



## NEET figures show rise in dropouts

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The number of young people classified as NEET – not in employment, education or training - has risen for the third quarter in a row, according to new Government statistics.

Figures from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) show that the latest overall figure for 16- to 18-year-olds is 11.9%, up 1.3% from the same period last year.

The statistic will come as a blow to both DCSF and the 115 English councils who have identified tackling the problem as a key part of their Local Area Agreements.

DCSF's original target was to reduce the number of 16-18 year old NEETs from 9.6% in 2004 to 7.6% by 2010.

However, there is some good news for the Government. The number of young people classified as NET (not in education or training) figures has decreased by 0.7% in the second quarter to 23.7%, compared with the same period last year.

John Bateman, chief executive of the charity UK Youth, which supports young people's learning outside school, said better accreditation for extra-curricular learning was one way NEETs could be supported.

"Many young people who find themselves in this situation have complex issues which need to be resolved," he said.

"These include living in areas where there are high levels of deprivation and where their families have not been in employment for several generations."