



Department  
for Education

# **Identify and support young people at risk of being NEET**

**Local authority good practice guidance:  
Using Risk of NEET Indicators (RONI) to  
support young people to participate in  
education, employment and training**

**January 2025**

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## These organisations contributed to the development of this guidance

### Local and Combined Authorities

Achieving for Children (Kingston and Richmond)	Enfield Council
Barking and Dagenham Council	Essex County Council
Barnsley Council	Gloucestershire County Council
Birmingham City Council	Greater Manchester Combined Authority
Blackburn with Darwen Council	Hackney Council
Blackpool Council	Hampshire County Council
Bracknell Forest Council	Havering Council
Brighter Futures for Children (Reading)	Herefordshire Council
Bury Council	Hillingdon Council
Calderdale Council	Hull City Council
Cambridgeshire County Council	Islington Council
Career Connect	Kensington and Chelsea Council
Central Bedfordshire Council	Kingston Council
Cheshire East Council	Kirklees Council
Cheshire West and Chester Council	Lancashire County Council
City of Doncaster Council	Learning Trust (Hackney)
CK Careers (Calderdale and Kirklees)	Leeds City Council
Cumbria County Council	Leicester City Council
Derby City Council	Liverpool City Council
Derbyshire County Council	Manchester City Council
Durham County Council	Merton Council
East Sussex County Council	Newham Council
Education Development Trust	Norfolk County Council

Northumberland County Council  
Oldham Council  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Portsmouth City Council  
Richmond and Wandsworth Councils  
Right to Succeed (Blackpool)  
Rotherham Council  
Royal Borough of Greenwich Council  
Salford City Council  
Sefton Council  
Sheffield City Council  
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council  
South Tyneside Council  
Southampton City Council  
Southend-on-Sea City Council  
St Helens Borough Council  
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council  
Stoke-on-Trent City Council  
Sutton Council  
Swindon Borough Council

Telford and Wrekin Council  
Trafford Council  
Warrington Borough Council  
West Berkshire Council  
West Midlands Combined Authority  
Wiltshire Council  
Wirral Council  
Wolverhampton City Council  
Worcester Children First  
Worcestershire County Council

### **Other Organisations**

Careers and Enterprise Company  
Careers Leaders and Careers Hubs  
The King's Trust  
Learning and Work Institute  
Local Government Association  
Youth Employment UK  
Youth Futures Foundation

## Summary

This publication provides non-statutory guidance from the Department for Education. It has been produced to help local authorities identify and support at-risk young people before they become Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET). These young people can then be monitored and supported to help them stay in education and make a smooth transition into sustainable post-16 options.

## Who this publication is for

This guidance is for:

- Staff in local authorities who are responsible for delivering the statutory duties to ensure the participation of young people up to age 18.
- School and college leaders and staff, including those responsible for careers education and supporting students to transition into post-16 learning. This includes Careers Leaders, Heads of Year, Form tutors, Pastoral Head of Year, SENCO, and those designated both for Safeguarding and Looked After Children.

Within this guidance, the terms '**education institutions**', '**education establishments**' and '**schools**' are used to refer to all school-age settings, including: all mainstream schools (maintained and academies, free schools, independent schools), maintained and independent special schools, pupil referral units (PRUs), alternative provision, specialist social, emotional and mental health provision, AP academies and hospital schools.

## Main points

This government is determined that every young person should have the opportunity to fulfil their potential. The Government, local authorities, and education providers want to ensure that, after they finish compulsory schooling, young people can participate in high quality education, training and employment routes – and onto fulfilling work.

This guidance aims to support local authorities, education institutions and partners to work smarter by using data to proactively identify and support young people who are at risk of being NEET. Supporting effective transition from Year 11 into post-16 is a priority as this is a high-risk stage for young people. The guidance includes the following:

1. 10 core principles to support an effective RONI approach
2. Using data to identify young people who are at risk of NEET
3. A consistent, effective process to identify at risk young people
4. How and why to involve education institutions in the RONI process
5. Core principles of good support for young people at risk of NEET

## Introduction

This good practice guide provides a benchmark of effective practice for organisations using a Risk of NEET Indicator, or RONI, tool. The content is based on evidence and insights from partners including local authorities, education providers and experts, and practitioners in youth employment and careers education.

Many local authorities, schools and colleges already use a RONI to identify young people at-risk of becoming NEET. These young people can then be monitored and supported to help them stay in education and training. The department wants to ensure that every young person has the chance to fulfil their potential and progress into further learning and onto fulfilling work. Supporting at-risk young people benefits the UK economy, society, and the quality of life and future prosperity and health of our young people.

Local authorities, schools, post-16 providers and partners all play a role to support young people's journeys towards further learning and fulfilling work. Effective use of a RONI approach depends on the collaboration between these partners. While this guide is primarily for a local authority audience, it can help all partners to be clear on their roles and to work effectively together. Sections 4 and 5 are particularly relevant to staff in education institutions who are responsible for careers education and supporting young people to transition into post-16.

This guide focusses primarily on the transition into post-16. But getting the setting and choices right for young people at post-16 is also crucial to prevent NEET at age 18+. This is a government priority: we are developing a new Youth Guarantee for all young people aged 18-21 to ensure they can access quality training opportunities, an apprenticeship or employment support. The Youth Guarantee is complemented by plans for a new national jobs and careers service to help get more people into work, and the launch of Skills England to open up new opportunities for young people.

The Youth Guarantee will break down barriers to opportunity for all young people, transforming life chances and helping them to progress into further learning and onto fulfilling work. Enabling a RONI approach supports this strategy to lower the number of young people not learning or earning. It supports LAs, schools and partners to sustain participation before the age of 18 and to prevent disengagement at the point of transition into post-16. This will in turn help to reduce young people becoming NEET at age 18+.

A RONI approach will inform the development of the Youth Guarantee. The same core principles of prevention underpin both policies. These principles and ways of working should be applied to the Youth Guarantee to support transition onto further learning and fulfilling work at age 18. For example, this could include monitoring risk characteristics at 16-18 and putting in place preventative support if needed.

## What is a Risk of NEET Indicator?

- A RONI is a process that uses data about young people, collected by education providers and local authorities, to identify those at increased risk of becoming NEET.
- Using a list of characteristics that are associated with an increasing likelihood of becoming NEET, young people with those risk factors can be identified.
- Young people identified as at risk can be monitored and supported to help them stay in school and to effectively transition into post-16 education/training.

### The cost of NEET

- [Research](#) suggests that time spent NEET leads to reduced life chances including lower future wages, a higher likelihood of becoming unemployed or committing crime, and lower levels of physical and mental health. These long-term impacts of being NEET as a young person have significant costs.
- NEET status is 'sticky'; 18-24 year olds who experience a 3-month spell of being NEET are 75% more likely than others to be NEET after 12 months ([Impetus, 2019](#)) with a long-term impact on lifetime earnings.

References<sup>1,2</sup>

## Why use a RONI?

Young people spending any time NEET at any age is bad for society, for the economy, and for the future of our young generation. Periods spent NEET can be bad for individuals' future prospects, earnings, and their confidence and well-being. There is also a cost to the economy for NEET young people, including missed income, productivity and the cost of support to move them into positive destinations. Identifying and supporting young people at risk can help prevent these negative outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Health England, *Local action on health inequalities: Reducing the number of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET)*, Health Equity Evidence Review 3, September 2014: [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dd2a040f0b65d88634a03/Review3\\_NEETs\\_health\\_inequalities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7dd2a040f0b65d88634a03/Review3_NEETs_health_inequalities.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *Youth Jobs Gap: The long-term NEET population. Research Briefing 6*. Impetus, September 2019: <https://impetus-org.files.svdcdn.com/production/assets/publications/Youth-Jobs-Gap-The-Long-Term-NEET-Population.pdf>



## Benefits of a RONI approach:

- Helps ensure that disadvantaged at-risk young people (many with complex needs) are supported to stay in education and transition into appropriate post-16 options.
- Saves money – preventing drop-out is more impactful and cost-effective than picking up the pieces once a young person has disengaged. A RONI data approach can also drive efficient use of resources by targeting support on young people at risk of disengaging – helping them to remain in education.
- Supports local authorities to take an upstream, preventative approach to how they deliver their statutory participation duties.
- Supports collaboration between Local authorities, schools, colleges and partners to maximise their impact in supporting a young person's journey.
- Can help to ensure young people's needs are promptly and holistically addressed. E.g., by identifying and supporting those with poor mental health and who are at risk of NEET, or by helping education institutions to shape the curriculum and tailor support to ensure young people's learning and circumstantial needs are met.
- Informs the evaluation of the effectiveness of careers and pastoral support available to young people.
- Informs local economic development discussions. E.g. Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs) that bring together local businesses, providers and stakeholders to align post-16 technical education and training with local labour market needs.

## Local authority's statutory duties

Local authorities have [statutory duties](#) to “encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education or training” until they are 18 years old, or 25 years old if they have an education, health and care plan (EHCP). Local Authorities must “collect information about young people in their area in order to identify those who are not participating, or who are at risk of not doing so, and to target their resources on those who need them most.” They must also ensure that every young person completing compulsory education receives an offer, by the end of September, of an appropriate place in post-16 education or training.<sup>3</sup>

To deliver these duties, some local authorities have developed RONI tools to identify, monitor and support young people at risk of disengaging. A preventative approach to keeping young people in education is more straightforward and less costly than reengaging those who drop out. This guidance draws on effective RONI approaches.

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/participation-of-young-people-education-employment-and-training>

There is considerable variation among councils in capturing and acting on NEET risk factors. [Published data](#) at the end of 2022<sup>4</sup> shows that the percentage of young people recorded as having a vulnerable characteristic varies from 10% of the cohort to none. This guidance can support an improved uptake and consistency in RONI approaches.

## **Gatsby Benchmarks: careers provision in schools**

Focussing on at risk of NEET young people in their cohort is a crucial part of how schools and colleges ensure effective transitions for young people.

The [Gatsby Benchmarks](#)<sup>5</sup> are a framework that define the best careers provision in secondary schools and colleges. Schools that meet the benchmarks perform better at supporting students into post-16 pathways, so have fewer young people NEET. Benchmark 3 encourages schools to collect and maintain accurate data on the destinations of young people for 3 years after they leave school.

The Careers and Enterprise Company's (CEC) '[Ready for the Future report](#)' (2022)<sup>6</sup> showed that for each Gatsby Benchmark achieved by a school or college, the likelihood of a young person being NEET is reduced by 1.1%. The relationship is twice as strong in the quarter of schools with the most economically disadvantaged intake, as measured by free school meal entitlement. The CEC estimate that, if this was represented across all benchmarks in all schools, such a level of careers guidance would be worth £150m in annual fiscal savings from lifetime costs of those NEET alone. A similar relationship has been observed using post-18 destinations and also the Millennium Cohort study for post-16 destinations in the CEC's latest annual report [Now and Next](#) (2024).<sup>7</sup>

While this guidance focuses primarily on young people in Year 10 and Year 11, risk of NEET begins earlier. Early intervention by schools, e.g., from year 7 onwards, is key to preventing NEET. The CEC is developing work to support a RONI approach in schools. This work compliments the RONI approach in local authorities and the intention is to ensure that the processes align. A RONI approach can also help to keep young people in education and training in years 12 and 13. Understanding their needs and individual risk factors enables support to be tailored to help young people in post-16 settings to make a smooth transition into further learning and onto fulfilling work.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-people-neet-comparative-data-scorecard>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/careers-leaders/gatsby-benchmarks/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/ready-for-the-future-a-review-of-careers-education-in-england-2021-22/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/our-evidence/evidence-and-reports/careers-education-2022-23-now-next/>

# Section One: 10 principles to support an effective RONI approach

## 1. Clear data and accountability

- A RONI process is only as effective as the data used. Understanding the range of data on young people, and ensuring it is consistently and effectively gathered, underpins the RONI approach.
- Local authorities should record young people's risk factors and support needs, to ensure that the RONI process is robust.
- This approach is underpinned by proactive engagement and communication with schools and post-16 providers, and by clear roles and processes which support effective data sharing.
- Local authorities can continue exploring new and innovative ways to improve data collected.

## 2. Partnership approach with education institutions

- Education institutions are essential to an effective RONI approach. Build strong relationships with named colleagues in schools. E.g., the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Careers Leaders, and those responsible for transition.
- All partners need to understand their role and what they are getting from the partnership. Approach collaboration with education institutions as equal partners, and seek a 'win-win', to enable strong, effective partnerships. This guidance includes ideas for how to do this.
- Education institution staff know student's individual needs. They can enhance data-based risk measures and can tailor support to address student's barriers.
- Build data sharing flows both to and from education institutions. This provides a return and an incentive for engagement with data gathering and support for at risk young people.

## 3. Have a transition policy

- Developing a transition policy can achieve a coordinated approach to supporting transition by bringing together the key partners to better understand each other's priorities, drivers and levers.
- A clear policy can bring together the RONI process and transition strategy in a single document. It can set out the purpose of collaboration, expectations, roles and data collection timelines. This supports alignment to ensure the effective use of intelligence gained through data sharing.

- A policy can set a minimum consistent standard for transition support, helping partners to meet the needs of all young people to achieve positive sustainable destinations.
- Publicising your policy helps communicate the value of the RONI and can drive and support a focus on transition and disadvantage among SLTs in schools and post-16 providers.

#### 4. Identify and support young people at risk of NEET

- Using a RONI allows you to develop a ‘whole person’ approach; tailoring support to individuals’ needs and supporting collaboration with schools, colleges and partners to maximise their impact and expertise in supporting a young person’s education journey.
- Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, those who are vulnerable, and those with multiple, complex needs, are all over-represented in the NEET cohort.

#### 5. Establish what works and for whom

- Improving your knowledge of the interventions that work for different groups of marginalised young people will help you improve impact and efficiencies.
- As the Institute for Employment Studies have shown, it is critical that young people at risk are offered opportunities, activities and services that interest them, to attract them to voluntarily engage with support.<sup>8</sup>
- A one-size-fits-all approach to employment programmes and careers advice often fails to recognise the barriers and needs faced by some groups of young people.
- Tools like the Youth Futures Foundation’s [Youth Employment Toolkit](https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/toolkit/)<sup>9</sup> provide up-to-date evidence. You can test and refine support models by measuring the impact of interventions using destinations data and sharing learnings with one another.

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<sup>8</sup> Supporting disadvantaged young people into meaningful work: An initial evidence review to identify what works and inform good practice among practitioners and employers, Institute for Employment Studies, prepared for the Youth Futures Foundation, 2020. <https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/news/new-research-highlights-how-to-help-young-people-into-work/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/toolkit/>

## 6. Personalise support offered

- Effective provision is tailored to the young person, takes account of background information, and responds to individual needs to create an appropriate path back into education or training.
- Achievable outcomes can be agreed with the young person and expressed in an individual plan. On-going needs assessments allow the support plan to develop with the young person. Section 5 of this guidance includes tips for how to do this and key roles and responsibilities.
- Interventions supporting young people into destinations are most effective when support continues to help the young person stay there.

## 7. Ensure suitable provision is available locally

- Local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that sufficient suitable provision is available locally. You can show strategic leadership and coordinate this e.g. by mapping funding pathways, identifying gaps and future-proofing local provision.
- Establishing relationships, regular meetings and communication routes with education and training providers can also support a comprehensive local offer.
- You can coordinate with providers to ensure that young people seeking a place are able to access one at the start of the academic year. This can include working with providers to keep track of waiting lists, and to ensure that young people receive follow ups and are offered appropriate post-16 options.
- Some areas have established a strategic board to lead a review of current 16-19 provision, provide oversight and drive the development of future provision.
- Ensuring that quality education and training pathways are available, particularly for those young people who are less likely to be successful at academic Level 3 qualifications, is necessary to ensure appropriate pathways for all. This could include enhancing provision below Level 2 e.g., by facilitating local collaborations, taking steps to put provision on a stable funded footing and ensuring availability of specific provision for those with complex needs.

## 8. Enable effective data sharing

- Put in place the structures, relationships and systems that enable effective data sharing between partners in support of the RONI process.
- Local authorities, education institutions and providers regularly share information about young people, including their risk-factors, learning records and destinations.
- Local authorities can play a leadership role to simplify processes and ensure that the necessary Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs), and relationships are in place. This may also include putting in place systems to securely share sensitive data.

- Improving the use of data that you already collect on young people can be a key step. RON identification can be improved by integrating other, often separate, stand-alone statutory council data collections as part of the RONI. E.g., those for young people with SEND, and for Looked after children / children in care.

## **9. Seek out funding and partnerships to deliver effective support for young people**

- Some areas have developed partnerships to jointly-fund support for young people's transition and retention in education or training and to prevent NEET.
- Keep aware of national and local funding opportunities and build relationships with colleagues who are responsible for commissioning and funding bids. Exploring partnerships with relevant bodies (e.g., in health, criminal justice, local government and economic development, etc.) can also help to resource support.
- Devolution also brings opportunities for local partners (combined and local authorities), where appropriate, to work together to maximise funding opportunities to support NEET prevention and re-engagement activities.
- Local Careers Hubs can also provide strategic inputs, support, funding and resources related to effective preventative support for young people.

## **10. Monitor impact and invest in what works**

- Local authorities, schools and colleges can review destinations and outcomes of young people identified as being at risk of NEET. This can help you to develop a picture of which routes and support are effective for different young people.
- This information can be fed back to pastoral teams in schools to help them tailor their support offer. It can also inform a strategic approach to ensure that suitable provision is available locally (principle 7 above).
- E.g., it can be used to shape decisions about the funding of local provision and support, and to ensure that local provision meets the needs of the population, as part of your engagement with local providers.

## Section Two: Using data to identify young people who are at risk of NEET

This section sets out the main NEET risk factors to help local authorities and schools develop a consistent approach to carrying out a RONI. These risk factors can be adapted to suit local demographics, the needs of young people, and available data. Young people with certain characteristics are more at risk of being NEET. The risk increases for those with multiple risk factors. These risk factors include:

- low educational attainment (not achieving 4 to 9 at GCSE)
- poor attendance at school
- disrupted education e.g. multiple school moves
- unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes towards school
- low self-confidence
- care experienced / looked after children and those with social care support
- special educational needs (SEN), learning difficulties or disabilities
- teenage mothers and pregnant teens
- young carers
- health problems, especially mental health problems
- coming from a low-income family
- some ethnic minority groups, particularly black and mixed ethnicity
- being in a pupil referral unit or alternative provision
- those who experience temporary or permanent exclusion
- refugees and asylum seekers
- those with English as an additional language (EAL)
- substance / alcohol misuse
- elective home educated (EHE)
- contact with the criminal justice system e.g. supervision by a youth offending team
- identified as at risk of exploitation
- homeless

Additional risk factors can also be good predictors of NEET. Local authorities and schools are aware of these factors from experience, but they may not be on traditional lists of risks. For example:

- having siblings who are NEET
- young people who have recently moved into an area with no historical links there
- young people with parents who are known to probation services
- young people whose parents are unemployed
- low parental involvement in education

Young people who were not educated in the area can be at risk because their education may have been disrupted and they may not have a relationship with local education institutions. But their risk is also increased because the local authority often holds little data on them. In these cases, communicating with other local authorities, schools and partners is important. Risk factors may also be weighted to reflect their relative contributions to potential poor outcomes.

## Risk factor selection and keeping up to date

It is important to review risk factors regularly and take account of emerging research, as risk factors may change over time. For example, cases of poor mental health in NEET young people are an increasingly identified risk factor. Sexual orientation and gender identity are also increasingly common. Different risk factors will also be more prevalent in some areas than others.

Local authorities that choose to develop their own individualised RONI process will need to take account of local specificities. The NCCIS RONI tool (see below) will support all local authorities by providing each a list of at-risk young people based on a generalised estimate of key risk factors, taking account of recent emerging research in this space.

Recent [research by the National Centre for Social Research](#)<sup>10</sup> has explored the degree of overlap between different forms of marginalisation among young people (aged 13 to 25) in England, and how experiencing multiple types of marginalisation increases NEET risk. Researchers identified five key risk factors that strongly associated with NEET status:

- Not having an academic qualification above level 1.
- Having a limiting disability.
- Having a child.
- Having a mental health condition.
- Having been identified as having Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Researchers identified two clusters that could be a potential focus, given they generate a substantial increase in risk due to the presence of four of the six most influential risk factors, and that these overlaps of risk factors are relatively common in the population:

- Having been identified as SEN and not having an academic qualification above level 1 (experienced by 12% of the population of young people).

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<sup>10</sup> *Risk factors for being NEET among young people*, National Centre for Social Research, Prepared for: Youth Futures Foundation, December 2023: <https://natcen.ac.uk/publications/risk-factors-being-neet-among-young-people>



- Having a limiting disability and poor mental health (experienced by 8% of young people).

Research also shows some groups of young people are at greater risk of NEET, due to the different types and numbers of risk factors they face. Particularly at risk were those from low-income households, young people of black or mixed ethnicity, as well as people of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, and people who identified their sexual orientation as homosexual, bisexual or 'other'. However, this is not to say that everyone in a particular group will experience the same risk of being NEET. It is important to consider the full range of individual risk factors rather than treating the whole group in the same way.

[Youth Futures Foundation's data dashboard](#)<sup>11</sup> is an interactive tool showing risk factors, and clusters of factors, by local authority. This can help you to identify and consider key local risks as you develop and contextualise your RONI approach. The Department for Education's report '[Characteristics of young people who are long-term NEET](#)'<sup>12</sup> can help you to consider key risk factors that are associated with long-term NEET status.

Over time, local authorities can develop processes for reviewing how accurate different factors are at predicting NEET, adjusting your RONI process accordingly. Monitoring pupils as they progress from Year 11 to Year 13 allows you to understand the links between those at risk and those who became NEET. It also supports good careers guidance in schools as part of the Gatsby Benchmarks.

## Accurately recording data

It is important to record information about young people accurately and consistently to identify risk factors. This includes information about young people who have SEND and SEN support needs, are care experienced, are in alternative provision and those with poor mental health.

General principles that can support accurate and timely reporting include:

- Clarity around roles, responsibilities and timelines for tracking young people.
- Supporting collaboration and effective performance management across council teams with responsibility for vulnerable cohorts, including looked after children, care leavers, young offenders and SEND, etc.
- Building strong relationships with education institutions and the voluntary sector, for example, by sharing local authority data back to schools and post-16 providers, where appropriate, to ensure that young people's needs are understood and to build the relevance and value in data sharing and risk identification.

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<sup>11</sup> <https://data.youthfuturesfoundation.org/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/characteristics-of-young-people-who-are-long-term-neet>

- Clear data sharing processes and agreements in place which all staff, schools and post-16 providers understand.
- Prioritising information technology to support local intelligence gathering.

## Other data sources

Local authorities can supplement the RONI with information collected throughout the year about young people's post-16 plans. As part of the September Guarantee duties, all local authorities must track which young people have received a post-16 offer of a place.

Education institutions, and many local authorities, also collect 'intended destinations' data. The department provides all schools access to Compass+, a Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) resource, that assists Careers Leaders to gather this data and local authorities to receive it. The annex includes a calendar of key annual data collection contacts with providers.

## Levels of data

The list of 'at risk' young people generated by the data-driven RONI process can be used as a first phase or indicative list. Working closely with staff in education institutions who know the young people, this initial RON list can be reviewed and refined. School staff will be aware of both risk factors (e.g. a recent bereavement), but also protective factors (e.g. a supportive family member), not captured in a dataset. The different levels of information can be described as a three-layer process.

1. **'Core' data** that provides a reliable indicator of risk of NEET: a simple, consistent entry-point for all organisations including those not currently using a RONI.
2. **'Supplementary' data** that organisations may want to include once RONI 'core' risk factors are embedded. Adding local contextual and demographic data can add value and support a more nuanced, tailored identification of young people's risk. There may be barriers to accessing and using this basket of data.
3. **Beyond data** i.e. individual details about young people that education institution staff will know. This information makes the RON list tailored and reflective of each young person's personal circumstances. It also enables helpful 'protective factors' to be incorporated into the risk assessment and potential interventions.

## NCCIS RONI tool

The department is supporting local authorities and their partners to identify and support at-risk young people, by building a RONI tool. The RONI will be part of the NCCIS database system that local authorities use to transfer young people's tracking data to the department. The RONI tool will generate a list of at-risk young people based on risk factors including personal characteristics and attendance. This will ensure that all local

authorities can effectively identify young people at risk of NEET, providing a basis to work with education institutions to refine the 'RON' list and target support where it is needed.

The RONI tool in NCCIS will provide each local authority with a RON list of young people using 'core' data. It will provide local authorities with information on Year 10 and Year 11 pupils twice yearly (in January and August) from the National Pupil Database. This information includes student's entitlement to Free School Meals, school absences, school exclusions, 'Looked After' status and whether students are classified as Children in Need. This information will be matched with risk factors already collected in NCCIS to give a holistic picture of risk. Local authorities may want to customise this with 'supplementary' data e.g., from social care or youth justice sources.

Local authorities can refine the RON list by working with education institution staff and using their knowledge about the young people's personal circumstances.

## **Data Sharing**

An effective RONI process relies on the smooth, efficient and timely sharing of information between partners. To support this, local authorities can lead and embed a strategic approach to the collection and use of data in the local area. Information shared to identify and support young people at risk of NEET is part of a wider system of data shared between partners. For example, information about young people's risk-factors, learning records and destinations may be shared between partners for a range of purposes, including:

- From education institutions to the local authority
- From local authorities to education institutions
- Between education institutions
- Between local authorities
- Between a combined authority and the local authority / other partners

To develop a holistic picture of each young person's risk factors, and their support needs, it is necessary to understand and build on these systems and, wherever possible, to make use of the information being collected. Local authorities can enable this by:

- Playing a leadership role locally to embed effective data sharing practices
- Making effective use of all the data being collected by the local authority.

## **Make effective use of all data collected by the local authority**

Local authorities can greatly improve RONI risk factor identification by improving the use of data that you already hold on young people. In many areas statutory data collections, including those for participation tracking, for young people with SEND, and for Looked

after children / children in care, are managed in separate, database systems that cannot communicate with other council databases.

However, this information provides key risk factors for NEET. RON identification can be greatly improved by sharing information between these council teams, e.g., by linking together these separate, stand-alone data collections. If an automated solution is not available, improving data sharing processes between the council teams can be explored.

## **Local leadership on data sharing**

Local authorities can play a leadership role to drive collaboration on the shared challenge of embedding a RONI process and post-16 transition strategy. Most councils have Data Sharing Agreements (DSAs) in place with local education institutions and have established systems for securely sharing sensitive data. Many areas also have DSAs in place to facilitate data sharing with other local authorities.

This leadership role can also include taking steps to simplify existing processes, for example around the collection of destinations data (see below). Building data sharing flows from and to education institutions can reduce bureaucracy and free up staff capacity to analyse the data and use it to drive improvements to support students and prepare them for transitions.

## **Education institutions sharing information with local authorities**

Statutory guidance on the Participation of young people in education, employment or training states that:

Local authorities must collect information about young people in their area in order to identify those who are not participating and to target their resources on those who need them most... [and] should also collect information about those who are at risk of becoming NEET.

As part of these duties, education institutions regularly share data with local authorities. Under Section 72 of the Education and Skills Act (ESA) 2008, educational institutions are under a statutory duty to provide information to local authorities about their students, in order for the local authority to deliver their duties under the ESA to provide support services to young persons and young adults to encourage, enable or assist their effective participation in education or training.

If a local authority asks an education institution for information needed to fulfil their duties, about young people living in the area, the institution has a corresponding duty to provide the information. A RONI process is the main way that local authorities can identify young people at risk of not participating. Therefore, any data requested for RONI, e.g., data about young people's risk factors, should be provided by education institutions as per the statutory guidance.

## **Local authorities sharing information with education institutions**

To support transition, local authorities share young people's information with education institutions in several ways. As part of embedding a post-16 transition strategy and RONI approach, there are opportunities to simplify and better join-up these processes.

- A RONI process requires local authorities to share information about young people's characteristics and risk-factors back with education institutions (see section three). This enables school staff to refine the 'at risk' or RON list using their knowledge of individual students and to put in place appropriate support.
- Schools and local authorities also share information on young people's support needs with post-16 settings, so they can receive appropriate support to transition and settle (taking advice from legal teams, and with an appropriate DSA).
- Education institutions and local authorities collect destinations data: To measure the effectiveness of their careers programme and meet Gatsby Benchmark 3, for three years after they leave school, schools collect information on pupil's destinations. For local authorities, collecting information on young people's intended, immediate and sustained destinations is also a key part of tracking activity to support the post-16 participation duties, and can also be used as a risk indicator for RONI.

In this context there are opportunities for closer collaboration and join up – to improve RONI processes and support for at risk young people. For example:

- Sharing information with the education institutions who provide it can build the relevance and value in sharing and ensure that all partners understand young people's needs. This ensures better support for those at risk (sections four and five cover the key role that education institutions play in the RONI process).
- By supporting schools to collect destinations data you can also boost collaboration and increase their engagement in the RONI approach (where reciprocal data sharing agreements are in place, to enable the sharing of information on young people's destinations and risk factors).

## **Local authorities sharing destinations data with education institutions**

Local authorities can show leadership on the collection and use of data locally by taking steps to simplify the processes that underpin the flow of data between partners. By reducing this bureaucracy, you can in turn increase the capacity of school staff to focus on supporting students and preparing them for transitions.

Taking advice from their legal teams, local authorities can simplify processes around the collection of destinations data. E.g. to avoid the need for data sharing directly between educational establishments, local authorities can act as a collector of data from educational establishments and then share it back with them. This saves time and

resource. Some local authorities have also used the 'public task' basis for processing destinations data in this way.

If the privacy notice covers intended data sharing activities post-collection, information about young people's destinations can be shared back with education institutions, without the need to have previously sought consent from the young people before they leave school in Year 11. By helping schools to meet the Gatsby BM3 requirement in this way, local authorities can build a reciprocal relationship and incentivise engagement with the data gathering and RONI process to support post-16 transition.

Using the 'public task' basis for processing can also potentially support partners to access a broader range of data sets (e.g. social services, health and police) which contribute to risk measures such as RONI. Further information on public task and other lawful bases for processing are available from [the ICO website](#).<sup>13</sup>

## Good Practice Case Studies

### Streamlined data sharing between education providers and local authorities, northern combined authority

A northern combined authority (CA) improved local tracking and data sharing processes by leading a new streamlined data collection and return process. Consultation with partners involved in the data journey identified key challenges. There was a need to streamline the tracking system, improve data resources available to education institutions, and help them better understand what works in achieving positive transitions for all students.

A process was created whereby local authorities continue as collectors of 'destination' data from educational establishments (as is their statutory duty under the ESA 2008) and then act as the central conduit to share this information back with them. This allows the educational establishments to fulfil their Gatsby BM3 requirements, as part of a streamlined process, which in turn enables greater staff capacity to focus on supporting students:

- The need for student consent for local authorities to share destinations data back with their own education institutions can be avoided if this is in line with the Privacy Notice for the statutory collection - so students are aware of how their data may be used.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/uk-gdpr-guidance-and-resources/lawful-basis/a-guide-to-lawful-basis/lawful-basis-for-processing/>

- In this example, data is shared with and by the local authority, which removes the reliance on multiple direct data shares, and associated data sharing agreements, between individual education institutions and/or providers.

Consultation highlighted a lack of consistency in local data processes. Barriers included different processes and timescales across the city region, poor understanding of roles and responsibilities and multiple data sharing arrangements. To meet their Gatsby BM3 requirements, schools were spending significant time both obtaining individual student consent and collecting information on student destinations from multiple institutions. This resource-heavy process meant that school staff had limited capacity to analyse and use the data to drive improvements to prepare students for transitions and to reflect retrospectively on the effectiveness of their careers education provision. Under the new process these barriers are significantly reduced.

The new process based on ‘public task’ (one of six lawful bases for processing personal data) allows schools to use destinations data collected by the local authority. This allows schools to understand trends and challenges and better inform their careers education (CEIAG) programmes. All partners involved in tracking destinations can now focus their resources on early identification and NEET prevention. Data sharing to support identification of risk factors may also be covered under ‘public task’, e.g., where the RONI process supports statutory duties relating to the participation of young people.

### **Integrated database where council teams share information about young people’s risk factors and needs, northern city council**

In 2022, the Council launched a ‘one-system’ approach to its holding and sharing of data. This brought together the previously separate databases for children's social care and for education services. This integration allows teams that support young people with specific needs (e.g., care experienced, EHCP, etc.) to share information about young people’s needs and risk factors efficiently and transparently in one secure system. This includes young people identified as being at risk of NEET when transitioning to post-16 provision.

Individual team members can access appropriate areas of each data module, viewing young people’s records, documents and interventions by teams. This supports holistic assessment of each young person’s individual risk factors, enables services to tailor support and respond to individual needs, and enhances collaboration across teams.

This approach has helped the Council to build better relationships with education institutions, to improve the timely exchange of information. As a result, all partners can focus their resources on those young people that are required to be tracked. This has enabled improvements to the identification and tracking of key at-risk groups including Children Missing Education (CME), Electively Home Educated (EHE), and care experienced young people. The new ‘one system’ also minimises duplication across services, improves tracking where pupils have been known to move out of the area, and allows the council to target support more effectively.



## **Secure SharePoint site for safe and transparent sharing of data from education providers to the local authority, rural county council**

The council needed a single point of entry to communicate with education institutions and to enable them to safely and transparently share information to support the post-16 participation duties. Previously information was shared inconsistently and in various formats, requiring significant resource for staff to input into the system. The new secure SharePoint site supports an efficient, secure process with templates, Information Sharing Agreements (ISA) and data calendars all in one place.

The site has permissions which take providers to their own private folders, which contain every document needed to share the data. All data is securely transferred under the ISA and the templates ensure that information is uploaded in the correct format. A shared calendar tracks information gathering across the academic year and shows how each data return is used. The quality and timeliness of data returns has improved as schools understand why key data is needed at certain points. The council is now supporting providers who did not meet the requirements with training.



## **Section Three: A consistent, effective process to identify 'at risk' young people**

### **Model for a comprehensive RONI process and activities to support transition through Year 11**

#### **1. Early Identification**

- NCCIS automated RONI process ensures all risk characteristics are collated.
- RAG rate cohort at the end of Year 10 (or early Year 11 for new starters).
- Expert input on RON list from staff in schools who know young people.

#### **2. Meaningful Interventions**

- Plan a series of interventions to support young person to access appropriate post-16 options smoothly.
- Ensure relationships with post-16 providers are introduced early.
- Where appropriate include employer interventions and hand-holding support after Year 11 to help young people adjust to the new setting.

#### **3. Check and Refine data**

- Incorporate new available Year 11 RON data (Jan), shared via NCCIS, to update RAG ratings.
- Expert input on RON list from staff in schools who know young people.

#### **4. Information Sharing**

- Ensure appropriate documentation is completed to share with post-16 providers (RONI) to support retention in first term.
- Post-16 providers are sent relevant documentation and transition meetings held.
- Additional transition meetings held for SEND and other high-risk cohorts.

#### **5. Ongoing Support**

- Support services identified and provided information to support the young person.
- They support them over summer period and during any enrolment process and continue to provide support until at least October half term in Year 12.
- Additional programmes are accessed – e.g. where a young person requires extra training, experience, coaching or support before taking their next step.

## Current RONI processes

The RONI process is led by the local authority in some areas, while in others it has been led in schools. An effective approach relies on partnership working which maximises the strengths and responsibilities of each partner. However, the impact can be reduced when processes are inefficient, roles are not clear, and where work may be duplicated.

A common barrier to an effective approach is where the local authority asks schools to collect and record information about students' risk factors in ways that are resource intensive for school staff. This section sets out a model to provide clarity over roles and responsibilities, maximise the strengths of each partner and streamline processes.

Historically the RONI process has been done in one of two ways:

### The two main RONI approaches in the past

<b>Approach 1</b>	1. Local authority informs provider of which young people are at risk of NEET, based on RONI	2. Provider reviews information and may make amendments based on contextual information	<b>Outcome:</b> Young people identified as at risk of NEET gain additional support and / or referred to appropriate support services	
<b>Approach 2</b>	1. Local authority requests RONI data from provider, seeking specific data identifying which young people are at risk of NEET	2. Provider collates data identifying those at risk of NEET	3. Provider shares this information with the LA	<b>Outcome:</b> Young people identified as at risk of NEET gain additional support and / or referred to appropriate support services

## New RONI tool in NCCIS

The RONI tool within the NCCIS portal for all local authorities to use will automatically generate and share a RON list of young people, in each local authority cohort. This RON list will be based on young people's risk factors, collected in NCCIS, supplemented with other DfE data sets.

The automatic RON list streamlines the initial, data-driven phase of the RONI process. This means that the role of school staff in populating RONI data will be significantly reduced. This in turn frees up resource in education institutions to focus on supporting transition for at risk young people. Local authorities and education institutions may want to explore the potential for further efficiencies through integrating work and systems to support the tracking and sharing of data as part of Gatsby Benchmarks (destinations data) and RONI processes.

## RONI activity timeline

Twice yearly, in August and January, each local authority will receive, via the NCCIS portal, a list of young people, who live in the local authority area and have NEET risk factors. In preparation for the academic year, local authorities can RAG rate the cohort that has completed Year 10 at the start of the new term in September. This allows planning of transition activities for the year ahead as young people start Year 11.

### Example RONI activity timeline

Date	Activity
Aug-Sep	Year 10 RON list produced in NCCIS. Shared with education institutions to review and return.
Oct-Dec	With education institutions, plan interventions to support young person to access post-16 options. E.g. careers guidance interviews, additional support, building relationships with post-16 settings etc.
Jan	Year 11 RON list produced in NCCIS. Shared with education institutions to review and return.
Feb	Education institutions and local authority agree final Year 11 RON list for additional transition support.
Feb-Jun	Ongoing interventions to support young people to effectively transition.
Jul-Aug	Support through summer for young people who don't have a post-16 place.
Sep-Dec	Education institutions and local authority work with post-16 providers to support the Year 12 cohort with enrolment, ongoing handholding, etc. to ensure retention in their new post-16 settings.

## Roles and responsibilities

Collaboration is essential and this approach allows each partner to focus on impactful activity to support young people, while reducing duplication and inefficiencies.

1. The first, data-driven, part of the RONI process is led by staff in the local authority responsible for the statutory participation duties and tracking of young people.
2. The initial RON list, generated in the NCCIS portal, can be shared with education institutions so that staff who know the individual young people can refine the list, adding 'softer' factors that are not captured in data e.g., personal, contextual knowledge about each individual's situation.
3. This process can be repeated in January when the second RON list is generated.

The role of education institution staff in refining the RON list allows it to be tailored to reflect each young person's risk factors and individual needs. This phase also enables positive 'protective factors' to be incorporated into the risk assessment and support plan. This check can also help to ensure that resources are directed where they are needed, reducing 'dead weight' costs of identifying the wrong young people for extra support. This may be because a young person has other support in place or due to 'protective factors'.

A RONI is most effective with a "whole school approach" to the identification of young people at risk. Some schools have created a 'Transitions Team' which consists of Careers Leaders and careers pastoral staff, year leaders, the safeguarding lead, SENCO, attendance lead and staff who lead on both data and exams.

## **Careers Leaders in Schools**

Schools are expected to appoint a Careers Leader who has the skills, commitment and backing from the senior leadership team, including protected time to carry out the role effectively. Schools must name the Careers Leader and publish their contact details on their website. Many schools also build relationships with local post-16 providers, and share information about student's needs, so support can be tailored to help young people settle in their new settings at the start of Year 12.

The Careers Leader can be named on information shared with local post-16 providers to support transition. A named contact from the school, who knows the students and their support needs, can be a point of contact and support for students who struggle to settle into their new post-16 settings. Other roles in schools that could be included in transition and RONI work include Heads of Year, Form tutors, Pastoral Head of Year, Safeguarding Lead, SENCO, Careers Adviser/Lead, designated teacher for Looked After Children.

## **Good Practice Case studies**

### **School input into the 'at risk' list and use of NEET prevention panels for the highest risk cohorts, northern city council**

The council produces an initial RON list which identifies pupils in Year 11 with the following risk factors: poor attendance, excluded, alternative provision, missing education (CME), home educated (EHE), child protection plan, looked after care (LAC), SEND, SEN support, Parent / pregnant, youth offender (YOT) and substance use. In October an aggregated RON list is shared with schools for them to review and confirm the level of risk (high or medium) by the end of January, also considering any statutory involvement.

The council flags approximately 30% of the Year 11 cohort. Once schools review this list, around 20% of the cohort are confirmed as 'at risk'. Schools also provide supporting comments and add any young people, not already flagged, who they believe are RON. Returned by the start of the Spring term, this list is cross-checked with other council

services, including the SEND and looked after / children in care teams, to create a 'highest risk' cohort. This allows resource to be targeted for priority young people first.

The Council holds NEET Prevention Panels in schools to focus transition support on the high-risk RON cohort who do not have an offer of a place to continue at post-16. Panels are run every half term from the second half of the Autumn Term. At the panels schools and alternative provision (AP) providers present students at high risk of NEET to a panel for tailored advice, opportunities and offers of support. The panel includes the Council, Virtual School, the commissioned transition support provider and local support services.

At the start of the academic year, the transition support provider focuses on the RON cohort, contacting any students who are not enrolled, so they can quickly be supported into positive destinations. They also hold fortnightly meetings with the large colleges to discuss the RON cohort and ensure that they are continuing to attend. This allows early intervention for more support or to find other suitable provision. Careers advisers linked to the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) schools are in regular contact with providers to ensure these young people have made a smooth transition. They can then quickly provide extra support where needed.

### **Cross-council collaboration on joint careers support, delivered by a network of careers advisors, two northern metropolitan boroughs**

In Yorkshire, two neighbouring councils joint-commission a co-ordinated, comprehensive transition support offer. A transition support provider delivers the statutory participation duties, NEET tracking and targeted Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) services for vulnerable young people. The provider is also contracted to provide IAG to most secondary schools, colleges, specialist provision and pupil referral units.

1. RONI completed by school advisers, in collaboration with school staff, to identify young people at risk of NEET, with multiple barriers to participating.
2. Early referrals to participation advisers are made for those young people flagged as high risk of NEET. Poor attendance is highlighted as a priority group.
3. The process is supported by effective internal referrals between the SEND, education and participation teams to ensure timely and appropriate follow up.

The skilled network of Careers Advisers, using one CCIS database, and working pre and post 16 across all learning environments supports a joined-up approach. Advisers offer additional support to young people identified as at risk. This includes additional IAG and practical support, especially in Year 11, to maximise effective transition. Support can include interviews to encourage engagement and progression, referrals to relevant agencies for support, and visits to post-16 providers to support sustained transitions.

Early referral to Participation advisers, who work with 16-18 NEET clients, also allows them to begin building relationships with the client early and offer additional support outside of the school environment.

## Section Four: How and why to involve education institutions in the RONI process

Local authorities, education institutions and post-16 settings have a shared commitment to ensure that all young people have an effective post-16 pathway into further learning and onto fulfilling work. A collaborative approach, which builds on the strengths of all partners, supports this shared goal. Local authorities can provide a coordinating role and data insights. Education institutions know their pupils' needs and aspirations. Post-16 settings can check in with their new students and provide support to help them settle.

Education institutions also work preventatively over a longer period, not just as young people approach the end of Year 11. Since Year 7 they have been taking steps to prepare pupils for post-16 transition, guided by the Gatsby benchmarks framework.

### 10 key principles for effective and impactful collaboration with education institutions

1. **Approach RONI collaboration with schools as equal partners.** To engage schools RONI can be pitched as a 'win-win' with clear benefits for each partner.
2. **Build relationships with key staff in schools.** Emails sent to a school's main office may not reach the right person so call to get a named contact. Each school has a named **Careers Leader** who can be your route into closer collaboration on transition. Careers Hubs can also assist in developing links to schools.
3. Listen. It's essential to **understand school's needs and challenges** and what has / has not worked with previous approaches. Individual context is important – e.g. where are they on their journey with careers provision, embedding the Gatsby Benchmarks and their approach to supporting transition. Be prepared to make changes to ensure that the RONI approach, key outputs and responsibilities are working well for all partners.
4. Have a **transition policy** which commits to a consistent transition offer for all young people, clearly sets out the purpose of collaboration, and sets expectations about everyone's roles and data collection timelines etc. (see later in this section).
5. **Set clear expectations.** Be clear about your offer of support to schools, but also the limits of that offer. E.g. some local authorities may be able to offer schools help with supporting at risk young people, whereas others may not. Setting clear expectations about the available support is essential.
6. **Work with the trailblazers.** When launching a new RONI approach, building capacity and momentum is key. Work initially with 'the willing', these trailblazer schools can help to bring others along through peer influencing and by directly demonstrating the benefits.
7. **Add value.** Be clear on what you are offering to education institutions, whether it is data insights, coordinating a risk-based approach, or offering additional support. E.g. schools may already have much of the data that makes up the RONI, but

local authorities can present this information in ways which add value, including by drawing in additional data sources that schools cannot access.

8. **Support data collection** through proactive engagement and communication with partners. This could include laying the groundwork for data collection, establishing streamlined processes and early information gathering - both within schools and between schools and local authorities (see content on data sharing in section 2).
9. **Clarify roles and responsibilities:** reduce duplication and streamline processes by looking to build on the strengths and existing responsibilities of all partners.
10. **Set up a transition panel.** Bring together key staff in schools, the local authority, colleges and other partners to deliver RONI and transition activities and to coordinate support for at risk young people (see this section and section 5).

## Education institutions play an essential role in an effective RONI process

Education institutions play a vital role, firstly to support accurate identification of students at risk (see section one). They do this by using their knowledge of young people to refine the initial, data-based, RON list. Secondly, using their relationships with young people, schools are the primary source of preventative support to ensure that those at risk can progress into appropriate post-16 options (section five summarises the characteristics of good transition support).

Education institutions are key to an effective RONI process in the following ways:

- Many **young people's key adult relationships are with school staff**. Support from these trusted adults is key to ensuring that young people can first identify – and then step confidently into an appropriate post-16 pathway.
- **Schools collect and use data on destinations and risk factors**. Data is collected on each pupil's education, training or employment destinations for at least three years after they leave school. This is an established part of the accountability system of data shared between schools and local authorities and a requirement for schools to meet [Gatsby Benchmark 3](#). RONI tools present this information back to schools in new ways to help identify those at risk.
- **Schools have a statutory requirement to provide students with a careers programme and impartial and personalised careers guidance**. High quality careers education in school has a key role to play in helping students form their future plans and supporting them into positive destinations at post-16 and beyond.
- Schools **support students to develop relationships with post-16 colleges, providers, local employers and other professionals** (a statutory requirement outlined in [Gatsby Benchmark 8](#), which includes Provider Access Legislation). Transition processes also support the transfer of information between schools and post-16 providers, aided by students' careers education records. This process is underpinned by schools maintaining consistent advice, tracking agreed actions and next steps, and offering students further ongoing support where needed.



- **Careers guidance in school is particularly important for disadvantaged young people and those with protected characteristics.** These young people may require additional support at key transitions. Schools can provide this support and build it into statutory support provided for e.g. care experienced young people (Virtual schools heads) and those with EHC Plans, which use a similar ‘strength and aspiration’ -based model.

## A RONI approach has benefits for education institutions

A RONI helps education institutions to identify at risk students to support their transition into post-16 pathways. But collaborating on a RONI process also embeds key systems, relationships and ways of working – which enable partners to tackle broader priorities.

Schools focus on students’ risk factors throughout secondary education. This allows them to tailor support for students to tackle priorities including attendance, engagement, motivation, aspiration, and attainment. A RONI approach can both build on these strong foundations and support these priorities. RONI includes the following benefits for schools:

- **Enables a ‘whole school approach’ to tackling disadvantage and supporting transition.** RONI creates an opportunity to focus the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), and key staff across the school, on addressing these challenges. This focus can support strategic coordination on NEET prevention and, for example, an exploration of sources of additional support and funding to reduce NEET risk.
- **Helps improve the impact of school careers education** by using data to target young people with multiple needs and/or barriers and tailoring careers advice and support for individual needs. Some schools also use evidence from RONI to assess the impact of careers interventions and to demonstrate impact to Ofsted.
- **Helps tackle priorities including attendance and inclusion** by embedding a preventative approach. Persistent absence in school and NEET at age 16+ are linked challenges. A RONI underpins the collaborative multi-agency approach and data sharing frameworks needed to deliver improvements in these priority areas.
- **Enables communication and collaboration with post-16 providers, to plan and deliver transition support.** Building strong relationships with providers enables joint planning to meet the needs of at-risk young people. It also supports the collection of destinations data for Gatsby Benchmark 3.
- **Enables schools to access additional robust, quality-assured data on young people.** Local authority RONI processes use robust data, including some that schools cannot access (e.g. social care, youth justice, etc.). This approach produces a more accurate RONI, identifying at-risk students who may not be known to schools, and reduces the impact of unconscious bias and gaps in school staff knowledge about individual students.
- **Saves time and resource** by providing the RON list in a structured format back to schools for further review. The detailed work of collecting and analysing the RONI



data has been completed by the local authority. The NCCIS RONI tool further streamlines this process, reducing the impact on school staff.

- **Supports other school priorities.** A RONI approach and RON data supports education institutions with the Activity Survey which tracks student's destinations in post-16. It can show Ofsted how the school targets support to improve young people's destinations. It can evidence school action to meet Gatsby BM3 and BM1, and Provider Access legislation. Working with local authorities on destinations data is covered in detail below.

## Destination Measures for the Gatsby Benchmarks

Education institutions, local authorities and post-16 settings all have roles in gathering destinations data. There are opportunities for better join up (see also data sharing segment in section two):

- Schools collect destinations data on pupils for three years after they leave school, to measure the effectiveness of their careers programme.
- Data collected on young people's intended, immediate and sustained destinations is also important for preventing NEET and can be a RONI risk indicator.
- The Activity Survey outlines destinations of the previous year's Year 11 cohort, showing improved retention data as students' progress in the 12 and 24 months after they leave school.
- Local authorities, schools and post-16 settings can explore collaboration to share destinations data in a usable, timely way to support both Gatsby reporting and RONI processes.
- Local authorities can help schools by sharing RONI data year-on-year to track whether interventions are contributing to reducing risk as young people progress through Key Stages 3 and 4. For example, schools can use it to identify trends and decide how they target resources.
- Schools and local authorities may also wish to explore how local authority tracking data and schools' Compass+ data may be brought together to support these aims.

### Case study – Collaborating with education institutions to get student's consent to share their destinations, northern city council

A northern metropolitan borough council worked with local education institutions to develop a permissions letter for students to sign, which enabled schools to access their pupils' destinations. Previously, schools accessed only quantitative data, but the letter gave the council permission to release the names of the young people so that local schools could then track the progress of their students through their post-16 journeys.

## Establish a joint transition policy and regular meetings to support collaboration

Local authorities can lead and coordinate the approach to RONI and transition activities. A shared transition policy adds clarity and structure to these processes. It enables you to set the purpose of collaboration, expectations, roles and responsibilities and establish clear data collection timelines. In some areas a formalised project plan with milestones is produced. Establishing termly meetings with school leaders and staff responsible for data collection, and other key delivery partners can also drive collaboration.

- **Operational level:** brokering support and a transition plan for individual at-risk young people, e.g. Transition Panel case study.
- **Strategic level:** planning provision and transition support, formalising processes, pathways, relationships and data sharing, e.g. Transition Group case study.

### Case study – Transition Policy: overcoming data sharing challenges to develop a whole-area approach and a clear and consistent transition offer, northern city council

The Council wanted to bring together all elements of the RONI and transition process in a single document that could be easily implemented by school staff. Inconsistent data sharing, exacerbated by school staff turnover, was an issue. The Council convened a working group of careers leaders and advisers responsible for post-16 transition, partners from commissioned NEET services, and leads for vulnerable groups such as the Virtual School, SEND, youth justice etc. Key pillars of the transition policy were agreed, and Task and Finish groups launched to agree practices and processes to be developed. The Council took a lead in developing and testing these back with each partner.

The policy sets a standard of how every young person's transition should be supported and ensures that they are at the centre of all activity. It clarifies roles and responsibilities, operational milestones, recommended interventions, and arrangements for information sharing and ongoing support. Schools find the data checklist for each half term helpful; they know what data they will be asked for and when it must be returned. The Council and local college have developed a series of summer transition activities for at-risk young people, with the policy acting as a strategic reference point to support funding bids.

The transition policy has transformed data sharing. Data returns have improved greatly. The Council worked closely with their Information Governance team to clarify what data the Council can share with education institutions, what education institutions can share with the Council, and under what legal basis. The policy clarifies the rationale for sharing data and the legal requirements, providing assurance in the process. The Council now produces a 'One Year on Activity Survey', alongside the annual Activity Survey. It shows that participation often falls off between Year 12 and 13. This information has enabled constructive discussions to be held with schools as part of continuous improvement.

## **Transition Panel Process: using RAG rating and bringing together partners to ensure referral pathways, rural south-western county**

At the end of Year 10 the Council runs a RONI report, using council data, to identify key NEET risk indicators, such as poor attendance or exclusions. Each student is RAG-rated based on their accumulated RON score. Led by the council, termly panel meetings are held virtually with key schools, throughout Year 11, to discuss the at-risk cohort.

The first panel in Autumn is a small meeting between the school, the council and the transition support provider commissioned by the council. The initial RAG rating is reviewed, and schools can moderate the rating using their knowledge of the student. Early referrals are made to the transition support programme for those deemed high risk. The risk assignment process is guided by a risk table:

**Risk table to guide risk-assessment process**

<b>High Risk</b>	Student has complex issues indicating a high likelihood of becoming NEET. They will need significant support to successfully transition to post 16.
<b>Medium Risk</b>	Student is probably looking to move into post 16 education but needs support with identifying a provider/course and will need transition support.
<b>Low Risk</b>	Student has identified a post 16 provider and/or course but may need some support with the transition process.

The spring and summer panels are wider meetings including representation from local FE colleges and independent providers. The purpose is to signpost schools to suitable post-16 provision, make the intended destination provider aware of the at-risk learner's needs and their support requirements, and to agree any additional actions that can assist learners to make a successful transition. Since introducing transition panels, there has been an increase in the percentage of pupils in sustained education and employment. In particular improvements have been achieved among disadvantaged pupils.

## **Year 11 Transition Group: collaboration between schools, colleges and providers to support transition and retention, London borough council**

The Council convened a Year 11 Transition group in Summer 2020. Heads of Year 11 and Further Education partners meet three times over the summer term to discuss preparations and support needed for Year 11 transition. The Council can check in with schools on support for the at-risk cohort, highlight timely resources (e.g. the annual Summer Careers Fair, National Citizens Programme) and share good practice.

The group has implemented a data sharing agreement between schools and the local college. For all new starts at the college, the Council, via schools, provides prior

attendance and attainment data. This helps to identify students at risk of dropping out, so they can be promptly supported to continue attending and make a smooth transition.

### **Vocational Carousel, London borough council**

The Council runs a 6-week vocational programme every February. Year 11 students on the programme spend one day of the school week in a vocational setting, to potentially identify a suitable career pathway at an earlier stage. Placements include music production, web development, cabin crew and customer service, fashion design, product manufacture, plumbing and electrical, electronics and mechanical. There is an ESOL based activity project and SEN transitional tasters. The partnership between the local college, the Council and the Schools Partnership means that more young people enter further education with a September guarantee offer in place.

## Section Five: What makes support effective for young people at risk of NEET?

Early intervention is vital to identify at-risk young people. Those at risk of not making a smooth transition into post-16 need additional support:

1. First, in school to help them identify and get onto an appropriate pathway.
2. Second, to check and confirm they have received and accepted an offer of an appropriate place to continue their post-16 education or training.
3. Third, in Year 12 or 13, to help them to settle and stay there and then to make a positive transition into further learning or fulfilling work at age 18+.

A school's Careers offer should provide support for all students. It needs to be tailored to reflect the needs of its current student cohorts. Those with higher needs, and those not regularly attending school, may require additional, intensive support. The following key milestones in the support journey may be used by education institutions and local authorities as a guide:

1. Young person identified at risk by RONI process.
2. Cases discussed at school transition panel (often hosted by the local authority). Referral made to either a commissioned transition support provider (higher needs), or internal school careers adviser (moderate needs), as appropriate.
3. Referrals are processed by the commissioned partner; each young person is assigned an appropriate support package. Where this package includes support from a youth worker or other professional, an initial meeting will be booked.
4. For internal school referrals, introductions are made to the relevant school commissioned provision.
5. Young person receives the recommended individualised support e.g., focusing on their needs and personal goals.
6. Progress is reviewed at mid-term panels.
7. Each young person is supported until they transition into a post-16 placement.
8. Handholding and monitoring supports young person to settle into post-16 setting.

### Needs assessment

Once a young person is identified as at risk, the priority is to promptly assess their needs, aspirations and barriers. A thorough assessment enables an individualised support pathway and transition plan to be put in place. This enables both good outcomes for young people and the effective prioritisation of available resource.

The assessment process is led by school staff. This could include pastoral teams, tutors, careers leads and those responsible for transition. Staff work with the young person to develop a holistic needs assessment and transition plan. This can be informed by staff knowledge of individual students, coaching conversations, and the school-returned

RONI. For young people with an existing statutory support package and/or Personal Education Plan, staff should ensure that these processes are joined-up and that the transition plan is integrated with other support.

The assessment and support planning process can be supported by tools including:

- the Centre for Youth Impact’s [Adult Rating of Youth Behaviour \(ARYB\) Tool](#).<sup>14</sup>
- The [Journey to Employment \(JET\) framework](#)<sup>15</sup> which identifies seven groups of factors that contribute to successful outcomes: personal circumstances; emotional capabilities; attitudes to work; employability skills; qualifications, education and training; experience and involvement; and career management skills.
- [The Careers and Enterprise Company’s Future Skills Questionnaire](#)<sup>16</sup> which gives students the opportunity to reflect on their career-related knowledge and skills and allows Careers Leaders to target support where students identify a challenge.

**Risk table for triage process**

<b>High Risk</b>	Student has complex issues indicating a high likelihood of becoming NEET. They will need significant support to successfully transition to post 16.
<b>Medium Risk</b>	Student is probably looking to move into post 16 education but needs support with identifying a provider/course and will need transition support.
<b>Low Risk</b>	Student has identified a post 16 provider and/or course but may need some support with the transition process.

## Support pathways

The above risk table can guide the triage process. For those with moderate needs, e.g., ‘amber’ on a RAG-rating system, a typical plan might include additional tailored careers education to help decide on next steps, support to address identified barriers e.g. building relationships with appropriate providers or employers, and active monitoring through Year 11, to ensure they have a firm post-16 offer in place and are confident to take their next step. The school careers offer, including coaching and targeted interventions, may be sufficient to support transition for young people with this level of need.

Young people with high needs, e.g. those RAG-rated ‘red’, may require intensive support through Year 11, often continuing into Year 12 to help them to transition and then stay in

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.ymcageorgewilliams.uk/key-resources/measurement-hub/adult-rating-youth-behaviour-aryb>

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.thinknpc.org/resource-hub/the-jet-pack-a-guide-to-using-the-journey-to-employment-framework/>

<sup>16</sup> <https://resources.careersandenterprise.co.uk/resources/future-skills-questionnaire>

post-16 provision. The local authority can help education providers to access additional support and to think creatively about how to meet the young person's needs. They can also broker a relationship with an appropriate local post-16 setting. 1:1 support, from a transition mentor or coach, will often be required. A youth-work approach is often effective with young people who have disengaged and are not attending school, and for those at risk, e.g., those with low attendance and facing other barriers.

Some young people, particularly those who are vulnerable and have complex needs, may require sustained individualised support and a range of tailored interventions over longer periods. During this time, they may disengage and reengage multiple times. Many local authorities also offer summer provision, in partnership with providers. This keeps those at risk, and those without a clear pathway, engaged through the summer holiday period so they are ready to transition into appropriate post-16 options in September.

As part of their statutory duties to ensure that young people can participate, many local authorities play a coordinating role to ensure that at-risk young people and those who are NEET get the support they need. Local authorities can bring together local partners to ensure that the young person's support plan and pathway can draw on the full range of support and provision available locally. The 'transition panel' model is a good example of how local authorities can facilitate this process.

### **Case study – Flexible and responsive individualised support model for an individually tailored package, northern combined authority**

Recognising that young people's choices, pathways and needs can change regularly, the Combined Authority developed a flexible approach to supporting transition. The model is built on flexible but responsive individualised support, based on young people's needs, barriers and aspirations. Support is delivered through a youth-work approach by a mentor or coach. This allows for the coordination of different layers of support which young people may need to access to sustain a positive destination.

For those at risk of NEET due to low attendance and engagement in education, the model enables low level intervention to engage with the young person to understand what is impacting their engagement. For example, uncertainty about their course or career choices, low confidence, mental health, peer issues, home issues. Young people need to know that they can talk this through with someone impartial before they disengage. The following interventions are not linear, but rather different layers of support that can be tailored to each individual.

- **Initial engagement.** Developing partnerships with other organisations, e.g., schools, colleges, Pupil Referral Unit, Job Centre Plus. Referrals from local authority partners e.g. Youth Offending Services, In Care Teams. Outreach, e.g. from detached youth worker.
- **Identify and address barriers and support needs.** Pool existing assessment / plans, e.g., EHCPs, Youth Rehabilitation Orders, Care Leaver Plans, etc. Develop



Action Plan including a positive transition pathway. Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG), including personal advice, debt, housing, financial advice (including benefit checks), health and well-being. Support to complete forms for travel pass, benefits etc. Mentoring / counselling / life-coaching. Discretionary budget, e.g., for travel expenses, interview clothes, driver's license.

- **Address skills and experience gaps.** Building confidence, resilience and motivation. Building soft skills, e.g. problem solving, leadership, proactivity, adaptability. Learning and training e.g. paid for courses including Construction Skills Certification Scheme and Security Industry Authority accreditation.
- **Move towards education, employment or training.** Supporting visits to colleges, open days, job fairs. CV development and support with application forms. Job search and interview skills e.g. mock interviews and online interviews.
- **Post exit support.** Agree support in Exit Plan, e.g. accompanying young person on public transport, warm handovers, 3-way meetings (between the young person, their mentor and the employer or trainer), meeting up after the first day.

## Key principles for effective transition support

Research into the efficacy of support for young people at risk of NEET identifies core principles that underpin effective transition interventions across the spectrum of needs. For further information, see the Youth Futures Foundation [Youth Employment Toolkit](https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/toolkit/).<sup>17</sup> and the CEC report [Effective Careers Interventions for Disadvantaged Young People](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/3ogdxqu1/bit67-cec-report_v3.pdf).<sup>18</sup>

- Support should be **evidence based** i.e. driven by data and evaluation and **co-produced with young people**.
- **Match young people to the right programme.** Understand their interests, motivations, and aspirations (and barriers to progress) and align them with opportunities that match these. Offer activities, services and opportunities that interest young people to voluntarily engage e.g. wage subsidies or rewards for attendance and 'cultural magnets' such as sports or arts. Programmes should meet the specific needs of young people, e.g. building and applying new skills, taking on group-based work and gaining qualifications. Ensuring that appropriate provision is available throughout the year, e.g., roll-on roll-off options, is important.
- Research shows that the **quality of implementation** is key to good outcomes. This requires high quality relationships and interventions, delivered by consistent staff. Programmes should 'model' workplace culture and expectations and ensure safe, inclusive environments where young people are valued and respected.

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<sup>17</sup> <https://youthfuturesfoundation.org/toolkit/>

<sup>18</sup> [https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/3ogdxqu1/bit67-cec-report\\_v3.pdf](https://www.careersandenterprise.co.uk/media/3ogdxqu1/bit67-cec-report_v3.pdf)



- A youth work approach, built on strong relationships, can support young people. **Mentoring, coaching, and life skills training** models are likely to positively impact youth employment outcomes. Effective approaches include **personalised and intensively delivered support**, with strong relationships and continuity of advisor. Young people with higher needs may need help with practical, personal, or social challenges, for example tutoring, careers support and pastoral wellbeing support. Also, specific support, relevant to young people's individual needs, e.g., SEND, mental health, financial hardship, housing, leaving care.
- **Employer focussed** - Programmes should be aligned with local opportunities and skills needs, which relies on strong partnerships with local employers and good quality labour market intelligence. Best practice should see strong levels of employer commitment locally.
- Include elements of **vocational training** (both on-the-job and off-the-job). Young people who do this are more likely to get a job. Off-the-job training has a higher impact when combined with basic skills and other components. On-the-job training has a high impact for young people who face additional barriers. Training and development and "work first" approaches positively impact on employment e.g. by facilitating rapid entry into a job through support such as job search assistance, work experience and the ability to learn skills while working.
- **Support should be joined up, with the local authority at the centre.** Collaboration is often necessary to support individual needs, deliver interventions in partnership and ensure support is complementary, not duplicated. Many local authorities facilitate links between education institutions and specialist post-16 settings, as well as with other services, e.g. social workers, support for care-experienced young people, and referrals into transition support workers. Local authorities can also ensure that stakeholders are aware of support available to young people e.g., via NEET provider forums and provision mapping exercises.
- Many local authorities provide **dedicated staff to support transition** for young people with additional needs. For example, mentors can be embedded in settings that have large numbers of at-risk young people e.g. special schools, alternative provision, virtual school for care-experienced young people, the youth offending service (YOS), mainstream schools serving disadvantaged areas, and assigned to support the electively home educated (EHE) cohort.

## Good practice Case Studies

### Youth work transition support for high-risk young people, rural south-western county

The council commissions Transition Chat, a youth work-based programme, which supports young people in Year 11 who are deemed at high risk of becoming NEET following secondary school. In Year 11 young people are assigned a Youth Worker who provides holistic support and a positive role model, which may be missing in their life, to

identify and then work to overcome barriers. Support continues through the summer break, and into post-16 education until around October / November, to ensure the young person settles. The programme breaks down into six phases:

1. Young person is identified at risk by the secondary school or external referrer.
2. Cases are discussed at transition panel hosted by the local authority and a referral to Transition Chat can be made.
3. Referrals are processed; each young person is assigned a youth worker, and an initial meeting booked.
4. Young person is offered individualised sessions focusing on their needs and personal goals.
5. Progress is reviewed at mid-term panels.
6. Each young person is supported until they transition into a post-16 placement. If interventions have been unsuccessful, and the young person is certain to be NEET, a timely handover is made to the youth services NEET team.

In 2020/21 and 2021/22, 80% of referrals made a successful transition into a post-16 pathway. Building on the model, two new programmes have been developed for at-risk groups: to provide mental health support for young people not in school and to support children with EHCPs who are working towards a new educational placement.

## **One-to-one mentoring support for schools, rural northern county council**

The commissioned transition support provider supports young people aged 15-16, who are vulnerable and at-risk of NEET, into a progression pathway of education, employment, or training. The programme works with all schools in the county (including alternative education and specialist provision settings). RONI data is used to identify 10% of the Year 11 cohort for one-to-one mentoring support, alongside 25% for group work activities focused on work-related learning.

An assessment tool is used with young people to look at progression routes, barriers, and measure and support change. An individualised action plan is tailored to each young person's aspirations. Transition support is provided through summer and autumn to ensure young people successfully transition into post-16 learning. Over 3,800 young people have been supported by the programme, of which 75% progressed into a positive education, employment, or training destination. Young people who do not make an initial transition are referred to a post-16 re-engagement programme which includes one-to-one intensive support from a progression coach.

To support sustained participation, a RODI (risk of dropout) tool is shared with local colleges, who use the information to support students at risk of disengaging. This may include additional contact with personal tutors, tracking attendance patterns, ensuring students receive their entitled financial and travel support. Weekly submissions of data

enable post-16 providers to inform the council of any young people who drop out of learning. These are followed up by the commissioned transition support provider who offer a range of support to re-engage these young people in learning.

### **Ensuring care experienced young people have a career plan, southern city council**

At the start of every Spring term, the council emails all designated teachers and career advisers to request career plans for all Year 11 Care Experienced students. Follow up identifies those who have not had an appointment. These young people are offered a video-call advisor appointment, which supports them with motivation and guidance. The process also flags any students missed off the priority list, as career guidance is offered to vulnerable students first. Career plans are checked for quality, good exploration of options, and post-16 plans, then added to the student's Electronic Personal Education Plan. This supports a joined-up approach to transition support and ensures that all professionals understand the young person's aspirations and can support them to achieve these.

### **Provider Forum and Directory to coordinate local provision for at-risk young people, London borough council**

This group brings together local stakeholders with a shared purpose to reduce the borough NEETs and not knowns, increase numbers of young people participating and improve the offer of provision for young people. The group provides the local authority with an overview of the provision of training and support for NEETs and pre-NEETs, which is important as most providers are not commissioned by the LA. The group has about 100 members including colleges, training providers, agencies working with young people including those NEET, and Careers Advisors. As well as general information sharing on programmes that are available, the Group work together to:

- Report on NEET, unknown and participation figures
- Meet, network and share good practice
- Promote training and work opportunities within their organisations
- Discuss referral of NEET young people to identified provision
- Ensure training programmes and activities reflect NEET young people's needs
- Explore gaps in provision and identify ways to address them.

## Annex: Data calendar for the academic year

This table sets out the main data shares that local authorities require from schools and providers throughout the academic year including RONI.

**Data calendar for the academic year - example**

Task	Request	Which Provider(s)?	Request	Deadline for Return
<b>Intended Destinations Year 11s*</b>	Record plans of Year 11 students. Consent for sharing individual destinations with school (Activity Survey) collected via written form or verbally.	11-16 and 11-18 School; Alternative education provider with Year 11 cohort / and pupils missing education	February	May
<b>September Guarantee</b>	Data confirming conditional or unconditional offers of learning for Year 11 and 12 leavers (16 and 17 year olds). This includes "offers" for those returning to a 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of a two-year course.	College; 11-18 school; independent training provider; other sixth form institution	First request in March	Updates requested across period. Final in Aug
<b>Official Starters Data</b>	Confirmation of starts for 16-19 year olds (up to 25 for those with a current EHC Plan). Includes course details with start and predicted end dates.	College; 11-18 school; independent training provider; other Sixth Form institution	End of Aug / early Sept	September
<b>Monthly Post 16 Leavers and Joiners</b>	Confirmation of monthly late starts or in-month leavers from providers. Includes actual end date and any ongoing destinations.	College; 11-18 school; independent training provider; other Sixth Form institution	Monthly from October	Final return in May
<b>Activity Survey (Indicative)</b>	Early indications for destinations of latest cohort of Year 11 leavers.	11-16 School; 11-18 School; alternative education provider / Pupils Missing Out On Education (PMOOE)	December	January

<b>Task</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Which Provider(s)?</b>	<b>Request</b>	<b>Deadline for Return</b>
<b>Risk of NEET Indicators (RONI)</b>	Year 10/11 at risk of not progressing into post 16 learning.	11-16 School; 11-18 School; alternative education provider / PMOOE	As agreed	As agreed
<b>Risk of Drop-Out Indicators (RODI)</b>	Year 12/13 at risk of not sustaining the full year / two-year course.	College; 11-18 School; Other Sixth Form institution	As agreed	As agreed



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