

Working with Young People 'At Risk' of NEET

Guiding Principles

- 1. Provide meaningful, high-quality and flexible pathways** that align with young people's interests, strengths and aspirations. These pathways should enable *all* young people to make progress towards their desired career and life goals, while allowing them to explore different options and change direction as their journeys unfold.
- 2. Listen to young people's voices** and ensure their contributions are heard and acted upon. Young people have valuable insights and perspectives to share when they are consulted on decisions that affect them. They have the right to be actively involved in shaping their own education and employment trajectories.
- 3. Empower young people through relational and strengths-based practices** that are rooted in collaborative and young person-centred frameworks. These practices should aim to maximise young people's abilities, qualities, energy and skills, rather than focussing on their deficits.
- 4. Connect young people to inclusive environments** that foster a strong sense of belonging and community. Cultivating holistic approaches that prioritise positive relationships with peers and trusted adults can support wellbeing, enhance learning and facilitate engagement. Trust and connection are more effective than punitive or control-based responses to young people's needs.
- 5. Care for the whole young person** ensuring that they feel safe and secure enough to engage with learning, training and employment opportunities. Young people's wellbeing, including mental health and SEND,

must all be recognised as integral to their future success. Seeing and supporting the whole young person creates the conditions for positive outcomes.

- 6. Sustain support during transitions** by ensuring young people have consistent points of contact with skilled and knowledgeable adults who can help them navigate uncertainty and overcome barriers as they move through education, employment or training.

These guiding principles are intended to create the conditions for young people to flourish within the education system and the labour market. The principles are grounded in research from the [Mapping Interventions for NEET \(not in education, employment or training\) young people in England](#) project, based in the School of Education at Manchester Metropolitan University and funded by the Leverhulme Trust (RPG-2021-144). The project draws on the voices of practitioners, families and young people themselves to provide the first national picture of the nature and impact of early interventions for young people 'at risk' of becoming NEET.



The images are provided by a NEET young person who depicts how she feels about life before and after a successful intervention.