work – and the programmes proven to help develop these*, London
- Johnson T, Gritz M, Jackson R, Burghardt J, Boussy C, Leonard J, Orians C (1999) *National Job Corps Study: Report on the Process Analysis*, Washington, US.
- Kluve, J, 2014. Youth labor market interventions. IZA World of Labor.

- Kluve, J, Puerto, S, Robalino, D, Romero, JM, Rother, F, Stoterau, J, Weidenkaff, F and Witte, M (2019) Do youth employment programs improve labour market outcomes, *World Development*, 114, pp.237-253.
- Kritikos E, Ching C (2005), *Basic Skills and Early School Leavers*, Europa Study on Access to Education and Training, (Ref. DG EAC 38/ 04).
- Machin S (2006), *Social Disadvantage and Educational Experiences*, OECD Social, Employment And Migration Working Papers.
- Maguire S and Newton B (2011) Activity Agreement Pilots – trialling different approaches to re-engaging young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): Evaluation of the 2009-10 extension, Research Report DFE-RR086, Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- Maguire S and Thompson J (2007), *Young people not in Education, Employment or Training - where is Government Policy taking us now?* Youth & Policy. 96. Summer, pp5-18.
- Maguire S, Newton B, Fearn H, Huddleston P, Levesley T, Miller L, Oakley J, Usher T, Williams C, White C (2010), *Evaluation of the Extension to the Activity Agreement Pilots*. London: Department for Children, Schools and Families DCSF-RR 201.
- Maguire, S and Newton, B. (2010) *Activity Agreement Pilots: Evaluation of the 2008-2009 extension*, RB201, Department for Children, Schools and Families.
- Maguire S, Thompson J (University of Warwick), Hillage J, Dewson S, Miller L, Johnson C, Newton B, Bates P, Page P (IES) (2008) Evaluation of the Activity and Learning Agreement Pilot, Process Evaluation Year One Report, Research Report RW027, Department for Children, Schools and Families, Jan 2008
- Mangan, J and Trendle, B, 2019. Evaluating the effectiveness of a mentoring program for Indigenous trainees in Australia using propensity score analysis. *Education Economics*, 27(3), pp.308-322.
- Martin JP and Grubb D (2001) What works and for whom: a review of OECD countries' experiences with active labour market policies, IFAU - Office of Labour Market Policy Evaluation, Working Paper 2001:14.
- Miller, C, Cummings, M, Millenky, M, Wiegand, A, Lond, D (2018) 'Laying a Foundation. Four-Year Results from the National Youth Build Evaluation', MDRC.
- NDTi (2014) Supporting young people with mental health problems into employment: A rapid review of the evidence. Preparing for Adulthood Programme factsheet.
- Newton B, Speckesser S, Nafilyan V, Maguire S, Devins D, Bickerstaffe T (2014) The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation, Research Report, Department for Education.

- Newton, B, Johnson, C. and Fearn, H. (2009a) *Participation in Activity Agreement Provision; Activity and Learning Agreement Pilots Programme Theory Evaluation Working Paper 3 DCSF-RR097*.
- Newton, B, Levesley, T, Oakley, J, Fearn, H and Johnson, C (2009b) *Activity and Learning Agreement Pilots Programme Theory Evaluation; Activity Agreements and Small Step Progression Working Paper 5 DCSF-RR098*.
- O'Higgins, N (2001) *Youth unemployment and employment policy: a global perspective*, International Labour Organisation, Oxford: Alden Group.
- Piopiunik, M and Ryan, P (2012) *Improving the transition between education/ training and the labour market: What can we learn from various national approaches?* EENEE Analytical Report No.13.
- Pring R, Hayward G, Hodgson A, Johnson J, Keep E, Oancea A, Rees G, Spours K, Wilde S (2009) *The Nuffield Review of 14-19 Education and Training: . Final report Education for All: the Future of Education and Training for 14-19 year-olds* Routledge.
- Rathbone/ Nuffield Foundation (2008) *Engaging Youth Enquiry*, [www.nuffield 14-19review.org.uk](http://www.nuffield14-19review.org.uk).
- Rodríguez-Planas, N. (2017) School, drugs, mentoring, and peers: Evidence from a randomized trial in the US. *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, 139, pp.166-181.
- Schochet, P.Z., Burghardt, J. and Glazerman, S. (2001) *National Job Corps Study: The impact of Job Corps on participants' employment and related outcomes*, Mathematica Policy Research report submitted to US Department of Labour.
- Schochet, P.Z., Burghardt, J. and McConnell, S. (2008) Does Job Corps work? Impact findings from the National Job Corps Study, *American Economic Review*, 98:5, p.1864–1886.
- Schochet, P.Z., McConnell, S. and Burghardt, J. (2003) *National Job Corps Study: Findings using administrative earnings records data final report*, Mathematica Policy Research report submitted to US Department of Labour.
- Social Finance (2016) *New insights into improving outcomes for at-risk youth*, London
- Spielhofer T, Benton T, Evans K, Featherstone G, Golden S, Nelson J, Smith P. (2009), *Increasing participation: understanding young people who do not participate in education or training at 16 or 17*. Department for Children, Schools and Families Research Report No. DCSF-RR072.
- SQW Consulting (2010) *The Costs and Benefits of Interventions Aimed at Workless Youth: Final Report for the London Development Agency*.
- Steer, R (2000) *A Background to Youth Disaffection: A review of literature and evaluation findings from work with young people*, Community Development Foundation.

Tanner, E., D'Souza, J., Taylor, E., Finch, S., Purdon, S., Maguire, M. (2010) *Activity Agreement Pilots – Follow-Up Survey of 2007-2008 Participants*, Research Report DFE-RR010, Department for Children, Schools and Families.

US Department of Labour, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services (2014) *What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence*.

Vernon L (2006), *Early School Leaving: Broader Approaches to Learning: Literature review*, Campaign for Learning.

Walker, M., Hills, S. and Heere, B., 2017. Evaluating a socially responsible employment program: Beneficiary impacts and stakeholder perceptions. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 143(1), pp.53-70.

Wilson, T. (2013) *Youth unemployment: Review of training for youth with low qualifications*, BIS Research Paper No. 101.

Woodgate, R.L., Morakinyo, O. and Martin, K.M., 2017. Interventions for youth aging out of care: A scoping review. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 82, pp.280-300.

Appendix 2: Examples from the call for evidence

Recommendations from the sector: Greater Manchester Talent Match Programme (delivered by GMCVO)

As the lead partner on the Lottery-funded Talent Match Programme in Greater Manchester, GMCVO wanted to find ways of delivering support to young people described as 'hidden' NEET in Greater Manchester. Their model uses voluntary and community sector organisations to provide 'Talent Coaches' to support the target group. These organisations are not always well placed to bid for large-scale commissioned employment projects, but their connection to local communities and broad agendas means they can nurture health and wellbeing and support movements to employment. They use an initial assessment to establish proximity to the labour market and build an individualised support offer based on this which enables young people to make progress and their 'distance travelled to be captured'.

Recommendation from the sector: Tracking the longer term outcomes of the Pathways programme at Fight for Peace

Fight for Peace (FFP) Pathways Programme is funded by Credit Suisse. It has supported and tracked 134 young people (some of whom graduated from FFP six years ago) who, when they joined the programme, had few or no educational qualifications. FFP offers a three week preparatory course during which their literacy and numeracy skills are assessed, and programmes of personal development, mentoring, sport and employability development are offered. Young people are then allocated to Pathways to gain qualifications in English, maths, community sports leadership/ gym instruction at Level 1 and/ or Level 2. While no counterfactual is available, the programme outputs suggest positive attitudinal effects, gains in qualifications, reductions in reoffending and critically progression into employment.

Recommendation from the sector: ESF NEET Provision in Greater Manchester (Groundwork delivered)

This provision that received European Social Funding has provided locally, tailored solutions to support young people at risk of NEET and those already NEET to re-engage in EET destinations. "Depending on the needs of the local area, Groundwork delivered a flexible programme to a targeted cohort of young people. This included sessions such as skills for working life, team building, planning, budgeting, presentation skills, anger management, confidence, communication, personal safety, raising self-esteem, career planning and healthy lifestyles. The aim of this programme was to raise attainment, improve attendance and

behaviour and where possible to re-engage young people back into mainstream provision [compliant with the policy to Raise the Participation Age]. The provision is divided between 14-16 year olds with aims to keep them in compulsory schooling. The 16+ provision focuses on mentoring and individualised support to identify an appropriate destination and work towards it.

Recommendation from the sector: Ready for Work (Business in the Community)

Ready for Work supports young people who have experienced homelessness or other barriers by delivering the skills they need to enter and sustain work. It is delivered in partnership with BITC members and businesses are highly involved throughout delivery. This level of employer engagement makes the programme unusual but is also seen to be at the heart of its success. The package provides registration (and assessment), pre-employment training focused on employability; two week work placements and post-placement support in the form of job clubs, coaching and one-to-one support. It achieves entry-to-employment outcomes for 58 per cent of clients completing the programme.

Recommendation from the sector: Lessons from mentoring support as part of Talent Match

Exploratory qualitative research into mentoring as part of the Talent Match intervention indicates the 'depth, complexity and potential power of the relationships' between young people and their mentors who played 'a fundamental role in the life of that young person. Moreover that 'that these relationships are based on intuitive responses to individuals, and that they will be as different as the individuals participating in them'. The research focuses on the quality of mentoring relationships in Talent Match and concludes that a high quality relationship ensures young people feel:

- they have the power to shape how they work with their key worker;
- they are understood and respected as an individual;
- like their key worker cares about how they're doing;
- able to turn to their key worker for support if they need to;
- the goals they're setting are realistic and achievable;
- motivated and inspired to achieve those goals;
- able to access practical, relevant help to achieve those goals.

Centre for Youth Impact, 2018

Recommendation from the sector: Building Better Opportunities National Evaluation

Building Better Opportunities is the Big Lottery Fund and European Social Funding programme providing joint investment in a variety of local projects in the UK that aim to help, amongst others, those with multiple and complex needs facing significant barriers to work, move closer to and into employment. Projects are designed to support individuals of all ages. According to the national evaluation, led by Ecorys, the projects being delivered successfully replicate existing good practice, and are developing 'structured, individually focused ongoing support through key worker/ coaching models, supplemented by targeted, specialist support as and when required'. The national evaluation records positive effects for participants, in respect of intermediate outcomes, including building confidence, minimising the effects of personal and situational barriers alongside employment support or support that will enable individuals to (re-) enter education to improve their labour market circumstances.

Recommendation from the sector: Triodos New Horizons and Unlocking Potential (Career Connect)

These programmes utilised the DWP Innovation Fund, financed through social impact bonds. They aimed to support young people aged 14-24 at risk of or already NEET to enter positive destinations including education, work and training. While the paper records how the programmes exceeded their target outputs in respect of improved attendance and behaviour, uptake of qualifications at Levels 1-3, and sustained employment at 13 and 26 weeks post participation, it does not describe the delivery approach but instead focuses on the outcomes achieved (as noted above). Lessons for engaging young people include the need to intervene early, ensure provision covering personal effectiveness and employability is available. For commissioning, lessons include limiting supply chains in delivery and that PbR can be effective where rates reflect the true level of investment that individuals need.

Recommendation from the sector: Moving on Up

Moving on Up (MoU) was a project aiming to increase employment rates for young black men in London. Funded by Trust for London and City Bridge Trust, in partnership with the Black Training and Enterprise Group (BTEG), it supported a range of organisations to supporting young black men to transition successfully into employment. The initiative was informed by research undertaken by BTEG about why there is an enduring gap in employment between young black men and white men. A range of projects led by third sector bodies were funded, including activities such as group-based skills training and brokering employment opportunities. The projects were evaluated through follow up surveys and tracking. The evaluation lacked a comparison group, so findings on job outcomes cannot be robustly attributed to the initiatives. The evaluation found that between 40-60% of participants moved into jobs. Participants reported feeling empowered by people caring about young black men as a group.

An evaluation of the Moving on Up initiative, carried out by The Social Innovation Partnership July 2017

Appendix 3: Glossary

ALMP	Active Labour Market Policies – these are usually government-funded programmes that take an active approach to help those out of work to find work – for example through jobsearch support, training, subsidised employment, work placements and so on. (This is in contrast to ‘passive’ policies like tax, welfare and regulation.) There are two key approaches within ALMPs: work first and human capital (see below).
Apprenticeship	In the UK, an apprenticeship is a way to gain the skills, knowledge and experience needed to get into many careers. They combine work with training and study, enabling people aged over 16 to earn while they learn.
Effect size	Effect size is a simple way of quantifying the difference between two groups. Effect size emphasises the size of the difference rather than confounding this with sample size. It is particularly valuable for quantifying the effectiveness of a particular intervention, relative to some comparison.
Impact assessment	An evaluation approach that seeks to identify causality. To do this, the outcomes of the participant group are benchmarked against those of a credible comparison group (the counterfactual who have not received intervention support but have experienced ‘support as usual’, ie what is available in the absence of the intervention). If the comparison group is judged to be plausible, and subject to statistical tests for significance, the impact of the intervention is the difference in outcomes (positive or negative) between the participant and comparison group.
NEET / EET	Not in employment, education or training / In employment, education or training
Work First	One of two predominant approaches in ALMPs. ‘Work First’ prioritises entry to work at the earliest opportunity and therefore focuses on shorter-term support like targeted job

search assistance, work preparation activity and work experience.

Human Capital The second of two dominant approaches in ALMP. Human Capital approaches seek to increase skills and qualifications and to reduce the effects of particular disadvantages before assisting individuals to find work.

Intermediate labour market A model of waged work in specially created temporary jobs where individuals receive additional support

Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) An RCT is an 'experimental' impact evaluation design, that exploits random assignment of similar people or groups of people to a prescribed and controlled treatment/intervention or to 'business as usual'/no intervention. A treatment group and a control group are formed by this randomisation process. Where it works well, randomisation controls for unobservable differences between the two groups.

To understand impact, the treatment and control groups are followed up to understand their outcomes, using agreed measures. Assuming randomisation has been effective, the difference in outcomes between the treatment and control groups is the impact of the treatment/intervention, ie 'net' of what would have happened anyway, which in RCTs is provided by the control group outcomes.

Quasi-Experimental Design (QED) "A study based on a true experimental design meets 2 criteria: manipulation of a variable factor between 2 or more groups, and random assignment of patients to those groups. A quasi-experimental study uses the first criterion but people are not randomly assigned to groups. This means a researcher cannot draw conclusions about 'cause and effect'. This design is frequently used when it is not feasible, or not ethical, to conduct a randomised controlled trial." (NICE Glossary, downloaded 11.11.19)

Payment by Results (PbR) "Payment by Results is a type of public policy instrument whereby payments are contingent on the independent verification of results." (Wikipedia downloaded 11.11.19)

Appendix 4: Detailed method

The approach was finalised at the inception meeting held on 12 July. This covered discussion of:

- **Policy-relevant analysis framework** against which to review/report findings (Figure 1 in main report). This was agreed with the addition of incentives to young people. Some further detail is provided below.
- **Search terms.** Keywords were used singly and in combination, using Boolean operators and truncation; the agreed search terms are shown in Table A1 below.
- **Scope and boundaries.** Simple keyword searches can generate a vast volume of articles/studies, hence boundaries were set for 'out-of-scope' (eg by quality, target group, year, cost, context). The REA element built forward from 2010 with a review of reviews covering older evidence.
- **Standards of evidence.** We agreed that the NESTA standards of evidence would be applied as part of the quality sift (a summary of these is provided in Table 1 in the main report).

We provide an evidence-based assessment of 'what works' in tackling youth worklessness, and the strength of evidence to supply a practical resource and starting point for identifying future priorities, as well as evidence gaps (see Table A1 below). To do this, we took forward a three pronged approach:

- A review of reviews in order to capture long-standing evidence on what works and to provide a narrative, contextual framing to the study.
- An REA which while less comprehensive than a systematic review, and more susceptible to bias, allowed a literature 'map' to be collated with limited time resource. This focussed on evidence from 2010 onwards and included academic and policy literature.
- A call for evidence targeted at the sector, key academic and policy researchers. Much of this evidence did not meet the required quality standards however some examples are included in boxes termed 'recommendations from the sector'.

Through these combined approaches 40+ sources of evidence were identified, and then reviewed and synthesised as part of final reporting.

The Youth Futures Foundation target group and target outcome

The Youth Futures Foundation's mission and ambition is to support those young people furthest away from the labour market to move towards and into sustainable work.

The Youth Futures Foundation **target group** is aged between 11 and 24 years, and experiences multiple barriers at the point at which they attempt to enter the labour and this can have implications for them being able to sustain their position in employment. The barriers they experience can be both systematic and individual and cover combinations of: being from a disadvantaged background, experience of poverty, being post-addiction/in recovery, history of offending, health conditions and disability, learning difficulties/disabilities/cognitive function impairments, having caring responsibilities (adult or child), being in care/care leaver, having limited qualifications/low skills and other factors. A key concern for Youth Futures is how the intersection between race/cultural background combines with any of the above barriers to hinder progression into and within work.

However, the Youth Futures Foundation was also aware that interventions may not specifically target those with multiple barriers but that their group of interest may have received support from 'universal' interventions. It therefore *did not* wish the 'what works' evidence identified and reviewed to be limited simply to interventions concerned with minimising the effect of multiple barriers.

The **primary outcome** that the Youth Futures Foundation is measuring concerns sustained participation in meaningful work. For this reason, our review focussed on the 16-24 year age band since employment initiatives are more common for this age group. The secondary outcomes centre on health and wellbeing. This presented two definitional challenges:

- There is variability in the extant evidence with different definitions of **sustained work**, eg some studies record sustained employment over a fixed period (eg three or six months); some measure sustained employment in one particular job whereas others include employment transitions; others still measure cumulative time spent in work within a two year period. It was important to highlight the definitional differences within the report from the review to provide a way forward on measurement for Youth Futures.
- Defining **meaningful work**. The Youth Futures Foundation is interested in interventions that enable young people to move into and sustain meaningful employment. Inherent in this is that work will be satisfying to the young people, and the form of work they undertake will match to their goals, ambitions and capabilities. 'Good work' as defined by The Taylor Review can be equated to meaningful work and would lead towards the secondary outcomes centred on health and wellbeing. For Youth Futures factors that indicate meaningful employment are that it is paid and that young people work a minimum of 16 hours a week. It considers flexible forms of work (such as gig economy) as relevant within these criteria. The Youth Futures Foundation does not consider short-term, unstable employment, or low quality work that does not enable progression to be a good outcome for the target group.⁰

The Youth Futures Foundation was particularly interested in place-based interventions that support partnership working between combinations of frontline support agencies, statutory bodies and employers. It also was interested to understand place-based, spatial

characteristics on young people's outcomes (eg the effects of local transport infrastructure, operation of local labour markets, etc).

Given the age range it covers, while Youth Futures has interests in preventative interventions (likely to be captured as 'early intervention') it recognises that the evidence for this review would lean towards interventions for the older part of the age banding (16-24 years), given the need to identify what works in achieving sustained, meaningful employment.

Notably the Youth Futures Foundation stressed the importance of evidence of *what does not work* alongside what does. Where evidence is deemed of a suitable quality and reliability but shows that an intervention is ineffective, it was important that this was covered by this study.

Call for evidence

At an early stage, the Youth Futures Foundation and IES launched a call for evidence approaching key academics, third sector bodies and institutes known to work on salient themes. Youth Futures and IES also promoted the call on social media and through organisational networks. Our aim was to identify and where possible include in the review material (academic and policy) that was not yet published.

Analytical framework

The analytical framework for the study was agreed (see Figure 1 in main report). The evidence was unlikely to fall discretely into these categories as interventions often provide 'bundles' of support in order to overcome multiple and complex barriers. The framework was therefore used as an organising structure in reporting the synthesised output from the material selected.

Search terms

The following search terms were agreed for mobilisation within the REA.

Table A1: Agreed search terms

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Additional †
You* (youth; young people)	Unemploy*	Sustained employment	16-24 years
	Workless*	Job-entry	Race/ethnicity
	Inactiv*	Work preparation	Multiple disadvantage
	NEET	Job brokerage	Barriers
	Disadvant*	Support	
		Progression	

† These were deployed only where the combinations of primary, secondary and tertiary terms were ineffective in generating evidence.

Review of reviews

We prioritised a small number of influential, existing ‘meta’ reviews and comparative international analyses, for inclusion in the REA. These ensured the study captured existing evidence on what is known to work and meant REA resources could focus on capturing contemporary evidence in the context of the current labour market.

REA delivery

The REA used Google Scholar as the primary database complemented by searches of Web of Science, Scopus, and others. ‘Grey’ literature resulted from interrogating the websites of: UK/devolved governments, research centres/think tanks, trusts/foundations, and international bodies, eg OECD, World Bank, Eurofound, and Cedefop. Publications in English only were shortlisted for review.

The search used agreed terms (Table A1), taking a pragmatic approach: refining terms to ensure search resources were maximised (eg where primary terms generated low returns, these were not be supplemented with secondary ones).

Once the long list had been compiled, we **sifted it** by abstract and summary against the agreed inclusion/exclusion/quality/scope/applicability criteria. The inclusion/exclusion criteria focused on whether studies cover the target group as well as the agreed primary and secondary outcomes and the date of publication (2010 onwards). There was also an assessment of the extent to which findings were replicable and generalisable, and supported the conclusions drawn. The quality criteria and NESTA standards of evidence were applied. Where evidence failed to meet criteria, it fell out of scope, with the exception that short summaries of evidence recommended by the sector were included as illustrative of current practices. The output was a sub-set of the search database tagged ‘for review’.

Following the mapping process, if a gap could be filled by an existing source that had not arisen through the REA or the call for evidence we added it to the longlist in order that it could be sifted for inclusion and quality.

The shortlist of **articles/reports was subject to detailed review**, using a standardised pro-forma to ensure consistency of data extraction. When extracting evidence, we ensured full information was captured on the intervention, its composition and target group(s), outcomes and where possible, its costs and economic/social returns.

Standard of evidence and quality assessment

The quality sift involved two strands of work.

- Firstly, the NESTA standards of evidence were applied²⁰. The most robust evidence for each theme in the analytical framework was prioritised for review, bearing in mind that not all interventions of interest may be subject to comparison/control group studies for a variety of reasons. Evidence judged as Level 3-5 was prioritised for inclusion, subject to meeting quality standards in respect of methodology.
- The quality sift was applied to all evidence prioritised for the shortlist. Factors for this assessment will include:
 - Independence of the evaluation
 - Quality and robustness of the research method including RCT/QED models, approach to literature reviews, and associated reliability
 - Completeness of the evaluation evidence – whether both impact and process evaluations available in order to understand causality as well as how the interventions caused the effect.

²⁰ See: https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/standards_of_evidence.pdf

Appendix 5: Table of sources and quality

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
<p>Schochet, PZ, Burghardt, J and Glazerman, S (2001) National Job Corps Study: The impact of Job Corps on participants employment and related outcomes, Mathematica Policy Research report submitted to US Department of Labour, June 2001 https://www.mathematica-mpr.com/-/media/publications/pdfs/01-jcimpacts.pdf</p>	<p>Randomised Control Trial Impact assessment of JobCorps initiative.</p>	<p>Survey of treatment and control group and presents findings on program impacts over the first four years after random assignment. Concerned with a range of outcomes measured using survey data. These are: education, employment rate, earnings, and non-labour outcomes (welfare, crime, alcohol and illegal drug use, health, family formation, childcare, and mobility). Random assignment of all youths found eligible for Job Corps to either a program group or a control group. Program group members could enrol in Job Corps; control group members could not, but they could enrol in all other programs available to them in their communities. Impacts estimated using data from periodic follow-up interviews to compare the experiences of the program and control groups. Program intake was from 1994 to 1997.</p>	<p>JobCorps was aimed at disadvantaged youth. Applicants must meet 11 criteria including: be 16 to 24; economically disadvantaged; live in an environment characterized by a disruptive home life, high crime rates, or limited job opportunities; need additional education, training, or job skills; and be judged to have the capability and aspirations to participate.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>

²¹ https://media.nesta.org.uk/documents/standards_of_evidence.pdf

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
Cedefop (2016) Leaving education early: putting vocational education and training centre stage, Volume II Evaluating Policy Impact, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/5558_en.pdf	Evidence review Mapped VET-related measures addressing early leaving	The research combined a mapping and selection of VET-related measures addressing early leaving through desk research at country and measure level, as well as study visits and 428 interviews with policy-makers (national and regional/local authorities in education), practitioners (principals, teachers, trainers, guidance personnel, persons from second change measures, employers), researchers and learners across the EU.	Focussed on measures which prevent, intervene or compensate early leavers and encourage them back into education and training.	N/A
Newton B, Speckesser S, Nafilyan V, Maguire S, Devins D, Bickerstaffe T (2014), The Youth Contract for 16-17 year olds not in education, employment or training evaluation, Research Report, Department for Education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/youth-contract-report	Quasi-experimental approach using Propensity Score Matching (PSM) as the basis for an impact assessment. Assessment of the Youth Contract (YC) initiative.	Uses linked data from the National Pupil Database (NPD, Individual Learner Record (ILR) and Client Caseload Information System (CCIS). The comparison group was formed using PSM. The outcomes of participants were compared to those of non-participants who had the same probability of receiving the YC intervention as well as possessing the same number of GCSEs.	The YC 16-17 was targeted to support vulnerable groups, initially proxied by qualification level. Eligibility was extended over time to specific sub-groups (these were young people who have one GCSE A*-C, young offenders released from custody and, from August 2013, those serving community sentences with one or more GCSEs A*-C and young people in care/were in local authority care with one or more GCSEs A*-C).	Level 3
Walker, M, Hills, S and Heere, B (2017) Evaluating a socially responsible employment program: Beneficiary impacts and stakeholder perceptions. Journal of Business Ethics, 143(1), pp.53-7	Pre and post-intervention survey.	Evaluation of a UK-based youth employability programme using mixed methods including pre and post intervention quantitative and qualitative data. The intervention was a 'plus-sport' programme that used sport (soccer in particular), as a basis to attract and retain people to the programme and then delivering welfare and education programmes.	Aimed to improve employability and life skills for marginalized young people in London area (Surrey, Southwest, Central London) who were not currently in education, employment or job training.	Level 2

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
<p>Hillage, J, Johnson C, Newton, B, Maguire, S., Tanner, E. and Purdon, S. (2008) Activity Agreements Synthesis Report DCSF-RR063 https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/10615/1/DCSF-RR063%20%282%29.pdf</p>	<p>Synthesis of 3 evaluation elements: process evaluation; quantitative impact assessment and programme theory evaluation. Examining the Activity and Learning Agreements (ALA) Pilots.</p>	<p>This paper examines how the pilots were set up, delivered and issues with their implementation. It also uses surveys of young people to measure the impact of the pilots in comparison to control areas. Finally, a programme theory element tested key aspects of the policy to identify what worked and what did not and the reasons for this. Pilot programme ran from 2006 to 2008 with an extension to 2011.</p>	<p>Eligibility requirements were that young people needed to be aged 16 or 17 and NEET for a continuous period of at least 20 weeks. From April 2008, the programme was extended to: young people who had been NEET for 13 weeks; targeting recipients of EMA; and vulnerable groups of young people such as carers and the homeless.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>
<p>Maguire, S, Newton, B, Fearn H, Huddleston P, Levesley T, Miller M, Oakley J, Usher T, Williams C and White C (2010) Activity Agreement Pilots: Evaluation of the 2008-2009 extension, RR201, Department for Children, Schools and Families https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/803/1/DCSF-RR201.pdf</p>	<p>Process evaluation See Hillage et al (2008) for a synthesis report of the evaluative elements used to assess the impact of the original pilot programme</p>	<p>Report on the implementation and delivery of the Activity Agreement Pilots extension phase. Evidence was from management information, provider feedback and implementation studies providing a longitudinal and qualitative account of the perspectives of different stakeholders involved in the delivery of AA, case studies in three localities and a cohort analysis. Pilot programme ran from 2006 to 2008 with an extension to 2011.</p>	<p>Eligibility requirements were that young people needed to be aged 16 or 17 and NEET for a continuous period of at least 20 weeks. From April 2008, the programme was extended to: young people who had been NEET for 13 weeks; targeting recipients of EMA; and vulnerable groups of young people such as carers and the homeless.</p>	<p>Level 2</p>

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
<p>Maguire S and Newton B (2011) Activity Agreement Pilots – trialling different approaches to re-engaging young people not in education, employment or training (NEET): Evaluation of the 2009-10 extension, Research Report DFE-RR086, Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2011</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596141/Activity_agreement_pilots_2009_to_2010_extension_evaluation.pdf</p>	<p>Process evaluation See Hillage et al (2008) for a synthesis report of the evaluative elements used to assess the impact of the original pilot programme</p>	<p>2 elements to the study. 1. Implementation studies which provided a detailed, longitudinal account of the perspectives of different stakeholders involved in Activity Agreement (AA) delivery. Case studies examining the interactions between AA and other financial entitlements, young people with learning disabilities and the perceived additional value of AA. Pilot programme ran from 2006 to 2008 with an extension to 2011.</p>	<p>Eligibility requirements were that young people needed to be aged 16 or 17 and NEET for a continuous period of at least 20 weeks. From April 2008, the programme was extended to: young people who had been NEET for 13 weeks; targeting recipients of EMA; and vulnerable groups of young people such as carers and the homeless.</p>	<p>Level 2</p>
<p>Tanner, E, D'Souza, J, Taylor, E, Finch, S, Purdon, S, Maguire, M (2010) Activity Agreement Pilots – Follow-Up Survey of 2007-2008 Participants, Research Report DFE-RR010, Department for Children, Schools and Families, July 2010</p> <p>https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/519080/DFE-RR010-Activity-agreement-pilots-2007-to-2008-follow-up-survey.pdf</p>	<p>Quasi-experimental design Post-programme survey of participants matched to young people in comparator areas</p>	<p>Part of a larger quantitative evaluation of Activity Agreements. Survey data was collected from long-term NEET young people in AA pilot areas and matched to data for similar young people in comparison areas where the pilots were not being implemented. Pilot programme ran from 2006 to 2008 with an extension to 2011.</p>	<p>Eligibility requirements were that young people needed to be aged 16 or 17 and NEET for a continuous period of at least 20 weeks. From April 2008, the programme was extended to: young people who had been NEET for 13 weeks; targeting recipients of EMA; and vulnerable groups of young people such as carers and the homeless.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
Green, A and Hasluck, C.(2009) 'Action to reduce worklessness: what works?' Local Economy 24 (1), 28 – 37	Policy review	This paper addresses two key questions. First, what is, and has been, the contribution of local action to reducing worklessness? Secondly, what initiatives, approaches and packages seem to have made a difference? It draws on a review of evidence on national interventions and local policies to tackle worklessness, focusing on the period since 1997.	Considers workless and disadvantaged people and the role of employers.	N/A
Eichhorst, W and Rinne, U (2016) Promoting youth employment in Europe: Evidence-based policy lessons, IZA Policy Paper No. 119, December 2016 http://ftp.iza.org/pp119.pdf	International comparative review	Draws policy lessons to promote young employment in Europe based on existing empirical evidence. Considers evidence with respect to a) vocational education and training; b) minimum wages and c) employment protection; and d) activation measures and active labor market policies.	Considers young people in general, not specific sub-groups.	N/A
Card D, Kluve J and Weber A (2010), 'Active Labor Market Policy Evaluations: A Meta-Analysis' The Economic Journal, 120, F452-F477 https://www.nber.org/papers/w16173	Meta-analysis of international literature	Meta-analysis of results of over 200 evaluations of active labour market programmes.	No specific consideration of impact of ALMPs on multiply disadvantaged young people but does compare impact of ALMPs on young people's outcomes with other groups. Youth unemployment considered alongside general population of jobless and disadvantaged (the latter classified specifically as low income or low labour market attachment) individuals. Considers different sub-group outcomes where individual studies allow this and examined age of participants where possible. Half of programmes only presented results for mixed age participants but a subset of estimates separates out the impact of ALMPs on younger workers.	N/A

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
O'Higgins, N. (2001) Youth unemployment and employment policy: a global perspective, International Labour Organisation, Oxford: Alden Group	International comparative review	This study looks at the issue of youth unemployment, from a global perspective, and examines the policy responses to it.	Mainly about youth unemployment in general but contains a section examining examples targeting disadvantaged youth. In some cases, this is disadvantage due to low skills, in others for multiple reasons.	N/A
Piopiunik, M. and Ryan, P. (2012) Improving the transition between education/ training and the labour market: What can we learn from various national approaches? EENEE Analytical Report No.13, October 2012 http://www.eenee.de/dms/EENEE/Analytical_Reports/EENEE_AR13.pdf	International comparative review	Draws on extensive literature of evaluations of European active labour market programmes (ALMPs) and pre-vocational policies (pre-vocational learning, special types of apprenticeship, and efforts to increase the supply of training places).	About young people in general, not disadvantaged young people.	N/A
Martin JP and Grubb D (2001) What works and for whom: a review of OECD countries' experiences with active labour market policies, IFAU - Office of Labour Market Policy Evaluation, Working Paper 2001:14	International comparative evidence review	Study considers impact of ALMPs, focussed only on those targeting particular labour market groups.	Range of different groups but including young people in transition from school to work are included as a specific group of interest, specifically training and employment programmes targeted at young unemployed people and apprenticeship training mainly for school leavers. Also examines subsidised employment but excluding that aimed at young people.	N/A

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
Rodríguez-Planas, N (2017) School, drugs, mentoring, and peers: Evidence from a randomized trial in the US. <i>Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization</i> , 139, pp.166-181.	Randomised Control Trial Evaluated the impact of the Quantum Opportunity Project (QOP).	Examined whether QOP was more effective on youths based on their level of ex-ante “bad” high-school peers, defined as those with high predicted-drug use within gender/race/school/treatment cells.	Students entering 9th grade in 1995. Targeted disadvantaged youths from low performing schools. Common barriers included substance use and broken families.	Level 3
Caliendo M and Schmidl R (2015) Youth Unemployment and Active Labor Market Policies in Europe. IZA Discussion Paper Series No. 9488 http://ftp.iza.org/dp9488.pdf	Evidence review	Discussion of the pros and cons of a variety of ALMPs for youth, highlighting factors that promote or impede their effectiveness.	Focuses on the particularity of the youth labour market situation building on findings that ALMPs for adults are not likely to be valid for young people to highlight what evidence exists across four main types of ALMP (labour market entry; labour market training; job search assistance, and; wage subsidies/public sector work programmes). Includes assessment of interventions for unemployed young people and general ALMPs where a sub-set assessment is made for younger participants. Limited discussion of specific interventions for or outcomes of disadvantaged young people.	N/A
Beale I, Bloss C, Thomas A (2008) The longer-term impact of the New Deal for Young People. Department for Work and Pensions. Working Paper No 23	Quasi-Experimental Design to assess long term impacts of NDYP	The effect of NDYP is estimated using 12 monthly cohorts of the starters between July 1999 and June 2000. Each cohort was followed for four years to test whether participation on NDYP reduced their Active Labour Market Benefits (ALMB) claims in both the short and the longer-term. A comparison group was drawn from administrative data with difference-in-differences applied to understand impact.	New Deal for Young People supported those aged 18+ who were out of work and claiming benefits. The more intensive components of the programme were only available to those who were long term unemployed	Level 3

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
<p>Clayton, S, Bambra, C, Gosling, R, Povall, S, Misso, K, Whitehead, M (2011) 'Assembling the evidence jigsaw: insights from a systematic review of UK studies of individual-focused return to work initiatives for disabled and long-term ill people'. BMC Public Health, vol. 11, n. 170 https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1471-2458-11-170</p>	<p>Systematic review</p>	<p>Review of effectiveness of UK individual-focused return to work initiatives (from government) for individuals with a limiting longstanding illness or disability.</p>	<p>Focusses on measures aimed at individuals aged 16 to 65 not employed and on some form of incapacity-related benefit.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>US Department of Labour, Commerce, Education and Health and Human Services (2014) What Works in Job Training: A Synthesis of the Evidence https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/OASP/legacy/files/jdt.pdf</p>	<p>Evidence review</p>	<p>Evidence review to inform the development of an action plan to make the workforce and training system in the US more job-driven, integrated and effective.</p>	<p>Considers interventions aimed at young people in general and some which are focussed specifically on disadvantaged young people. It is not clear for all these interventions what the multiple barriers are, but most commonly these include low incomes and at risk of, or having already dropped out of, education. The focus of the paper is on job training. This includes occupational and skills training integrated into secondary school models as well as specific training programmes to improve attainment and employment opportunities for older young people (ie up to 24 years).</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
Edelman PB and Holzer HJ (2013) Connecting the Disconnected: Improving Education and Employment Outcomes among Disadvantaged Youth, Institute for Research on Poverty Discussion Paper No. 1412-13 http://ftp.iza.org/pp56.pdf	Evidence review	Review of recent trends in employment outcomes for disadvantaged youth and the reasons for these trends. Review of range of policy prescriptions that might improve these outcomes, including policies that aim to a) work with in-school young people to improve education outcomes; b) increase earnings and incentivise labour market participation among young people; c) increase the willingness of employers to hire disadvantaged young people and improve the quality of jobs that they offer.	Examines outcomes for disadvantaged and/or less educated young people.	N/A
Wilson, T (2013) Youth unemployment: Review of training for youth with low qualifications, BIS Research Paper No. 101, February 2013 https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/16453/1/bis-13-608-youth-unemployment-review-of-training-for-young-people-with-low-qualifications.pdf	Evidence review	A review of reviews focused specifically on the effectiveness of training interventions targeted at increasing the employment and skills of young people.	Focuses on young people aged 16-24 who are not in learning or work and who have low or no skills.	N/A
Hasluck C and Green A (2007) What works for whom? A review of evidence and meta-analysis for the Department for Work and Pensions, DWP Research Report no 407, London: Department for Work and Pensions https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130314011325/http://research.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rpots2007-2008/rrep407.pdf	Evidence review	Synthesises the evidence on the effectiveness of New Deal programmes offered to different customer groups, including New Deal for Young People.	Review covers several customer groups, including young people, long-term unemployed adults, older benefit claimants, partners of benefit claimants, disabled people and people with health conditions, ethnic minorities and most disadvantaged.	N/A

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
Kluge, J (2014) Youth labor market interventions. IZA World of Labor	Evidence review	Discussion of how different active labor market policies work, evidence of their effectiveness, and examples of successful programs and the factors that make them successful or not.	Young adults who are long term unemployed, tend to have low qualifications and skills, many are school dropouts without a secondary school degree.	N/A
Miller, C, Cummings, M, Millenky, M, Wiegand, A, Lond, D (2018) 'Laying a Foundation. Four-Year Results From the National YouthBuild Evaluation', MDRC https://www.mdrc.org/sites/default/files/YouthBuild_Final_508%20compliant.pdf	Impact study using random assignment of control and program groups. Also process study and cost study.	The final evaluation report for a 4 year program which examines the operations, impacts and costs of the YouthBuild model.	Program aimed at out-of-school young people aged 16 to 24 who did not complete high school and who meet one of the following criteria: they are from low-income or migrant families, are in or have aged out of foster care, are involved with the criminal justice system, are disabled, or are children of incarcerated parents.	Level 3
NDTi (2014) Supporting young people with mental health problems into employment: A rapid review of the evidence, Preparing for Adulthood paper https://www.ndti.org.uk/uploads/files/Supporting_yp_into_employment_-_Final.pdf	Evidence review	Examined what support helps young people with mental health problems into employment.	Young people with mental problems are the main population of interest, but as the evidence on this group is relatively limited, additional evidence on young people in general, young people with disabilities and people with mental health problems is also considered.	N/A

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
<p>Hughes D, Mann A, Barnes S, Baldauf B, McKeown R (2016) Careers education: International literature review, Education Endowment Foundation, London 2016</p> <p>https://www.educationandemployers.org/research/careers-education-international-literature-review/</p>	<p>International literature review</p>	<p>This was a recommended source and was not sifted by the evidence standards</p>		<p>N/A</p>
<p>Newton, B., Levesley, T., Oakley, J., Fearn, H. and Johnson, C. (2009b) Activity and Learning Agreement Pilots Programme Theory Evaluation; Activity Agreements and Small Step Progression Working Paper 5 DCSF-RR098</p> <p>https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/rr098.pdf</p>	<p>Qualitative case study approach Assessing Activity Agreements Pilot.</p>	<p>Uses matched-case method to allow analysis of responses from young people and their Advisers to explore the characteristics of participants and the activity programme undertaken by young people. Pilot programme ran from 2006 to 2008 with an extension to 2011.</p>	<p>Eligibility requirements were that young people needed to be aged 16 or 17 and not to have been in any form of employment, education or training for a continuous period of at least 20 weeks. AA was therefore aimed at long-term NEET young people. From April 2008, the programme was extended to trial some alternative approaches to raising post-16 participation in employment and learning. The new models tested earlier intervention (targeting young people who had been NEET for 13 rather than 20 weeks); targeting recipients of EMA; and vulnerable groups of young people such as carers and the homeless.</p>	<p>Level 2</p>

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
<p>Newton, B, Johnson, C. and Fearn, H. (2009) Participation in Activity Agreement Provision; Activity and Learning Agreement Pilots Programme Theory Evaluation Working Paper 3 DCSF-RR097 https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/11346/</p>	<p>Qualitative case studies of young people and their advisors Examining the Activity and Learning Agreements (ALA) Pilots.</p>	<p>Young person-centred case study approach used to gather evidence about programme elements relating to: 'menu of choice' (ie choice over which activities the young person focussed on); the use of a discretionary fund to support young people with specific barriers, and; the use of brokers to support young people in accessing the support they need. Pilot programme ran from 2006 to 2008 with an extension to 2011.</p>	<p>Eligibility requirements were that young people needed to be aged 16 or 17 and NEET for a continuous period of at least 20 weeks. From April 2008, the programme was extended to: young people who had been NEET for 13 weeks; targeting recipients of EMA; and vulnerable groups of young people such as carers and the homeless.</p>	<p>Level 2</p>
<p>Mangan, J. and Trendle, B., 2019. Evaluating the effectiveness of a mentoring program for Indigenous trainees in Australia using propensity score analysis. Education Economics, 27(3), pp.308-322</p>	<p>Quantitative evaluation of a mentoring program using propensity score matching techniques.</p>	<p>Uses data from the Direct Entry Level Administration (DELTA) database which tracks the progress of participants in traineeships. Balanced the data between of those who had mentors and those who didn't using propensity score matching. Assessed the Average Treatment Effect (ATE), and Average Treatment effect for the Treated (ATT) estimates using the balanced data. Used a logit model to estimate the impact of treatment along with estimates of the impact of other confounders (gender, disability, language).</p>	<p>Indigenous youth in Australia who entered traineeships in 2006</p>	<p>Level 3</p>

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
SQW Consulting (2010) The Costs and Benefits of Interventions Aimed at Workless Youth: Final Report for the London Development Agency	Evidence review	Determine the costs and benefits of UK and international interventions aimed at youth worklessness and assess how relevant the results are in a London context.	Examined studies related to young people or where young people were an identified sub-set of the target for an intervention. Young people were defined by each study but were all within the 16 to 29 age group (most were younger than 24). The interventions aimed to reduce youth worklessness most by working with young people who were already. Only one study focussed on 'sustainability' or retention.	N/A
Centre for Youth Impact (2018) Can you bottle a good relationship? Learning about mentoring in the Talent Match programme, Big Lottery Fund https://www.youthimpact.uk/news-events/talent-match	Quality framework and learning from a project examining relationships between key workers and young people participating in the Talent Match programme.	This was a recommended source and was not sifted by the evidence standards		
Johnson T, Gritz M, Jackson R, Burghardt J, Boussy C, Leonard J, Orians C (1999) National Job Corps Study: Report on the Process Analysis, Washington, US	Process evaluation of the JobCorps programme. See papers by Schochet et al (2008), Schochet et al (2003), Schochet et al (2001) for impact evaluations of this initiative.	A process analysis of Job Corps during calendar year 1996 through a telephone survey of Job Corps outreach and admissions (OA) counselors, a mail survey of all Job Corps centers, and visits to 23 centers for interviews with staff, observations of activities, and focus group discussions with students and staff.	JobCorps was aimed at disadvantaged youth. Applicants must meet 11 criteria including: be 16 to 24; economically disadvantaged; live in an environment characterized by a disruptive home life, high crime rates, or limited job opportunities; need additional education, training, or job skills; and be judged to have the capability and aspirations to participate in Job Corps.	Level 1

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
<p>Ali, T. (2013), The UK Future Jobs Fund: The Labour Party's Adoption of the Youth Guarantee, Post Keynesian Economic Study Group Working Paper 1106 https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/978b/aef64f84cb36671f5639efdba88186aa8658.pdf</p>	<p>Policy review Linked to Fishwick et al (2011) which provides an impact assessment of the Future Jobs Fund.</p>	<p>Examines the development of employment policy in the United Kingdom and considers the Future Jobs Fund against this context.</p>	<p>Considers all age groups including young people.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>DWP (2012) Impacts and Costs and Benefits of the Future Jobs Fund, Department for Work and Pensions, London https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/223120/impacts_costs_benefits_fjf.pdf</p>	<p>Quasi-experimental design (using Propensity Score Matching) to estimate impact and assess costs and benefits. Part of the evaluation of the Future Jobs Fund.</p>	<p>The purpose of the impact assessment was to: "compare the observed labour market outcomes of Future Jobs Fund (FJF) participants with an estimate of their 'counterfactual' outcomes (the labour market outcomes that would have occurred in an 'alternative world' if they had not started their FJF jobs)." Having established a credible comparison group in the admin data in order to estimate impact, this allowed the DWP to explore the costs and returns to FJF. FJF ran between 2009 and 2010.</p>	<p>Young people aged 18-24 who had been unemployed for 6 months.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>
<p>Fishwick, T., Lane, P. and Gardiner, L. (2011) Future Jobs Fund: an independent national evaluation, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, July 2011</p>	<p>Explored effects of the FJF using data from 7 case study areas. Utilised outcome data and input from stakeholders and participants.</p>	<p>A preliminary view of the impacts, costs and benefits of the FJF, based on a quantitative survey and a simple analysis of JSA off-flows. A more robust analysis is provided in DWP (2012). FJF ran between 2009 and 2010.</p>	<p>Young people aged 18-24 who had been unemployed for 6 months.</p>	<p>Level 2</p>

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
Allaker, J and Cavill, S (2011). Customer experience of the Future Jobs Fund: Findings from a qualitative research study. Department for Work and Pensions. In-house Research Paper No. 1.	Qualitative research using customer feedback on their experiences. Part of the evaluation of the Future Jobs Fund.	Interviews with participants to understand the strengths and weakness of the delivery of the policy and lessons learnt from a customer's viewpoint. FJF ran between 2009 and 2010.	Young people aged 18-24 who had been unemployed for 6 months.	Level 2
Woodgate, RL, Morakinyo, O and Martin, K.M., (2017) Interventions for youth aging out of care: A scoping review. Children and Youth Services Review, 82, pp.280-300	Systematic review.	Review of housing, employment, education, mentorship, independent living, and health interventions.	Youth (16-30 yrs) who are aging out of the child welfare system within developed countries. Examined interventions aimed at youth transitioning out of care, but excluded pregnant youth, youth in the criminal justice system, and emancipated youth.	N/A
Green A, Atfield G, Barnes SA (2015) Employer Involvement and Engagement Talent Match Case Study Theme Report, Sheffield https://www4.shu.ac.uk/research/cresr/sites/shu.ac.uk/files/tm-employer-involvement-engagement-2015.pdf	Findings from case study research examining employer involvement with Talent Match partnerships.	This was a recommended source and was not sifted by the evidence standards		

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
<p>Schochet, PZ, Burghardt, J and McConnell, S (2008) Does Job Corps work? Impact findings from the National Job Corps Study, American Economic Review, 98:5, p. 1864–1886</p>	<p>Randomised Control Trial Impact assessment of JobCorps initiative.</p>	<p>Study findings were based on the comparisons of the outcomes of program and control group members using survey data collected during the four years after random assignment, and administrative earnings data covering the nine years after random assignment. The administrative earnings data included two forms of tax data: (1) 1993 to 2003 annual summary earnings records (SER) data reported by employers to the Internal Revenue Service and (2) 1999 to 2001 quarterly wage records reported by employers to state unemployment insurance (UI) agencies in 22 randomly selected states. Surveys were conducted at baseline (shortly after random assignment) and at 12, 30, and 48 months after random assignment. Program intake was from 1994 to 1997.</p>	<p>JobCorps was aimed at disadvantaged youth. Applicants must meet 11 criteria including: be 16 to 24; economically disadvantaged; live in an environment characterized by a disruptive home life, high crime rates, or limited job opportunities; need additional education, training, or job skills; and be judged to have the capability and aspirations to participate in Job Corps.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>
<p>Schochet, P.Z., McConnell, S. and Burghardt, J. (2003) National Job Corps Study: Findings using administrative earnings records data final report, Mathematica Policy Research report submitted to US Department of Labour</p>	<p>Randomised Control Trial Impact assessment of JobCorps initiative.</p>	<p>This paper focusses on participant earnings by examining administrative earnings records and how these compared to each other and to the survey data collected on earnings. Program intake was from 1994 to 1997.</p>	<p>JobCorps was aimed at disadvantaged youth. Applicants must meet 11 criteria including: be 16 to 24; economically disadvantaged; live in an environment characterized by a disruptive home life, high crime rates, or limited job opportunities; need additional education, training, or job skills; and be judged to have the capability and aspirations to participate in Job Corps.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>

Bibliographic details	Brief description of methodology	Abstract/Summary of Content	Focus on disadvantaged young people	Standard of evidence ²¹
<p>Kluge, J., Puerto, S., Robalino, D., Romero, J.M., Rother, F., Stoterau, J., Weidenkaff, F. and Witte, M. (2019) Do youth employment programs improve labour market outcomes, World Development, 114, pp.237-253 http://ftp.iza.org/dp10263.pdf</p>	<p>Meta-analysis</p>	<p>Review of studies investigating the impact of 4 types of specific intervention: (i) training and skills development; (ii) entrepreneurship promotion; (iii) employment services; and (iv) subsidised employment interventions. To be included, interventions must aim to promote employment and/or earnings/wage growth among the target population, rather than simply providing income support Studies included ranged from grey literature to articles in academic journals, published or posted between 1990 and 2014.</p>	<p>ALMPs designed for – or primarily target – young women and men aged 15 to 35 and who have low levels of skills, limited work experience or general labour market disadvantage. ; (ii) target unemployed youth or those with low levels of skills or limited work experience or who are generally disadvantaged in the labor market.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Gritz, R., M and Johnson, T. (2001) National Job Corps Study: Effects on earnings for students achieving key program milestones, Battelle Memorial Institute report submitted to US Department of Labour, June 2001</p>	<p>Randomised Control Trial Impact assessment of JobCorps initiative.</p>	<p>Examines the impact of specific programmatic achievements on earnings.</p>	<p>JobCorps was aimed at disadvantaged youth. Applicants must meet 11 criteria including: be 16 to 24; economically disadvantaged; live in an environment characterized by a disruptive home life, high crime rates, or limited job opportunities; need additional education, training, or job skills; and be judged to have the capability and aspirations to participate in Job Corps.</p>	<p>Level 3</p>