

Children & Young People Daily Bulletin

Recession blamed for huge increase in Neet figures

By Lauren Higgs
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The number of young people not in employment, education or training (Neet) has leapt by more than 100,000 in the past year.

Government statistics released today show there are now almost 960,000 16- to 24-year-old Neets in England, more than 230,000 of whom are aged between 16 and 18.

Iain Wright, junior 14-19 education and apprenticeships minister admitted that reducing the number of Neets has proved "challenging".

He said: "We know that the economic downturn is significantly affecting young people."

But he claimed that the government is taking decisive action to get young people into work and training by investing money into initiatives such as the Future Jobs Fund, which offers work to unemployed young people, and the September Guarantee, which offers every 16- and 17-year-olds a guaranteed place in education or training.

John Bateman, chief executive of UK Youth warned that government must invest more cash into non-formal learning opportunities for young people, if Neet figures are to be reduced significantly.

He said: "Non-formal learning gives young people the confidence and skills to get into work, training or full-time education and is a key element in resolving the problem of helping youngsters get themselves out of the Neet trap. We know this approach works."

He claimed that traditional approaches to education and training are unsuitable for many Neets that live in areas of high deprivation, whose families may have been unemployed for several generations.

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