

UNSEEN SURREY

AN EXPLORATORY OVERVIEW OF THE NEET CRISIS / NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING /



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BRITAIN &
EUROPE

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY



UNSEEN SURREY: AN EXPLORATORY OVERVIEW OF THE NEET CRISIS

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HIGH SHERIFF OF SURREY

PETER CLUFF



Peter is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales and spent the majority of his career working in private equity, firstly for an Investment Bank in the City and then as a co-founder of a pan-European private equity real estate company. He has been a Trustee of the Community Foundation for Surrey for over eight years and Chair of Guildford Philanthropy since July 2017. He becomes the **High Sheriff of Surrey** on March 21, 2025.

THE OFFICE OF HIGH SHERIFF

Each year, a man or woman is personally appointed by HM The King to hold in their County the independent, non-political, and unfunded office of the High Sheriff. It is the oldest secular office in the UK after the Crown dating back to AD992 when the shire-reeve collected taxes and preserved the peace.

Today, the key objectives of the role are:-

- To support the Royal Family and the Lord-Lieutenant, the Sovereign's representative in the County
- To support the Judiciary, all who maintain The King's peace, who administer justice and support their fellow citizens. This includes Judges, Magistrates, the Police, Prison Service and other law enforcement agencies, the emergency services, local authorities and church and faith groups
- To take an active part in supporting and encouraging the voluntary sector particularly where they are involved with crime reduction and social cohesion.
- To "convene and connect" bringing together all sections of the diverse community for the benefit of the County
- To uphold and enhance the ancient office of the High Sheriff.

In addition to these responsibilities, the High Sheriff has the opportunity to focus on a specific issue affecting the County. This year, the emphasis is on supporting young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET). To address the challenge of NEET in Surrey, Peter collaborates closely with the Centre for Britain and Europe (CBE) to gain deeper insights and develop effective solutions.

CBE RESEARCH TEAM

**AMELIA
HADFIELD**



Amelia joined the University of Surrey in 2019 as Head of the Department of Politics and founded the Centre for Britain and Europe in 2020, which became a Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence the next year. She expanded the Centre into key research areas and built strong connections with local government and regional businesses. Amelia is the Associate Vice-President of External Engagement.

**MAYA
CHEW**



Maya oversees operations at the CBE, including program management, data analytics, and marketing initiatives. Her academic work explores ageing among LGBTQ+ identities in the Global South. She previously worked in international education and public diplomacy at the US government-funded Fulbright Programme and NY-based edtech startups in Asia.

**PHILIPPE
LEFEVRE**



Philippe brings with him a wealth of work experience in both industry and institutions, setting up and co-Chairing the British Chamber of Commerce Defence Committee in Brussels, and having worked at the European External Action Service and NATO International Staff in Belgium. His activities broadly relate to the EU-UK Relationship with a focus on security and defence, with a specialisation in industrial cooperation and the role of international military organisations.

**NIKOLAI
KUTSCH**



Nikolai Kutsch is a second-year International Studies student at NC State University in his home state of North Carolina the United States. He has been delighted to work with the Centre for Britain and Europe on several projects during his exchange year studying politics at the University of Surrey.

CBE RESEARCH

THE CENTRE FOR BRITAIN AND EUROPE (CBE)

The Centre for Britain and Europe (CBE) is a groundbreaking public-policy research institute based at the University of Surrey in Guildford, England. It was founded in 2019 by Professor Amelia Hadfield and is comprised of a multitude of academics, policy practitioners, and professional staff. In its research wing, it has produced many high-quality academic outputs, hosted conferences, and involved extensively with publicly funded research, Horizon Europe projects, and provided commentary to news outlets and briefs to the UK parliament.

To further cooperation with the private and public sectors, the Centre also comprises CBE Global, which leads public-impact projects in areas of sustainability, economic regeneration, socioeconomic policy, and security and foreign relations. Some of our stakeholders include local governments Surrey County Council (SCC) and the Surrey High Sheriff, international businesses such as MHA, Gordon Murray, and interdisciplinary institutions such as the UN Affiliated CIFAL Centre on Sustainability and Centre of Excellence on Ageing (CEA). CBE Global also counts partners across Europe in Brussels and works frequently with Members of Parliament and think tanks in the UK and EU.

The Centre is among Surrey's most important institutions in bridging gaps between academics, government, practitioners, and the public. CBE continues to open its doors to collaboration, welcoming engagement opportunities with partners on research, policy, and impact-driven projects.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Getting to grips with the issues, the difficulties and the lost opportunities that surround those young people in Surrey who – by 16 or 17 – have effectively fallen out of one or a number of systems is truly challenging.

Situated against the indicators of key national and county-based data, the report outlines the negative impacts of disadvantage, the overstretch of key systems, and risk factors that increase the chances of marginalisation. Equally, the myriad of stakeholders interviewed, the structures examined, and the data analysed highlighted how national and local authorities, further education providers, employers, mentors and the voluntary sector can together reverse Surrey's story of missed opportunities.

Whilst Surrey has historically been a high-performing authority in terms of NEET (as well as the more complex 'Not Known' category) the report indicates problematic and possibly widening gaps that need to be addressed swiftly, materially, financially, and sustainably.

The report concludes with Existing Challenges to NEETs in Surrey: structural but not insurmountable obstacles; and many Pathways to Progress; capable of enhancing and increasing the range of opportunities, skills and personal development of young people, supporting them in transforming them from 'not in' to definitively 'in' education, employment and/or training.

THE PERILS OF PASSING THROUGH THE SYSTEM

The Centre for Britain and Europe wishes to present a simple flowchart for a 'traditional' passing through of the system in Surrey, and the different points at which individuals might drop off, increasing their risk of becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). Many of these stages can occur 'out of age order' and even an individual who doesn't fit any of these stages might still be at risk of becoming NEET.



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Primary (Ages 4 - 11)

1

Stage 1

Lack of Support for Parents Socioeconomic background, parental support, and early childhood conditions shape future educational and career opportunities

2

Stage 2

Delays in EHCP Plans Delays or inadequacies in EHCP support can hinder children with special educational needs from accessing appropriate resources early

3

Stage 3

Lack of Primary School Placements Limited school availability forces some children into unsuitable or distant placements, disrupting early education.

4

Stage 4

Mental Health Issues at Primary Level – Early signs of anxiety, depression, or trauma can disrupt learning and social development.

5

Stage 5

Transition into Secondary A difficult or poorly supported move to secondary education increases the risk of disengagement and academic decline.

Secondary (Ages 11 - 16)

9

Stage 9

Limited Post-16 Pathways on Offer A lack of accessible vocational, technical, or alternative routes forces students into unsuitable or disengaging post-16 options.

8

Stage 8

Behavioural issues or permanent exclusion Disruptive behaviour, often linked to unmet needs, can lead to exclusion and further disengagement.

7

Stage 7

Pressure on Exams & Lack of Hands-On Learning High-stakes testing and a rigid curriculum alienate students who struggle with traditional academic learning.

6

Stage 6

Issues of Attendance Persistent absenteeism due to family circumstances, anxiety, or lack of support leads to educational gaps and disengagement.

Post-Secondary (Ages 16 - 18)

10

Stage 10

Lack of College and Apprenticeship Placements or Provisions Post-secondary education options may be insufficient, particularly for those with additional needs.

11

Stage 11

Employers' Grade Requirements Job market expectations often favour academic qualifications, creating barriers for students following or seeking alternative pathways.

12

Stage 12

Significant Mental Health Issues & Anxiety Escalating mental health challenges in adolescence create more systemic barriers to education, employment, and training.

13

Stage 13

Loss of connection with social services Many young people lose access to essential support systems when transitioning into adulthood and post-18 provisions

FOREWORD

PETER CLUFF

Through my work with the Community Foundation for Surrey and Guildford Philanthropy, I have been keen to give opportunities and tackle needs by supporting initiatives that deliver training programmes, work experience, jobs and other benefits to local people who are disadvantaged, whether due to poor education, disability or mental illness. There is often a need to build self-confidence and self-esteem by facilitating access into a working environment and by encouraging the development of new skills, thereby enabling those most in need to improve their lives.

However, there are a number of young people across the county who reach the age of 16-17 and are not in education, employment or Training (NEET) and although significant resources are brought to bear from central government, local authorities, further education providers, employers and the voluntary sector; quite often the hearts and minds of these young people have been lost at a much earlier age due to a multitude of interwoven factors relating to family life, education attainment, financial issues, and health and well-being.

It is necessary first and foremost to understand the population that we are seeking to help, so that targeted interventions and bespoke initiatives can be proposed. By identifying the different cohorts that make up the NEET population in Surrey, specific solutions can then be applied, pilot studies implemented and, where appropriate, further studies undertaken. It is to be hoped that some low hanging fruit may be discovered and quick wins obtained, but it is recognised that some issues may be more intractable and require more complex remedial methods. My wish is that this report fires the starting gun in encouraging informed debate, clarification on the composition of NEETs in Surrey and ultimately leads us to the day when there will no longer be any NEETs in Surrey.

I am immensely grateful to the University of Surrey for accepting the commission to undertake this valuable research. Max Lu, was extremely supportive and directed me to Professor Amelia Hadfield, in the University's Centre for Britain and Europe to head the project. My thanks go to the full research team of Amelia, Philippe, Maya and Nikolai for the thoroughness and clarity of the Report, produced within a tight time-frame, to be available at the commencement of my Shrieval year; thereby maximising the time available to discuss its findings. I also extend my gratitude to everyone who contributed to this research, particularly Surrey County Council who embraced the initiative and helped provide much of the data which informs this report.



Peter Cluff

High Sheriff of Surrey
2025 - 2026

FOREWORD

PROFESSOR AMELIA HADFIELD

When Peter Cluff first suggested that the Centre for Britain and Europe (CBE) take an in-depth look at the profound challenges by which young people in Surrey find themselves beyond the reach of education, employment or training, I was determined that our team produce a report that provided an honest appraisal of the issues but with truly useful insights that he – as High Sheriff – can quickly put to use.

Getting to grips with the issues, the difficulties and the lost opportunities that surround those young people in Surrey who – by 16, 17, and beyond – have effectively fallen out of one or a number of systems was heartbreaking. Time and again, it was brought home to me, and to the CBE team, the negative impacts of disadvantage, the overstretch of key systems, and the range of risk factors that make marginalisation more likely. Equally, the myriad of stakeholders interviewed, the structures examined and the data analysed also highlighted the national government, our local authorities, further education providers, employers and the voluntary sector can – with improved approaches – together reverse Surrey’s story of missed opportunities.

Our report is entitled ‘Unseen Surrey’, because the concept of NEETs is simply not well enough understood in general, nor appreciated to exist within Surrey in particular. With the help of key stakeholders at the county and borough level, from public, private and voluntary sector alike, we have provided an exploratory overview, not an extensive and exhaustive appraisal – though there is certainly scope to do so. The overview itself makes clear that any number of NEETs is too many, and that in a county with all the assets that Surrey possesses, the NEET challenge cannot simply be accepted as one of a number of issues. It is a crisis of missed opportunities, which left unchecked, will increase the risk of marginalisation, exploitation, and abuse of young people on the one side, and diminish the quality, and potential of Surrey’s employment, training and education structures on the other. In labelling the current NEET situation as a crisis, we also wish to inspire renewed commitment in the wide range of multi-level, multi-actor supporters across Surrey who – like Peter – are absolutely determined to make a real difference. We are therefore clear in stating where the risk factors lie that can tip 16 and 17-year-olds in Surrey into categories of at-risk, or full-blown NEETs, but we are equally ambitious about the specific recommendations that reflect the scale and location of change required to improve the lives and indeed opportunities of young people in Surrey.



Professor Amelia Hadfield
Founder and Director
Centre for Britain and Europe



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PART I

INTRODUCTIONS

THE STUDY

This study was commissioned by Peter Cluff, incoming High Sheriff of Surrey (2025 – 2026) – a ceremonial role personally appointed by HM The King to hold in Surrey County, the independent, non-political, and unfunded office of High Sheriff. Its many roles include drawing attention to social issues and driving charity initiatives in the area.

The Centre for Britain and Europe at the University of Surrey is proud to be working with Peter on the study – which seeks to better understand the NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) population in Surrey and the underlying challenges, from an earlier age than other existing initiatives focus on.

Begun in October 2024 – the study has been published to coincide in March 2025 with Peter's appointment as High Sheriff, with further work in cooperation with Surrey County Council (SCC) in the year 2025 and likely continue with future High Sheriffs in 2026 and beyond.

The report makes use of a wide range of mixed methods tools for evidence gathering, bringing together both qualitative and quantitative analysis from political and social sciences. These include:

A comprehensive literature review of recent and relevant NEET research; a comprehensive policy review of recent and relevant NEET policies at district, county and national levels.

Data Gathering and Analysis on NEET youth in Surrey, with data from Surrey County Council, the Surrey Police Force, and National datasets.

Stakeholder Engagement and Interviews: comprising semi-structured interviews with both individual and multiple stakeholders who have worked in Surrey and surrounding regions on NEET: online and/or in person, complemented by focus group work.

These in turn have helped produce a series of Policy Suggestions, which the CBE team and its many stakeholders look forward to undertaking in the form of convening key groups, launching pilot project, laying the framework for a more detailed, data-driven report, and supporting Peter Cluff in achieving his own NEET-specific Shrievalty goals.



NEET IN SURREY

Surrey is traditionally known as one of the most affluent and prosperous counties in the UK, characterised by a high quality of life, leafy suburbs, and a mix of urban and rural communities. It has long been a popular choice for families, professionals, and retirees due to its excellent schools, commuter links to London, and scenic countryside, including the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Demographically, Surrey's 1.2 million residents are predominantly middle-to-upper-class population, with high homeownership rates and a skilled workforce. It has historically been home to many commuters working in finance, business, and technology, as well as a growing number of entrepreneurs and remote workers. Most of its residents are concentrated in populous boroughs such as Reigate and Banstead (155,985), Guildford (149,176) and Elmbridge (140,500) (Surrey, 2023). The county is also known for its relatively low unemployment rates and strong education system, with some of the country's best-performing schools and universities.

Despite its wealth, Surrey also faces challenges, including widespread areas of deprivation, housing affordability issues, and a persistently high number of young people who are Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET), or are classified as arguably at risk of becoming a NEET. Understanding these dynamics is key to addressing inequalities and ensuring opportunities for all residents, particularly younger generations seeking stability and career progression.

Through intense, extended and impressively positive collaboration with the Surrey County Council between October 2024 and March 2025, the CBE research team were able to map and examine geographical data related to education, economic, family, health, and social factors as well as youth justice in order to provide a clearer understanding of NEET in Surrey and considerations for targeted interventions. The findings below echo what may be available publicly but also contain large parts of as-yet unanalysed data; these are laid out in the pages that follow, and serve as a quantitative foundation for the ensuing qualitative interviews, and the analysis that goes into the findings and policy suggestions.



WORKING DEFINITIONS

This report sets out to explore the current challenge of "NEET" - Not in Education, Employment, or Training – within the county of Surrey. The term **‘NEET’** describes a person, typically a young adult, who is not engaged in any one of the following three activities: formal education (whether full or part-time), or employment (full or part-time). However, Surrey County Council data considers only those not in full-time employment as NEET), or training (as associated with education, employment, or separately). This term is frequently used in social, economic, and policy discussions, to refer to individuals who might be at risk of an incomplete or wholly excluded education, from short, medium or long-term unemployment, from an absence of skills arising from a lack of training, as well as a range of consequential forms of social exclusion, financial impoverishment, professional marginalisation, and more.

While the drivers that see young people slide from non-NEET to NEET status are varied, and can begin from the very early years, NEET status is generally categorised into the **16-24 age range** and then subdivided into groupings: 10-12, 12-14, 14-16, 16-18 and 18+. These groupings themselves can vary depending on the context or region, which NEET applies across all gender ranges, although gender-specific patterns themselves exist depending on the region and/or culture. In England, the NEET status would apply to those who have reached compulsory school age. Those not on a school roll before the statutory school leaving age would be classed as a child missing education.

At the national level, NEET statistics and understanding are jointly managed through the Department for Education (DfE), and the Office for National Statistics (ONS). The UK Government classification involves those from the ages of 16–24 and includes those both unemployed and actively seeking work, and those economically inactive and not seeking work. There is a range of different datasets provided by the UK government on these matters at the Government’s [Explore Education Statistics Services](#).

Often in this report and other reports, the use of term **‘At Risk’ NEETs**, refers to individuals who are usually younger than 16 and exhibit some of the risk factors relating to becoming NEET, including persistent absenteeism, low academic performance, unstable home environments, mental health struggles, or lack of access to suitable vocational and academic pathways. Not everyone who is deemed ‘At Risk’ becomes NEET, nor are all NEETs specifically ‘At Risk’ but it is helpful from an analytical, and policy-based perspective to be able to target and address NEETs before they drop out of education, employment, or training.

Similarly, within the report and national and local statistics, the use of **‘Unknown’** within NEET Datasets is prevalent. This is applied to individuals whose status is unverified and it is not always possible to determine exactly whether they are NEET or not. This is due to several factors including data gaps such as migration across counties, lack of a school placement putting them in the system, parental or young person’s refusal to provide information, or broader breakdown in cross-agency communication and data sharing. **Not all who are ‘Unknown’ are NEET** and it is important to qualify readings of data that include NEET and Unknown. Often the large fluctuation of data in NEET and unknown numbers might show a real-term increase in young people who are NEET, but progress in reducing the number of unknown individuals.

Lastly, **EET** (Engaged in Education, Employment, or Training) refers to young people who have successfully transitioned out of NEET status into a sustained pathway. However, barriers to long-term stability remain, particularly for those who have experienced prolonged disengagement.



NEET THEMATIC FACTORS

Educational Factors: These include cognitive differences/SEND status, availability of vocational or alternative learning opportunities, school attendance issues such as absenteeism and exclusions, and access to digital and technological resources.

Family and Economic Factors: This category covers aspects such as gender and ethnicity, family structure (e.g., single-parent households or multi-generational unemployment), children removed from school due to SEND-related issues or post-COVID concerns, the cost of living, eligibility for free school meals, and geographical challenges like rural accessibility.

Health and Well-being factors: These factors encompass emotionally based school non-attendance, availability of mental health support, and healthcare-based challenges, including care responsibilities or access to NHS services.

Social and Community Factors: This includes the influence of peer groups, exposure to crime or juvenile affiliations, and the availability or absence of community support networks.

Skills and Training Factors: This category covers issues related to skill development, training accessibility, and barriers preventing young people from gaining the necessary qualifications or experience for employment.

Whilst these factors do not cover all issues that might relate to a person's life, they allow us to understand and evaluate the different problems and the future potential solutions. These are separate but are not necessarily separable factors. As illustrated in the Literature Review below, these NEET thematic factors are also echoed in NEET literature, both academic and policy-based.



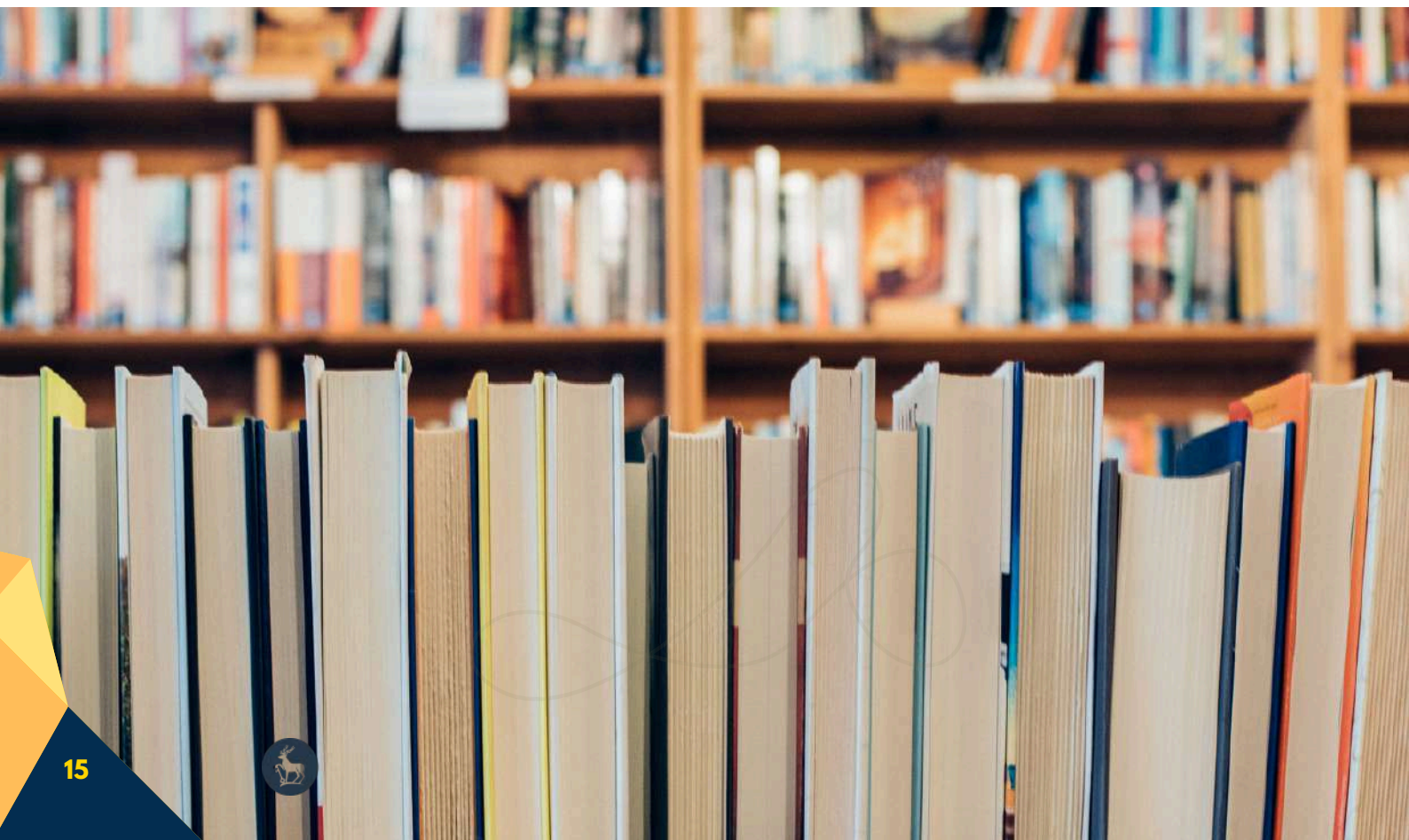
PART II

UNPACKING THE NEET NARRATIVE THROUGH CURRENT RESEARCH

The following section highlights a number of foundational and contemporary studies relating to NEET across a wide area of the scholarship, both academic and institutional. Our NEET literature is derived from a range of sources, including peer-reviewed literature on thematic factors relating to NEET – and literature relating to Institutional research, i.e. statistical reports, media and news articles, and reports specifically commissioned by local and national governments.

These pieces are set out at length in this first report, to indicate the range of conceptual, project-based and policy-oriented thinking that currently exists in this area, and which decision-makers in Surrey will need to be familiar with in order not to repeat previous errors and to undertake genuine change within challenging systems.

A copious amount of academic and policy research has been completed on the reasons for becoming NEET as well as potential avenues for solutions that might be able to remedy the problems. The following five sections examine each of these “factors” and the challenges associated with them. Within each factor, it quickly becomes evident that there is significant overlap between these various areas. For example, a low-income family in a high-crime area may struggle to address a health issue, which may cause a child to stop attending traditional education and never enter into skills-based vocational programmes that might propel them into a career. With this in mind, the intention of each section is to explore the various components of that factor to draw attention to how problems associated with it could cause a child to become NEET.



EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

Education may be the most important factor in determining which young people become and remain NEET. A 2024 study indicated individuals with lower levels of education are nearly twice as likely to experience extended NEET periods compared to their peers with higher qualifications (Fabrizi and Rocca, 2024). This was echoed by the finding of the Scottish Government's 2015 report, which determined a lack of qualifications may make young people 6 to 10 times more likely to become NEET depending on their gender and other demographic characteristics. The time young people spend in compulsory education is highly formative and if undertaken correctly, will equip them with the needed skillset and readiness to eventually enter the workforce or pursue higher education. As this stage of young people's lives is one in which they are generally under the roof of a parent or guardian, family factors have an especially significant overlap with education. Parents' willingness to commit to active participation in their child's educational path has been shown to reduce the likelihood of a child becoming NEET (Alfieri et al., 2015).

From the earliest ages, young people's compulsory schooling is critical to their transition to employment. Recent research has identified school readiness as an indicator of future NEET status, with 4–5-year-old children deemed school-ready if they reach a Good Level of Development (GLD) on their Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (Warburton et al., 2024). This means children with characteristics like special education needs, family and health difficulties, and disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds may struggle to achieve school readiness. This can harm children's educational trajectory, as students with low attendance, academic achievement, and extracurricular engagement are more likely to drop out of school and become NEET.

Even for those who do not drop out of formal education, the risk remains of falling behind in another measure of later NEET status – literacy. Youth with low literacy often fall into a “low skills trap” as they struggle to develop employability skills (Vugt et al., 2021). Subsequently, youth in this category are unable to benefit from additional ‘safety net’ schemes at the same level as literate peers, suggesting literacy must be addressed for further interventions to be effective. In addition to this, any attempt to lower NEET rates by focusing on education will also need to consider further the unique needs of students. For example, rural NEET youth's needs are often better met by pairing traditional and non-traditional education in addition to plugging students into community-led initiatives and vocational programmes to make sure they remain engaged (Flynn et al., 2024).

Other researchers commenting on potential policy solutions emphasise the importance of early intervention (Fabrizi and Rocca, 2024). They find that programmes aimed at keeping young people engaged during critical transition periods such as post-secondary school could significantly reduce NEET rates. Because it has been shown that being NEET in one year increases the likelihood of an individual remaining NEET the next year (Malo, 2023), finding key junctures to break the cycle is essential to staving off long-term NEET status.



FAMILY AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

A young person's family situation is highly indicative of later NEET status. In particular, their household's socioeconomic status predicts later outcomes (Odoardi, 2020). One 2024 study revealed that people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds spend up to 40% more time in NEET status than their more privileged counterparts (Fabrizi and Rocca, 2024). Yet often, large-scale policy remedies aimed at youth at risk of becoming NEET, such as the European Union's Youth Guarantee, face criticism for failing to sufficiently direct resources towards these most vulnerable groups of youth (Malo, 2023).

Additional work has also shown parents' socioeconomic status and educational background help form a "value system" which influences decisions about their child's education (Alfieri et al., 2015). This includes a suggestion that parents with less education and lower socioeconomic status may be less likely to prioritise their child's education than financially secure parents. UK research has identified intergenerational transmission of a 'culture of worklessness' (Powell, 2021). In families with one or more non-working parents, children may receive less encouragement to pursue education and employment. Further, research by the Scottish Government (2015) has indicated young people face a greater risk of becoming NEET if they live in social housing or come from a family either with a large number of siblings, without working parents, or are not headed by a cohabiting couple.

Young people from impoverished backgrounds are also four times more likely to be excluded socially and economically than their peers from higher-income families (Isherwood, 2023). Poverty may lead these young people – especially those of black British and South Asian backgrounds – to live in overcrowded social housing located further from the labour market, which may cause mobility and finances to become an obstacle to employment or training (The Centre for Social Justice, 2018). Black children in particular are more likely than their white children to be arrested by the police, placing them at higher risk of social exclusion (UK Government, 2024). Young people who identify as LGBTQ+ or have special education needs and disabilities also constitute a group that faces an additional likelihood of becoming NEET (Stonewall, 2020; NDA, 2019). Databases of information such as that of the Department for Education allow for Surrey's NEET data to be sorted along such factors as ethnicity or special needs to monitor their unique impact in Surrey specifically.

One factor that transcends socioeconomic status is how much attention parents dedicate to their child's needs, including addressing mental health difficulties that can lead students to drop out of school (Veldman et al., 2024). Beyond mental health, parents exercise influence via involvement in their child's education. Children with absent parents lack guidance and encouragement and therefore more quickly approach NEET status (Leino et al., 2013). These children may exhibit antisocial behaviour and face social exclusion and bullying at school. UK-specific research has shown that in situations where the police and social services had to contact parents about children's behaviour, NEET made up over a third of cases (Crowley et al., 2024, p.62). Even where parents are not absent, the quality of their involvement matters: in Italy, parents who read to their children help reduce the NEET rate, while parents who are overly controlling may increase it (Alfieri et al., 2015).

Even young people with seemingly ideal socioeconomic circumstances may become NEET due to family emergencies. Veldman et al. (2024) attribute late NEET to caregiving responsibilities, such as for disabled parents – a particular problem in South Asian communities. Unplanned pregnancies also limit young people's capacity to pursue education and employment (Powell, 2021). It is estimated that 21% of female NEETs between 16 and 18 years old are teenage mothers and face a greater likelihood of encountering adult poverty by age 30 (LGA, 2018).



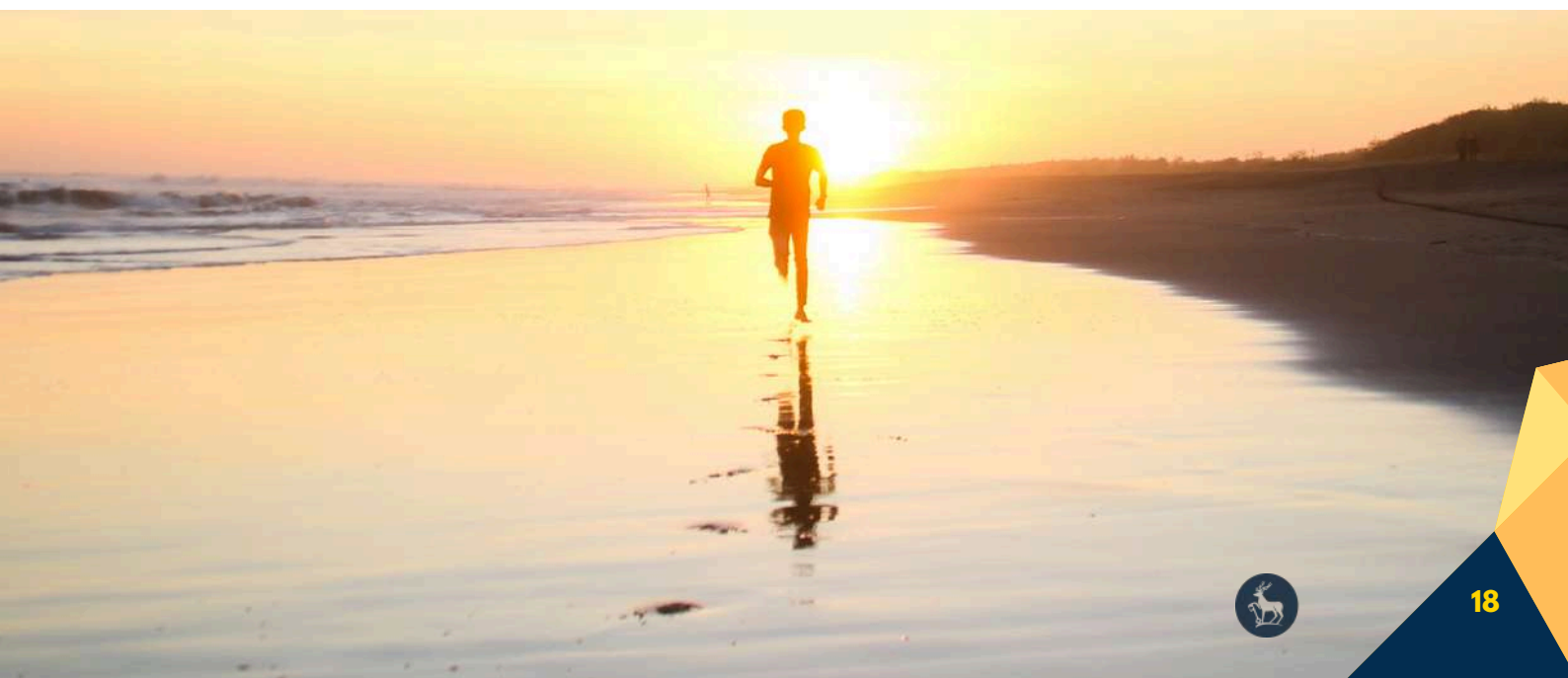
HEALTH AND WELLBEING FACTORS

Most work done on NEETs will readily acknowledge that in addition to being an economic problem, being NEET poses immediate and long-term health hazards to individuals. Elements of exclusion and isolation from support systems experienced by a young person who is NEET often join with detrimental habits formed during that stage of life to create a health spiral that continues over the course of that person's lifetime. Alongside these long-term health difficulties come ballooning costs associated with healthcare and a lack of economic contribution, causing financial stress for individuals in addition to the social safety programmes meant to help them (Isherwood, 2023; Scottish Government, 2015).

Studies have found that being NEET can put young people's health at risk and make them predisposed to issues like mental health disorders and substance abuse. Manifestations of this include a tripled likelihood of depression among NEET young men compared to peers and a heightened rate of alcohol and drug consumption among NEET youth (Public Health England, 2014). Similarly, Australian research has suggested that among young people attending mental health centres, those who are NEET are more likely to have experiences with criminality and cannabis in addition to mental health and social difficulties (O'Dea et al., 2014). This trend continues in data from over 50,000 young people in the United States which suggests NEET are more likely to smoke and exhibit poor health (Chandler and Lozada, 2018).

Similar heightened susceptibility to both NEET status and associated problems such as the development of a criminal record may be faced by young people in England with ADHD (Isherwood, 2023). Despite this heightened susceptibility, not all NEET young people experience the same level of risk. Research from Mexico found that "non-homemaker" NEET were more likely to experience a lack of purpose and associated risk of drug-related or suicidal behaviours, as compared to young people who were NEET due to family responsibilities (Gutiérrez-García et al., 2018).

In addition to the health problems stemming from NEET experiences, young people with health difficulties may be more likely to become NEET. People with disabilities may be up to 20% more likely to be NEET than their peers who are not disabled (Powell, 2021). Moreover, mental health difficulties and substance use have been shown to raise young people's vulnerability for later NEET status (Gariépy et al., 2021; Eurofound, 2012). Additionally, sexual health implications such as unplanned pregnancies may also contribute substantially to young people, particularly women, becoming NEET (Tanton et al., 2021). In many parts of Europe, "social selection mechanisms" exist by which people with poor health – women in particular (SIDA/ILO, 2020) – are more likely to be relegated to unemployment and NEET status (Hult et al., 2023).



SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACTORS

Social factors such as ethnicity and experiences with socioeconomic deprivation are important for attaining a nuanced understanding of the NEET phenomenon. Recognition of the higher susceptibility of some groups and sub-groups to becoming NEET is key to developing targeted approaches to the issue.

For example, rural areas tend to have NEET rates that are 10-15% higher than the national average (Flynn et al., 2024). This is connected to a lack of digital access and transport infrastructure, which pose an inhibitive hurdle even to students who are highly motivated to pursue education and employment. Additionally, in many places, women are particularly likely to be classified as NEET and benefit from gender-sensitive interventions (Rahmani et al., 2024). While this has statistically not been known to be the case in Surrey, where men have often been more likely to become NEET, young women and girls face specific issues such as pregnancy or family and caregiving responsibilities (Hult et al., 2023; Gutiérrez-García et al., 2018). This underscores the premise that looking at reasons for becoming NEET that are unique to various social demographics will allow for policy solutions to be tailored to these subgroups' needs.

One of the most important areas of social and community influence on becoming NEET is criminality. Research from Italy has shown exposure to criminal environments can exacerbate unemployment and hinder educational progress (Odoardi et al., 2024). In particular, the combination of economic hardship and heightened crime rates such as in southern Italy has been shown to deter investment and employment. This leads to a lack of opportunities for young people, who then become disengaged from society and less likely to pursue education or employment. The same research also notes the psychological harm associated with constant stress and fear of victimisation for these youth, meaning that even youth who do not develop their criminal record will still be severely inhibited due to the presence of crime in their lives.

This phenomenon of young people in low-income, unsafe communities getting trapped in NEET status has been observed and studied in England as well. A study by Magdelene Karyda (2015) on the impact crime has on NEET status for 18 to 19-year-old youth in England underscores the critical need for outreach towards youth in deprived and high-crime areas, emphasising the potential for a cycle of NEET status and criminality to establish itself for several generations within the same community. Karyda especially notes the need for further research into the impact of organised crime, which is inherently based upon social structures that require the recruitment and continued involvement of new criminals including youth that would then be classified as NEET.

Growing up in this kind of setting heightens the likelihood of a young person becoming NEET, as well as potentially engaging in criminal activity. A report from West Yorkshire found that despite a lack of widespread evidence for direct links between NEET and criminality, there is a significant overlap between the factors that lead a young person to become NEET and those that lead them to develop a criminal history (Isherwood, 2023). Odoardi et al. (2024) note that in the event of a young person developing a criminal record, their access to education and employment, as well as their social integration, is likely to be limited and make it more difficult to reverse their NEET status. For these youth, targeted interventions and access to opportunities for work and education despite their criminal past are a key part of the road to rehabilitation.



SKILLS AND TRAINING FACTORS

Notwithstanding the importance of academic excellence, newer research suggests hands-on vocational training programmes may be linked to more job prospects than a strictly academic course of schooling (van Vugt et al., 2022). Training provides students with hands-on experience in technical fields of interest and often direct connections to companies that will hire trainees as employees upon the completion of their programme.

Vocational training serves those at risk of being NEET by providing qualifications to enter high-demand sectors such as healthcare and IT. Youth guarantees and apprenticeships also help close the aforementioned skill gap many young people face (Eurofound, 2012), though different countries have had varying degrees of success with this. Germany in particular offers a strong example of connecting vocational learning with the labour market. Similar initiatives in England sometimes struggle to achieve the same ‘vocational orientation’ and therefore may struggle to offer secure paths to employment unless improved.

Research on how to make such improvements has found that it may generally be important to make sure vocational opportunities are markedly different from school and “created in partnership with young people” (Public Health England, 2014). This ensures trainees do not view their programme as merely a more technical version of school education but instead are able to engage with them as a path where they can be successful even if they might struggle in a traditional classroom.

Local governments have the opportunity to partner with private-sector vocational training providers to steer young people in an appropriate direction, such as through the establishment of local Youth Futures Teams, which help monitor youth trainees’ experiences and make sure they are set up for long-term employability (Lancashire County Council, 2024). Additionally, expanding access to these programmes requires considering barriers such as a lack of transport to training locations, which is especially prohibitive for rural youth who are 20-30% less likely to access these programmes due to such restrictions (Flynn et al., 2024).

This is especially important as further academic work has demonstrated the importance of assessing the skills and competencies of young people classified as NEET *before* and *after* their participation in training programmes to empirically establish the programmes’ effectiveness and make any necessary changes (RNY Observatory, 2023). Thus comprehensive assessment structures are crucial for developing training plans that accommodate varying levels of pre-qualification, readiness, and skills among NEET youth, particularly those in rural areas. Tailoring these plans to the needs of NEET youth further helps to reduce social exclusion and marginalisation.



CONCLUSION

In considering the application of lessons learned from this literature review, it is worth remembering that these NEET factors cover a wide range of life stages. Some factors, such as the standing of one's family or the impact of a physical or cognitive disability, are not avoidable and may cause a child to become NEET particularly early. Others, such as the development of a criminal record or a sudden caregiving responsibility or pregnancy, may occur later in a person's development and cause someone who has not been considered at-risk before to quickly begin missing school.

Thus for each instance of an individual becoming NEET, each of these factors is important to understanding both the generic, and specific causes for that NEET status. Once there is some understanding of these causes, action can be undertaken to prevent these challenges from continuing. This may mean providing a rural young person with reliable transportation to their vocational apprenticeship workplace, assisting a pregnant teenage mother with childcare responsibilities or providing support to a student who struggles with their schooling because of ADHD.

While each region and each NEET trajectory is unique, this literature demonstrates the pervasiveness of NEET status. When looking at the data specific to Surrey, the considerations gained from this literature review will help identify patterns and draw upon other authorities' solutions that have proven effective.



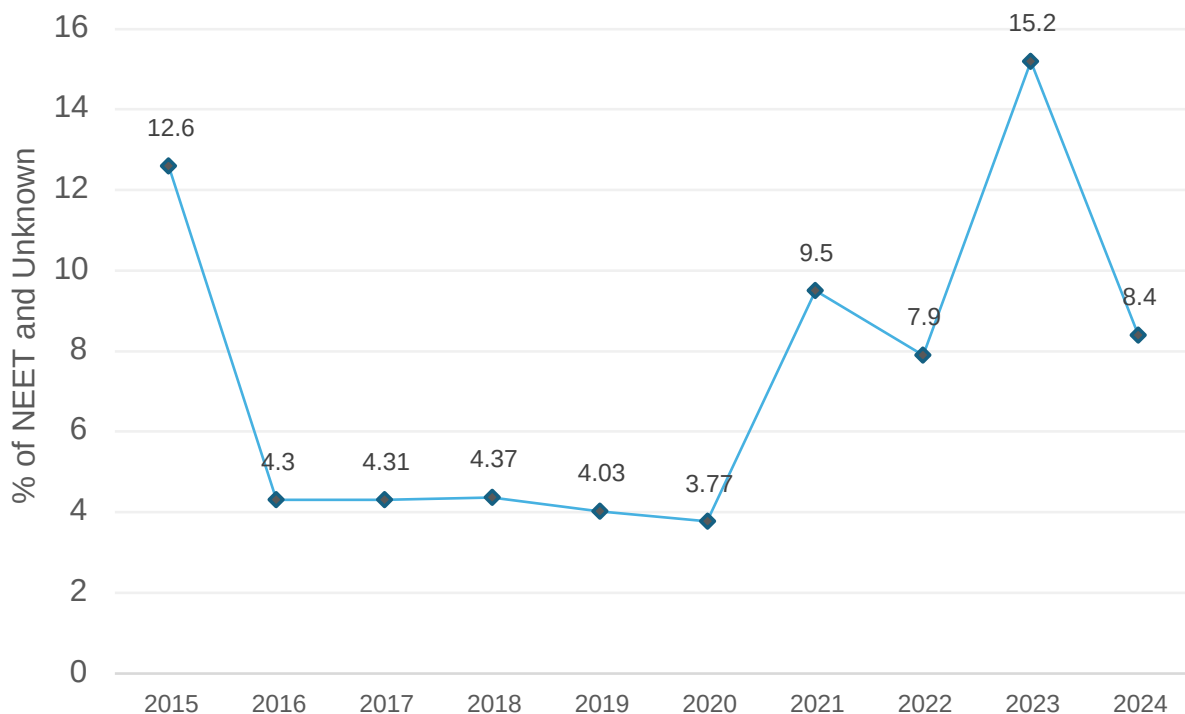
PART III

MAPPING SURREY'S NEET DATA

Nationally, the UK has experienced a notable increase in NEET individuals. By late 2024, approximately 987,000 young people aged 16 to 24 were classified as NEET, marking a 42% rise compared to the approximately 692,000 NEETs from three years earlier. This surge is particularly pronounced among young men, with 97,000 more male NEETs than females in 2024 ([ONS, 2022](#); [ONS, 2025](#)).

In the early 2010s, at the peak of NEET rates in parts of Britain, Surrey was able to boast comparatively low NEET rates. Between 2016 and 2020, the county's NEET and Unknown NEET rates steadily reduced to a national low and seemed to indicate progress towards the goal - stated in 2011 - of making all 16- to 18-year-olds EET by the end of 2015 (Surrey County Council, 2011-14). When COVID-19 became a global pandemic in 2020, it contributed to a massive furlough, primarily those between 16 and 18 years of age, and prolonged unemployment (Surrey County Council, 2020).

Chart 1 : Percentage of NEET and Unknown in Surrey 2015-2024



Source: [DfE \(2025\)](#)

By 2023, the Department for Education statistics (DfE) indicated a considerable increase representing a 15.2% surge in the NEET/Unknown rate, compared to a decade prior, predominantly from the Unknown population of 14.3%. However, a disclaimer on the DfE's website, as well as updates from Surrey County Council confirms that software supplier changes in 2022 compounded by known coding issues with Surrey's apprenticeships data means treating parts of this historic data with caution (DfE, 2024).



In the most recent iteration of data from DfE as of January 2025, the data discrepancy now appears to have been remedied. The data indicates that Surrey's NEET and Unknown population rests at 8.4%, down from the 2023 levels, demonstrating the significant difficulty encountered from 2020 onwards in tracing both young people categorised as NEET and those who are at risk, but still considerably high.

What the graph above shows is not necessarily a reduction of NEET Numbers from 2023 – 2024, but demonstrates the significant difficulty encountered from 2020 onwards in tracing both young people categorised as NEET, and those who are at risk of becoming NEET. The reduction from 2023 to 2024 could still indicate a real-term increase in NEETs but also an improved ability to clean up and reduce the number of unknowns by verifying the status of the young people. Nevertheless, the increase from 2020 is significant and notable.

Gaps in understanding the extent of the NEET problem in Surrey continue to exist. The remainder of this report therefore endeavours to bridge both what the data implies – and misses – through methodical interviews across the full spectrum of statutory and non-statutory authorities, and targeted research in collaboration with Surrey-based further and higher educational institutions, local employers and community organisations.



SURREY NEET SNAPSHOT

FEBRUARY 2025

16-18 DEMOGRAPHIC

Predominantly **white, male** youth recorded as NEET



Ethnic Composition

*some categories are deliberately merged to retain anonymity



45% on Free School Meal

VULNERABLE YOUTHS

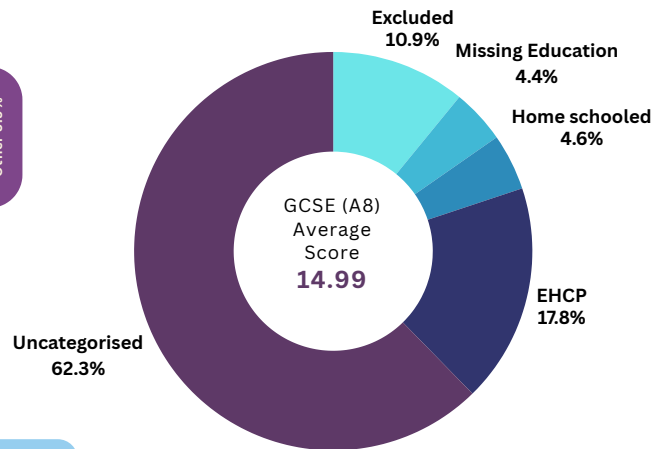
6%
have had an episode
of sexual
exploitation

3.6%
in the youth
justice system

101
receive EHCP* as
SEND** students

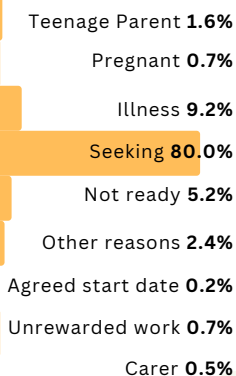
EDUCATION

14.99 average score out of 90, NEET
perform below GCSE Attainment 8
average score of 50.2 in Surrey



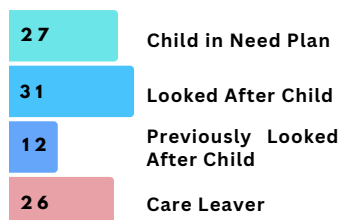
80% are currently seeking
further employment
or education

NEET CATEGORY



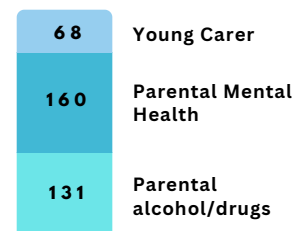
208 early interventions via
Early Help (EH) Plan, and
232 social care referrals

YOUTH WITH SOCIAL WORKER



27% have parents with
health challenges,
increasing likelihood
of *young carer* status

FAMILY



Source: Surrey County Council, February 2025 (n=574).

*EHCP: Education, health and care plan

**SEND: Special educational needs and disabilities

*** Some NEET individuals may appear in multiple NEET category



DATA BRIEF

The research team obtained NEET data of the 2024/25 cohort of Year 12 (Y12) and Year 13 (Y13) youth in Surrey from the Surrey County Council, updated as of February 2025. This dataset contains both NEET youth in Surrey sourced by the Surrey County Council through various institutions such as schools, alternative education providers, multi-agency monitoring systems (e.g. Early Years and Education System [EYES]), special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) officers, as well as self-reporting. The data used in this report is based on youth between 16 and 18 years, as opposed to the ONS data that accounts for youth aged between 16 and 24 years (ONS, 2024). The **16-18 age group** is the main priority of the research given the primary focus on early intervention, and the data availability from the Surrey County Council.

Overall, the February 2025 data comprises 574 individuals in Y12/13 (aged 16-18 years) across the county. Higher numbers are typically concentrated in urban areas and larger towns such as Guildford, Redhill, Farnham, Epsom, Camberly and Woking. The recorded **NEET data of 16-18-year-olds represents 2.1%** of the 2024/25 Y12/13 cohort of 27,308 young people across Surrey, indicating a higher NEET number in Surrey than the official ONS data (1.2% NEET and 7.2% unknown) from 2023/24 ([DfE, 2025](#))

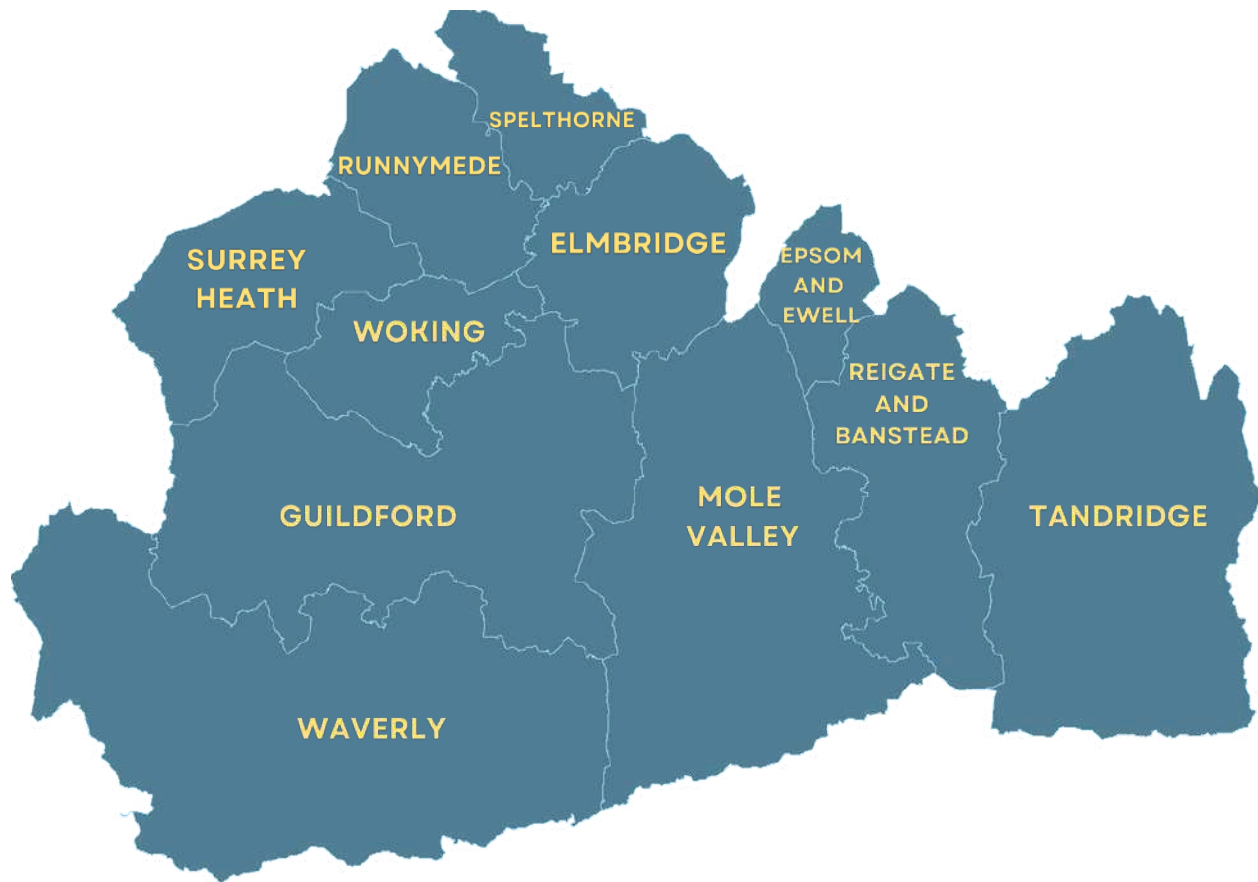
In addition to the **574** recorded NEET young people in Surrey, an additional 848 young people are categorised as NEET Unknown status in Surrey. As mentioned earlier, 'NEET Unknowns' may arise from migration across counties, lack of a school placement, parental or young person's refusal to provide information due to societal stigma, lack of cross-team communication, information transfer or data capture. This wide-ranging category of NEET Unknowns therefore poses a significant challenge, as some young people may still be engaged in education or employment, while others could be at serious risk of long-term disengagement, social isolation, or even criminal activity.

The high proportion of 'Unknowns' (14.3% in 2023) in Surrey's NEET statistics complicates efforts to accurately assess the scale of youth disengagement. Issues such as inconsistent reporting, changes in data management systems, and previous difficulties tracking apprenticeships have contributed to this uncertainty. Similar trends however are not unique to Surrey and are seen nationally, with a 42% rise in NEET and Unknown NEET rates over three years. However, the inclusion of 'Unknowns' in local datasets arguably creates difficulties in determining whether Surrey is truly experiencing an increase in NEET youth, or if data collection gaps are artificially inflating the numbers.

For this report, and after widespread consultation with interviewed stakeholders, the report's data analysis focuses on the **574 NEETs** within the following demarcated sections, to accurately examine key demographic patterns, geographic distribution, and potential educational, financial, familial and other risk factors associated with youth disengagement in Surrey.



Map 1: Surrey District and Borough Council



LOCATING SURREY'S NEETS

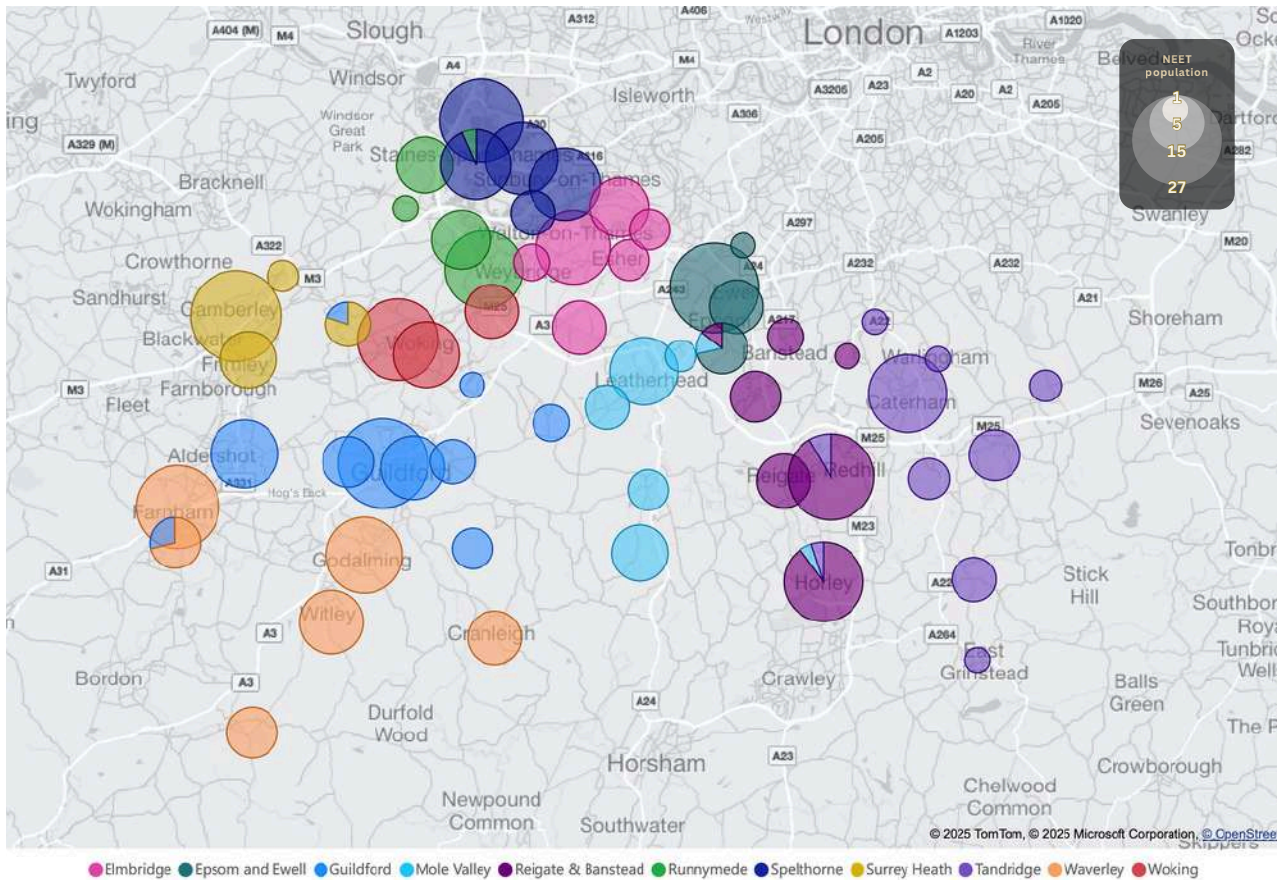
The geographically mapped data suggests that NEET populations are concentrated in specific areas. Localities closer to London, particularly in north-eastern Surrey, exhibit higher NEET numbers—potentially reflecting economic pressures or urban challenges. The largest London-proximate clusters are found around Staines in **Spelthorne**, Walton-on-Thames in **Elmbridge**, and **Epsom**.

Elsewhere in Surrey, the highest NEET concentrations are centred around Farnham in **Waverley**, Camberley in **Surrey Heath**, Redhill in **Reigate and Banstead**, and **Guildford**. In contrast, less dense areas such as **Mole Valley** and **Tandridge** display smaller NEET populations, likely influenced by factors such as job availability and cost of living.

Transport access may also play a role—areas with poor connectivity might struggle with youth employment and education access. Additionally, pockets of historical deprivation persist within Surrey, despite the county's overall affluence.

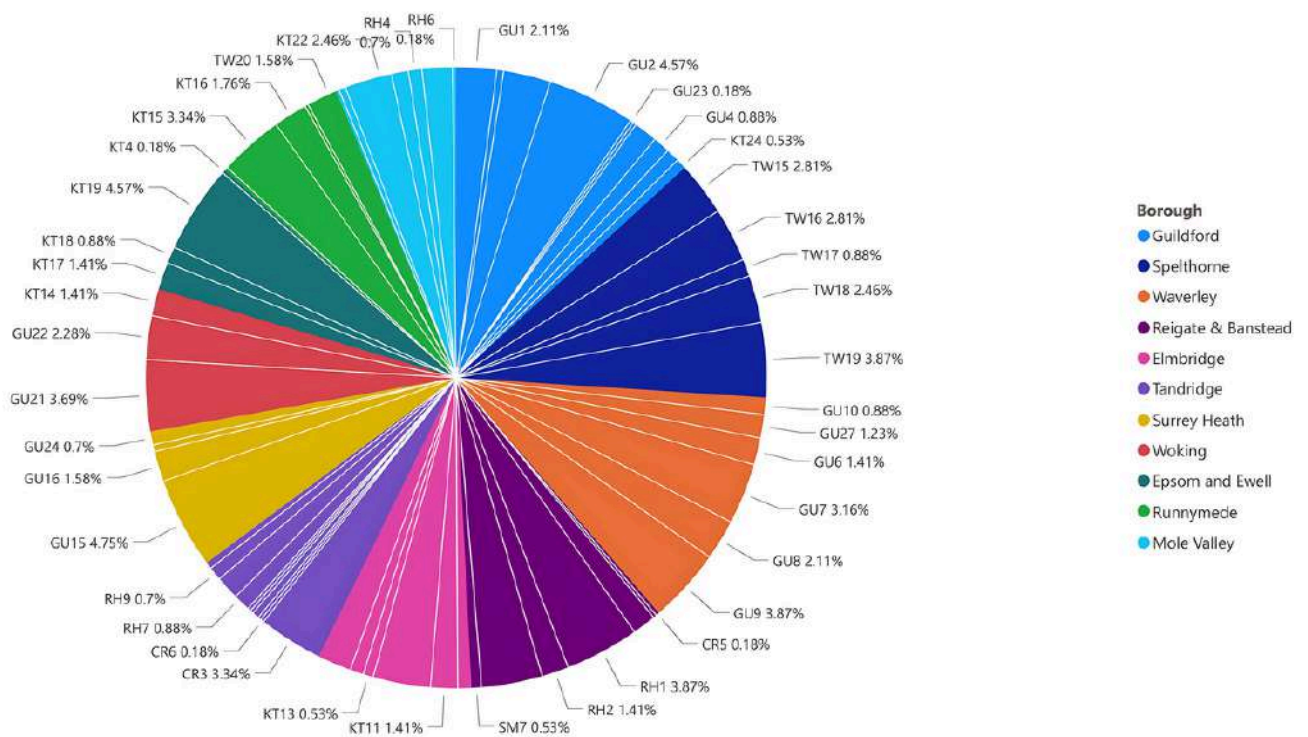


Map 2: NEET Individuals in Surrey, February 2025



Source: Surrey County Council; GIS mapping by CBE with postcode derived data

Chart 2: NEET Individuals in Surrey by locality, February 2025

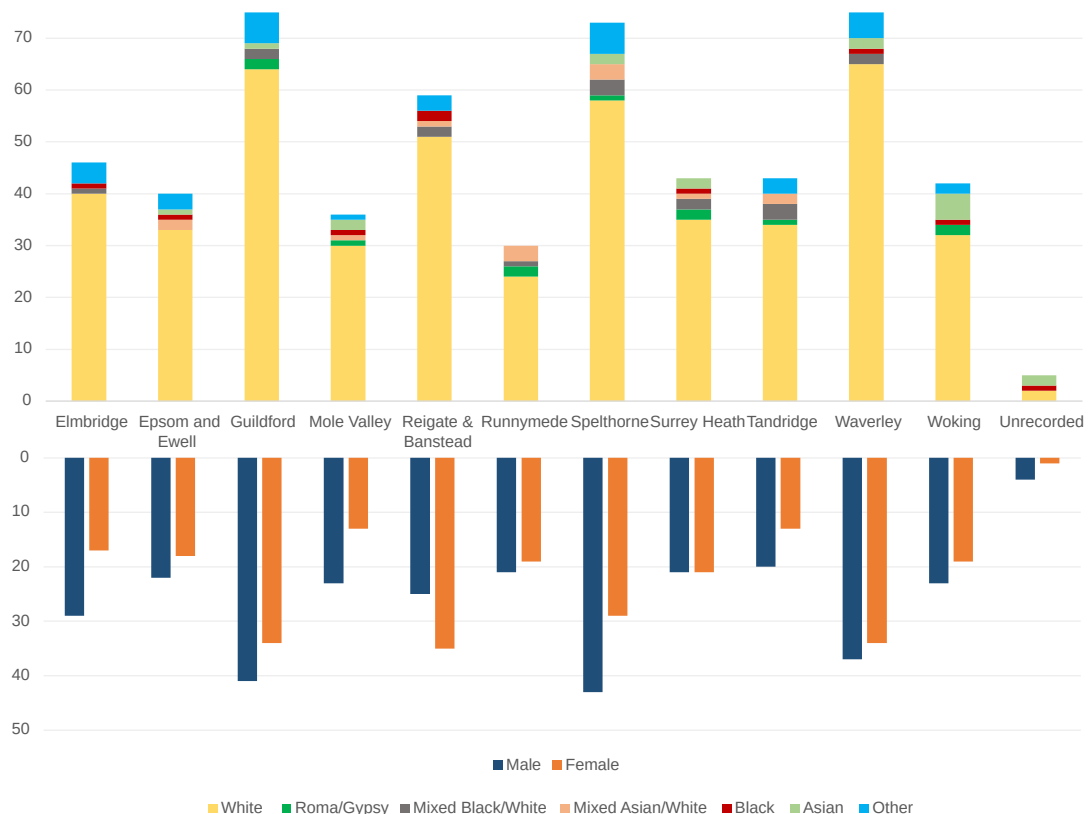


Source: Anonymised RONI data from Surrey County Council; visualisation by CBE (n=574).



Demographically, most of the NEETs are white students (82.5%) and predominantly male (53%). The ethnic and gender data of NEET are reflective of the population breakdown in Surrey ([Surrey Census, 2021a](#); [2021b](#)). However, the exception to the gender norm is seen in Reigate and Banstead where young women (58%) make up the majority of the NEET population.

Chart 3: Ethnicity and Gender of NEET Individuals in Surrey by locality, February 2025



Source: Surrey County Council data; visualisation by CBE.

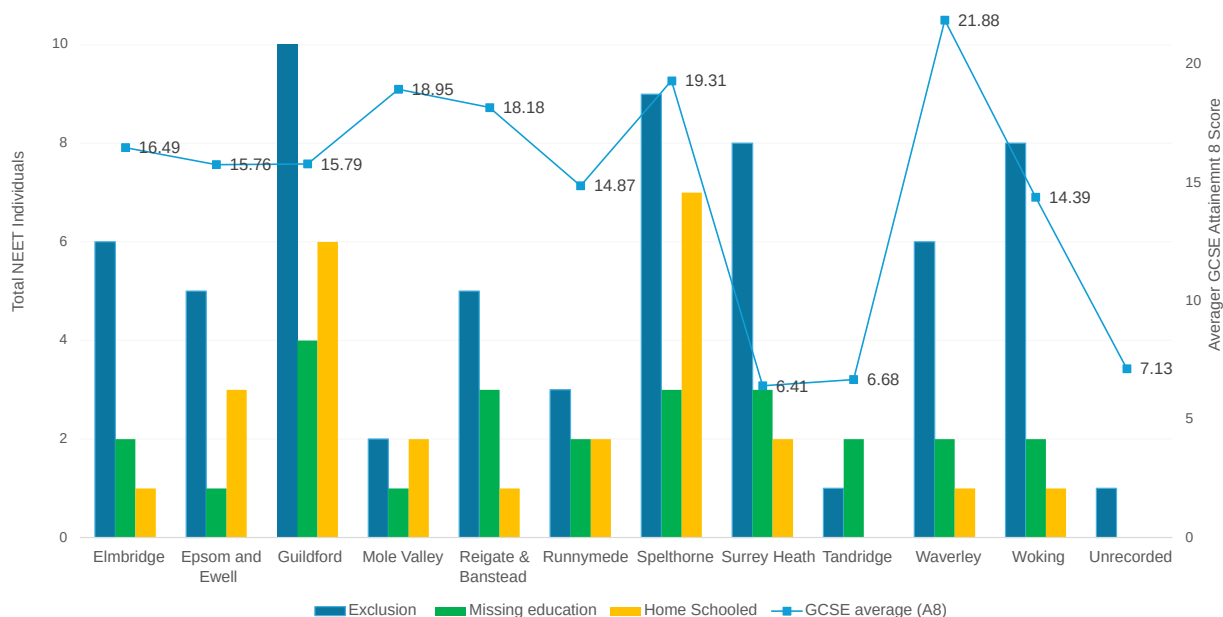


EDUCATION AND NEET

Evidently, there is a correlation between low literacy and poor performance at school. NEETs encounter the same issues of poor performance. The average GCSE Attainment 8 (A8) indicator score for some NEETs in Surrey is 14.65, well below the national average of 45.9 and Surrey's own average of 50.8 in 2023/24 (DfE, 2025). Some average A8 scores are significantly lower because of failing or completely missing the exams as seen in Tandridge and Surrey Heath. While the average A8 score paints a general picture that NEET are poor performers at school, exceptions exist - at least 4% of them perform above the Surrey average with a few performing exceptionally beyond the average in England.

Such discrepancies suggest that other factors contribute to poor educational performance including exclusion from and missing school and electively choosing to be home-schooled. The root of these can be attributed to factors such as poor and disruptive behaviour, mental health, family background, economic deprivation and personal social circumstances. These will be further explored in the subsequent data set.

Chart 4: GCSE Performance (A8) and Absence from School, February 2025



Source: Surrey County Council data; visualisation by CBE



ECONOMIC DEPRIVATION

Data shows that local authorities such as Guildford, Spelthorne, Waverley, and Reigate and Banstead have among the highest number of NEETs in Surrey. While the highest number of NEETs are concentrated around Camberly (4.75%), West Ewell (4.57%), and Park Barn (4.57%), all within the vicinity of neighbourhoods that experience the highest deprivation in multiple dimensions such as income, employment, training and education in the country (MHCLG's [Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019](#); [Surrey County Council, 2021](#)). Deprivation in this context refers to socioeconomic deprivation in either education, employment, health, or housing.

Background information on NEET arising from economic deprivation factors is not readily available, given the sensitivity and the necessity for anonymity. However, the research team utilised one of the RONI indicators, i.e., free school meals (FSM), as a determinant of low-income background. Free school meal eligibility serves as a proxy for economic hardship, as it is granted to students from households receiving government assistance. By mapping FSM eligibility against the Office for National Statistics (ONS) household deprivation data, a clear correlation emerges between NEET status and economic background.

FSMs are typically available for children in households receiving benefits such as Universal Credit, where earnings are below £7,400 post-tax, or Child Tax Credit with an annual income below £16,190. Other qualifying benefits include Income Support and Asylum Support, reinforcing the connection between FSM eligibility and financial hardship. Given that FSM recipients are often from households experiencing multiple forms of deprivation—such as overcrowding, unemployment, or financial instability—their likelihood of becoming NEET later in life is significantly higher.

The free school meal (FSM) data was geographically mapped against Surrey's deprivation heatmap (Census, 2021) to ascertain its link to socioeconomic disadvantages. This analysis is crucial in understanding the nuanced extent of the NEET issue as Surrey's affluent status may overshadow the presence of deprivation.

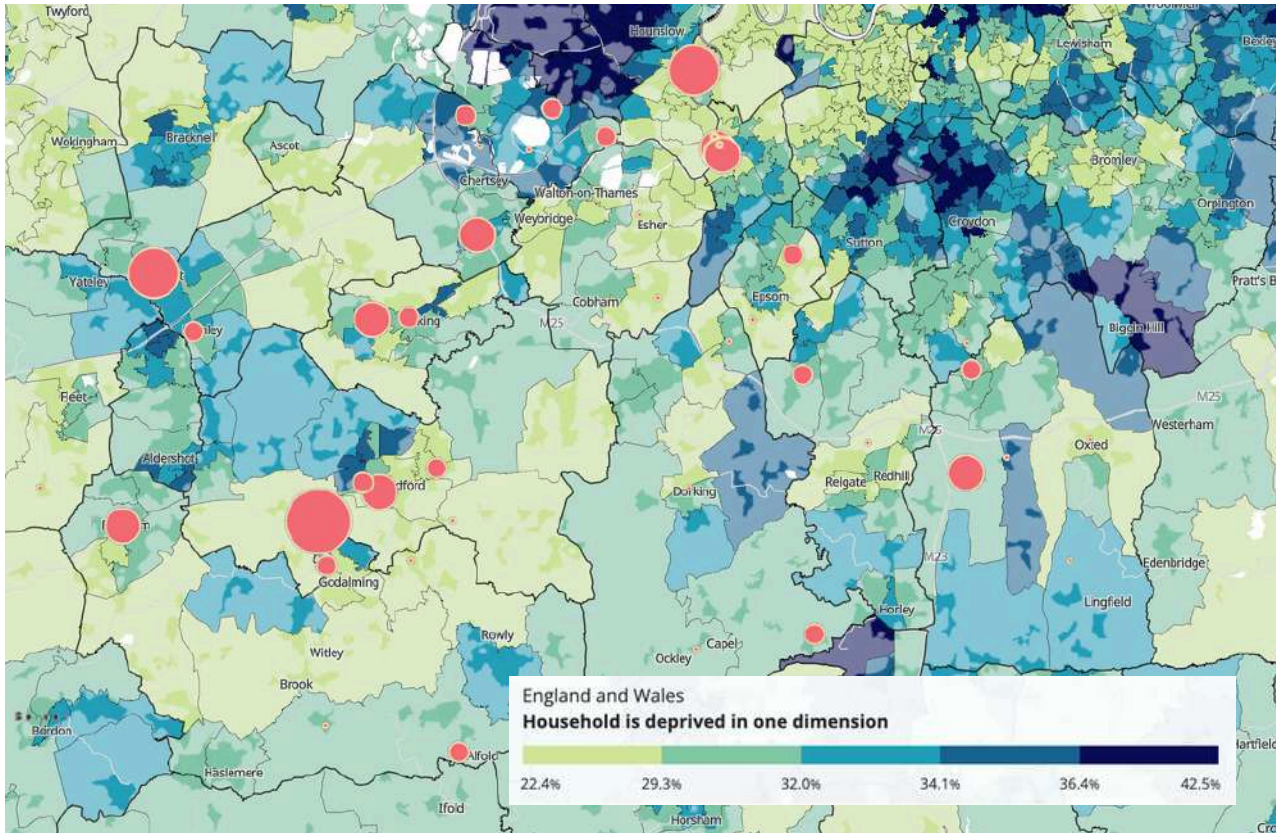
Data derived from the initial mapping (**Map 3**) seems to suggest that Surrey's NEET population is not exclusively concentrated in areas traditionally associated with deprivation. However, a more detailed, data-driven, micro-level analysis (**Map 4**) reveals a significantly different picture, and one that should be borne in mind when looking at early intervention, namely that Surrey NEETs receiving FSM are indeed located in areas of hidden deprivation, in what is a far more mixed picture. Maps 3 and 4 (following page) therefore visually illustrates these inter-relationships by providing a geographical representation of how economic deprivation aligns with NEET prevalence.

From the perspective of this exploratory report, these findings highlight three key points. First, financial deprivation exists within both deprived and affluent areas. Second, pockets of deprivation are closely linked to FSM eligibility. Third, areas with higher FSM eligibility rates also illustrate elevated NEET rates.

This data, and the ensuing patterns, align with above-mentioned national trends, which themselves indicate a strong correlation between socio-economic disadvantage as background conditions, and subsequent disengagement from education, employment, and/or training.



Map 3: Surrey's NEET Population v. Areas of Deprivation in Surrey

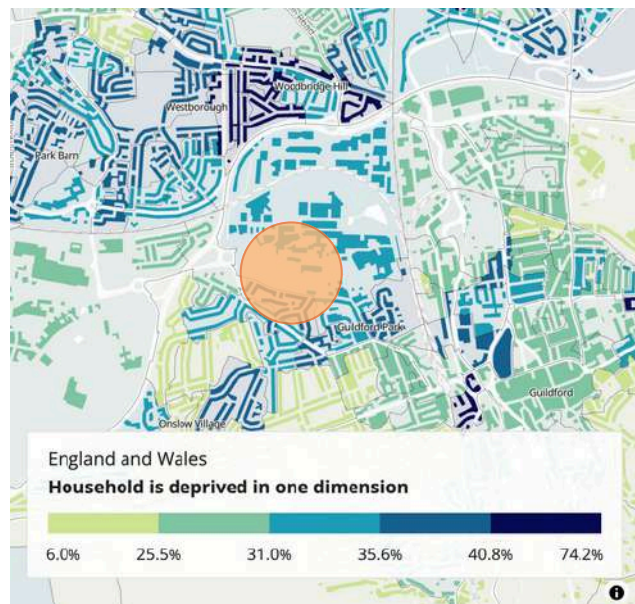


Source: Surrey County Council February 2025 NEET data mapped against ONS' Census 2021; visualisation by CBE.

Map 4: FSM Recipients v. Deprivation in One Dimension in Surrey Heath & Guildford



Map 4a: NEET cluster in the vicinity of Camberly, Surrey Heath



Map 4b: NEET cluster in the vicinity of Guildford Park and Westborough, Guildford

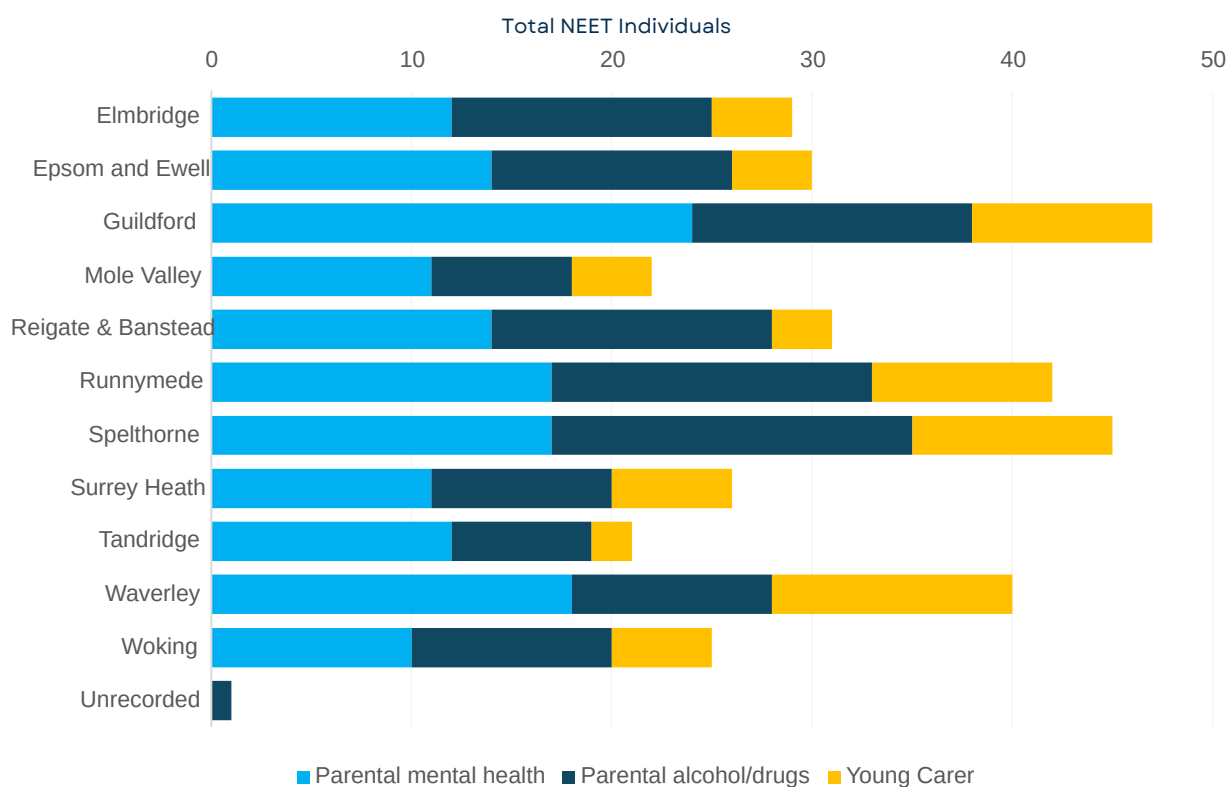
Source: ONS and Surrey County Council, 2021 Census data



FAMILIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Family factors play a major role in the ability of young people to cope with schooling and maintain personal well-being. In Surrey, these familial factors exist in the form of parental mental health and/or their dependency on alcohol or drug use, although may not be causal, they may lead to an increased likelihood of taking on caregiving responsibilities at a young age and consequently lead these young people to be classified as NEET. The highest rates of NEET youth are recorded in Guildford and Waverley, where poor parental mental health and young caregiving responsibilities are also most prevalent. Faced with these challenges, these young people often struggle academically, leading to frequent absences and increasing their likelihood of becoming NEET.

Chart 5: Familial Factors Affecting NEET Youth in Surrey, February 2025



Source: Surrey County Council; visualisation by CBE.

Household instability is another major factor contributing to NEET status, particularly for those requiring intervention from social services. Within the dataset, 232 young people were referred for social care support. Of these, the majority (208 individuals) received Early Help Plans, while a smaller group required more intensive interventions. The following chart summarises social care categories.



Chart 6: Social Care Recipients among 16–18-year-old NEET in Surrey, February 2025

Plan	Circumstances	Level of concern		Total in Surrey *
Early Help Plan (EHP)	Low-level concerns, need of extra support	Low		208
Child in Need (CIN)	Significant concerns about a child's well-being.	Moderate		27
Looked After Child (LAC)	Under care of local authority, i.e. Surrey County Council for more than 24 hours. Currently in foster care, children's home, or care order	High		31
Previously Looked After Child (PLAC)	Adopted or in guardianship after being in care	Moderate		12
Child Protection (CP) Plan	Child at risk of harm (neglect, abuse, etc.). Encounter trauma-related barriers to learning.	High		Negligible
Care Leaver	Aged 16-25, was in care but now independent. High NEET risk due to lack of familial support, financial struggles, and unstable housing.	High		26

Source: Surrey County Council; table by CBE.

* Some NEET individuals may appear in multiple NEET category

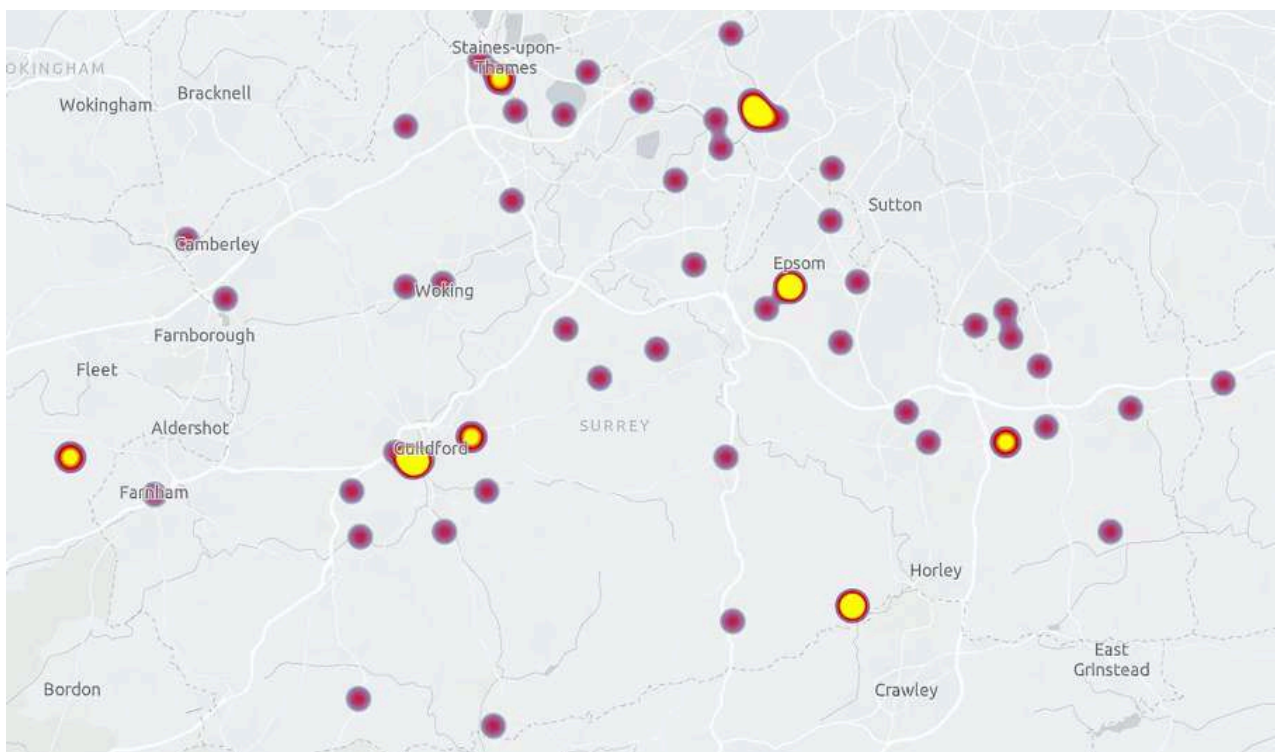


SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACTORS

Factors such as being pregnant and young parents played a role in limiting education and employment attainment, but these remain relatively low statistically at 0.7% and 1.5% respectively. More alarming, however, is the higher significance of ongoing illness and prolonged health issues (9.2%) and episodes of sexual exploitation (6.1%). The Surrey data recorded 208 cases (36%) of Early Help (EH) episodes that may relate to intervention in this area but do not point to a specific category of intervention.

Of the data, 101 (17.6%) of these youth have an EHCP (Education, Health, and Care Plan) and, hence, are designated as special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) students. EHCP provides legal support in areas relating to neurodivergence, mental health, and care needs. Given the high demand, limited resources and delay in assessment, it is likely that there are more SEND students than the data suggests as some may be on the waiting list while others receive general SEND provision without the need for EHCP. The local authorities of Guildford, Spelthorne, Epsom and Ewell have the highest number of EHCP students in Surrey, which again correlates with the locality of multiple deprivation noted in the aforementioned sections.

Map 5: EHCP Recipients among 16–18-year-old NEET Individuals in Surrey, February 2025



Source: Surrey County Council data; GIS mapping by CBE.



YOUTH JUSTICE IN SURREY

Crime is a central factor in assessing NEET data. In exploring the crime data, it is noted that the highest occurrence is in major towns, overlapping with NEET-high localities identified in earlier analysis such as Spelthorne and Guildford.

Chart 7: Crime per 1000 population in Surrey, Quarter Ending June 2024

Area	Crime rate
Waverley	45.39
Tandridge	54.16
Elmbridge	55.79
Surrey Heath	57.16
Mole Valley	57.9
Epsom & Ewell	63.47
Surrey average	63.62
Reigate & Banstead	65.78
Woking	66.34
Runnymede	70.83
Guildford	75.66
Spelthorne	86.38

Source: UK Police, 2024

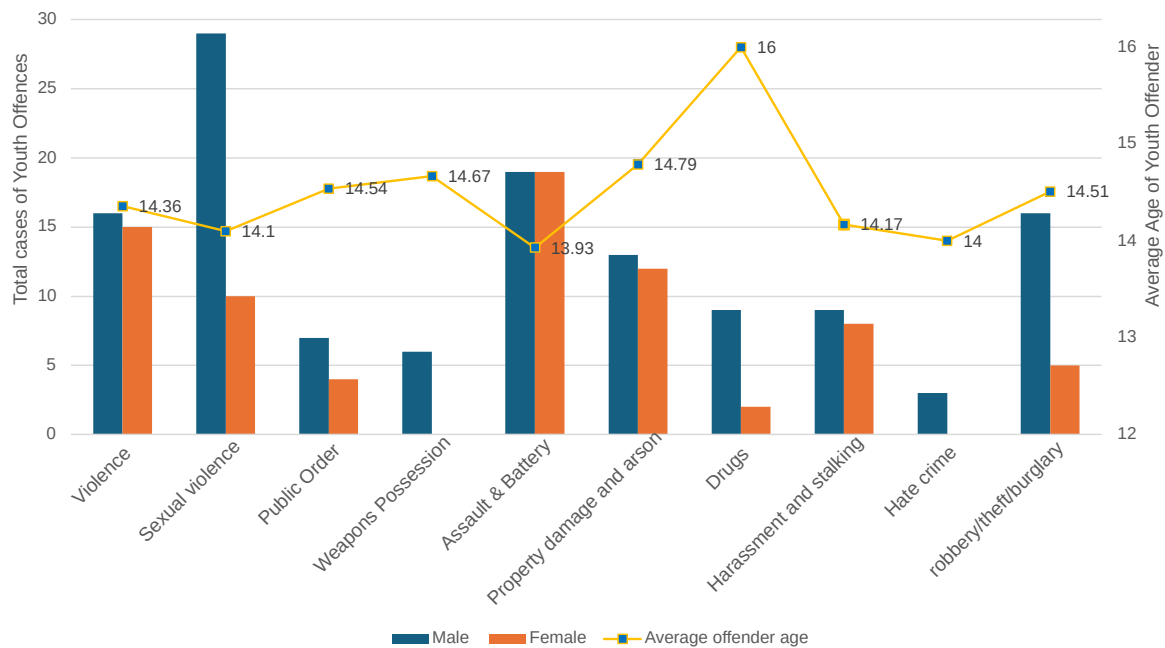
As noted earlier, identifying and categorising NEET individuals is challenging due to data limitations, compounded by the confidentiality surrounding youth within the justice system. However, the research team, working in conjunction with Surrey Police, were permitted to review and analyse anonymised youth justice data from Surrey in order to identify patterns.

A correlation analysis using the Pearson Correlation Matrix (refer to Annex I) was used to determine the relationship between variables such as age, gender, and the total number of cases. The analysis exhibits the highly gendered youth offenders: young males are disproportionately involved in the youth justice system. Offences are commonly recorded among younger offenders (strong negative correlation of cases vs. average age). The higher the number of cases, the lower the number of older offenders. Female offenders tend to be younger.

Further examination of the data indicates that the most common offences among Surrey's youth in January 2025 were physical in nature, i.e. sexual violence (40), assault & battery (38), and violence (31). All these points concern behaviour around mid-adolescence. Other behaviours such as property damage and arson (25) suggest an early anti-social behaviour that requires urgent attention before escalating into more serious crimes.



Chart 8: Recorded Type of Offences v. Average Age of Youth Offender Aged ≤17 Years, January 2025



Source: Surrey Police Data; visualisation by CBE (n=203).

WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

Overall, the analysis explored the multiple factors linked to NEET, namely economic, social position, health, disability, education, and youth justice that are mapped against geographical data in Surrey. While these attributes are highly correlated with NEET they should not be misconstrued as causes given the multifactorial nature of NEET, however, these attributes - operating as factors are arguably constitutive OF the primary reasons by which young people move into 'at risk', NEET', and 'Unknown' categories, in many cases, remain there.

A few important takeaways include the need for focus, especially in areas where multiple dimensions of household deprivation exist, e.g. employment, education, health and disability, and housing. These are seen among low-income households in urban areas such as Guildford, Ewell, Camberley, Woking, and locality within the Gatwick Diamond.

From a policy perspective, these categories, and these localities require additional support and resources, given their higher concentrations of NEET and overlapping social disadvantages. Targeted support should prioritise accessible education pathways, vocational training, and tailored employment initiatives to address economic barriers. Additionally, improved access to mental health services, SEND support, and youth justice diversion programs could mitigate long-term risks for vulnerable young people.

Collaboration between local authorities, schools, employers, and social services is essential to develop early intervention strategies. Strengthening community-based programs, mentorship opportunities, and financial aid for low-income families could help prevent young people from disengaging from education, employment, or training.

Going forward, refining data collection methods and improving inter-agency coordination will be crucial in understanding and addressing the evolving challenges faced by NEET individuals in Surrey. By focusing on both prevention and long-term support, policymakers can help create more sustainable opportunities for young people, ultimately reducing NEET rates across the region. These will be discussed in the upcoming section on qualitative interviews with stakeholders in Surrey.



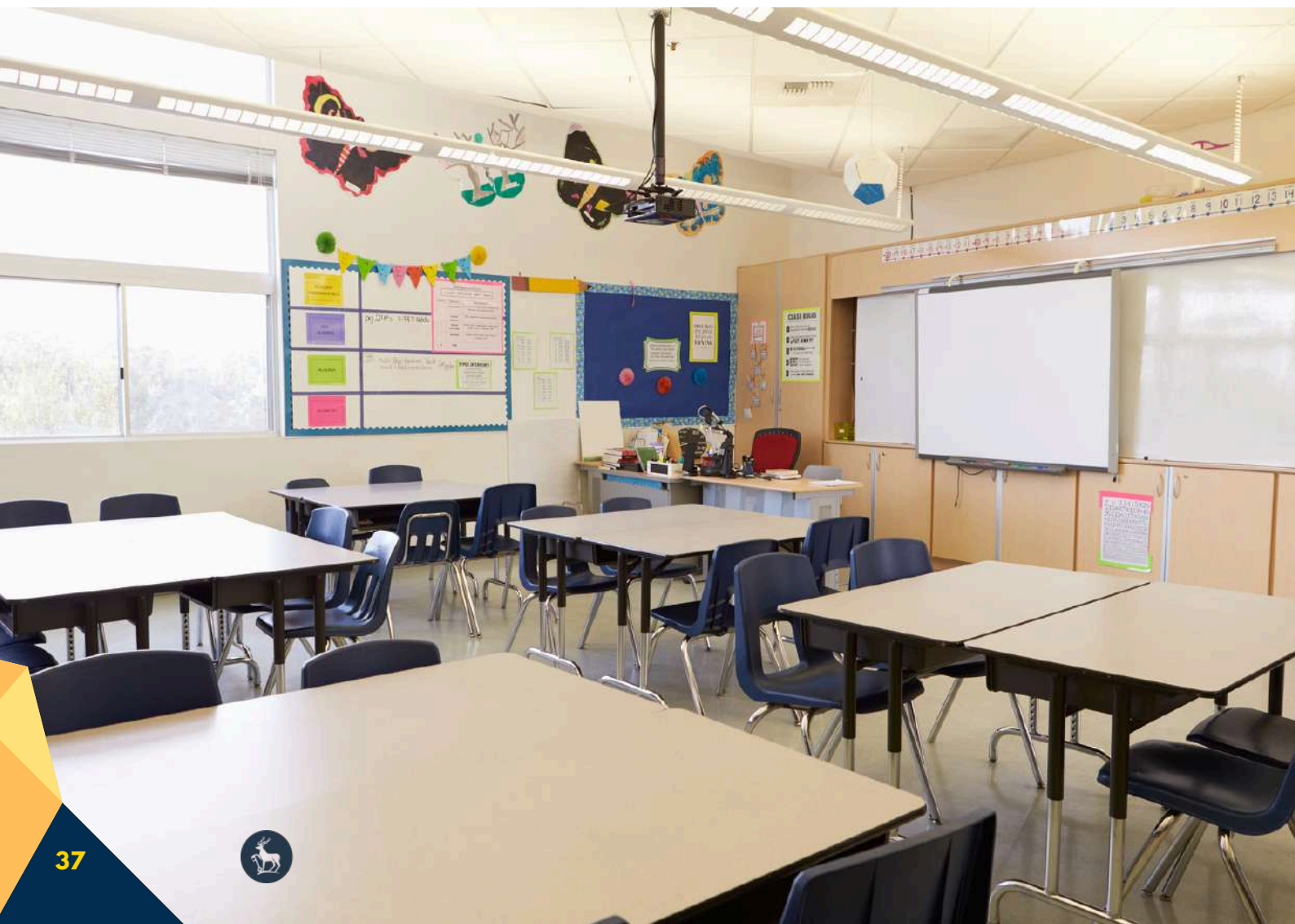
SOME CAVEATS

Data for NEET are **not comparable across the four UK nations**. Definitions of NEET differ across the UK, as does school-leaving age. In England, the statutory school leaving age in England is 16 years old. The September Guarantee policy implemented in 2007, guarantees all **school leavers at 16 years** of age the offer to further education or training. In 2013, this was strengthened to mandate participation in education, training or employment until 18 years of age by 2017. The age of school leaving remains 16 years in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Causes for being **NEET are multifactorial**, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach.

Our analysis informs data that surrounds primarily those aged **16-18 years** in Surrey and is not directly comparable with the generally broader ONS NEET that includes a larger age range, i.e. 16-24 years.

Being **NEET may be a temporary** or dynamic situation for a substantial proportion of young people. However, the labour market, especially for young people and especially for those without higher qualifications, is precarious. Even though many young people are not long-term NEET, nonetheless they may find themselves in a cycle of unemployment/low-paid employment which can perpetuate into later life.



PART IV

SPEAKING TO THE SURREY COMMUNITY

Included in this research report are interviews with a wide array of stakeholders across Surrey and beyond. In this report, we prioritised speaking to those who had a broad engagement with young people and those who are NEET through education (head teachers, college leaders, and other educators), civil society (heads and staff of charities and foundations), politics, services (councils both in and out of Surrey and the police) and of course Parents with the experiences of their children who were or are NEET. In this section, we seek to summarise our findings from these interviews and allow us to complement our findings through literature and data with on-the-ground understandings of the situation in Surrey.

The interviews were all semi-structured and held under the **Chatham House Rule** to allow for the most engaging and honest interactions and observations. Initial research for individuals involved allowed us to involve a snowball sampling approach to reach out to a wider group of individuals. Participants were selected based on their expertise and experience with young people, with efforts made to ensure a diverse representation across different roles and organisational sizes. All interviews were conducted remotely, following a core set of guiding questions but allowing for flexibility outside of these questions.

'We wish to convey our deep thanks to those who spoke to us and especially for the recommendations of others to speak to that allowed our breadth of interviewees. In total, the research team interviewed 30 representative with a focus on those with youth and NEET-related expertise specific to Surrey. A further 15 stakeholders were identified and contacted but the report deadline prevented interviews from being undertaken; the team will however endeavour to contact them for future initiatives pursuant to the 2025-2026 Shrievally

What became clearest throughout the interviews was the **importance of the individual experience of being not in employment, education or training**. As the findings have shown so far, each person who is NEET is so for differing reasons, and the ability to talk to different education, employment, and training providers with experience working with youth has been helpful in this regard. We wish in this part of the report to emphasize that the collation of experiences through the interviews provides a median understanding of the challenges providers face. However, there is no median person who is NEET, and the importance of individual listening and approach is vital, as is the flexibility that can be designed in the systems inherent to it.

In keeping with previous sections, we will be summarising the findings from our interviews into five sections, Educational Factors, Family and Economic Factors, Health and Wellbeing Factors, Social and Community Factors, and Skills and Training Factors.



EDUCATIONAL FACTORS

The education system was frequently highlighted by interviewees as a key factor affecting young people's ability to engage successfully. While responses varied, a common concern was the **inflexibility of mainstream education**, particularly at key transition points: from **primary to secondary school** and from **secondary to post-16 pathways**.

Challenges at the Primary Level: At the primary school level, issues related to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) were noted as early barriers to educational success. Interviewees emphasised the lack of suitable schools for children with SEND and the difficulty councils face in providing targeted EHCPs, leading some children to disengage from education at an alarmingly young age.

Additionally, professionals working with primary-age children observed a **rise in mental health concerns at younger ages**, with increasing cases of **anxiety and emotionally based school avoidance among children** as young as 10–12. Despite the urgency of early intervention, funding for primary-level initiatives was notably lower than for secondary education, with most financial support becoming available only in Years 10 and 11. One charity, having shifted its focus from secondary to primary education, reported greater financial instability as a result. Both educators and employers stressed the need to prioritise early intervention, as more children than ever are struggling to transition into secondary education.

Pressures in Secondary Education: At the **secondary school level**, competition between schools for funding and resources creates disparities in the ability to offer **flexible learning pathways**. Affluent schools often have greater capacity to provide varied support, whereas underfunded schools struggle to accommodate students who do not fit the traditional academic model.

Secondary education is increasingly exam-focused, and **students who struggle under this pressure can become disengaged**, leading to behavioural issues, apathy, or exclusion. The **lack of vocational options** further compounds this problem, as students with different learning styles or aspirations often have limited alternatives. Schools also face **pressures from OFSTED inspections**, which can incentivise them to remove struggling students from their rolls rather than provide the necessary support.

A major concern raised by interviewees was the off-rolling of students, where schools, lacking funding for alternative provision, feel forced to exclude students. In some rare cases, this is done to protect their OFSTED rating or to reduce disruptions in the classroom. However, once a student is off-rolled, there is little to no follow-up support, leaving them vulnerable to becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and effectively disappearing from the system.

Barriers in Post-16 Pathways: At the post-16 level, the lack of vocational training opportunities was a key issue raised by interviewees. Many employers felt that the academic targets imposed by schools did not align with local labour market needs, resulting in missed opportunities for students who might thrive in more practical, skills-based roles.

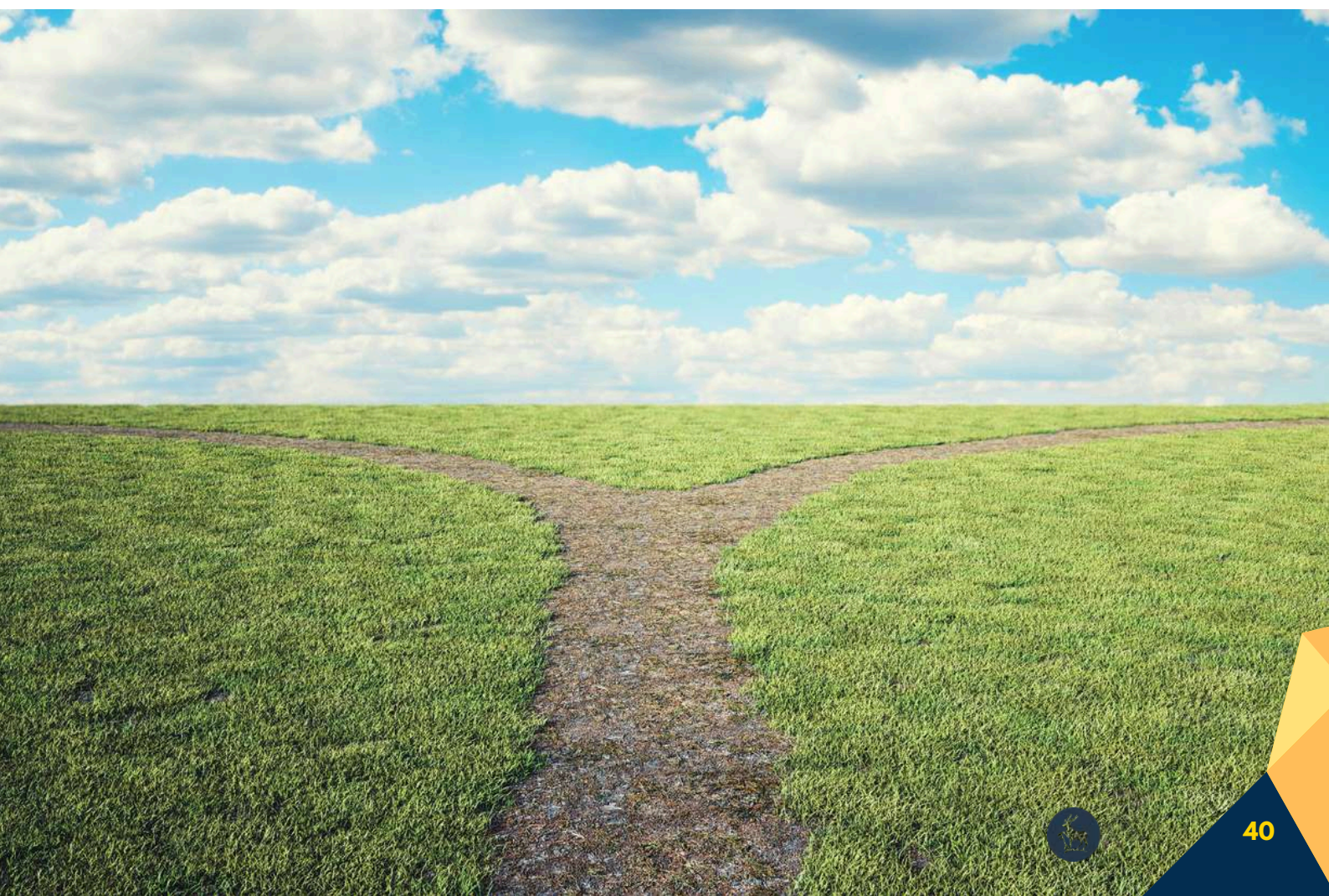


Successful alternative pathways

These include skill-building initiatives, whether through stealth education (where learning is embedded within engaging activities) or explicit micro-skilling programs designed to transition young people directly into the workforce. However, these opportunities remain underfunded and often poorly advertised, making them inaccessible to many students who could benefit from them.

The Expanding Role of Schools: Schools are expected to play a central role in reducing NEET numbers, yet interviewees repeatedly noted the **growing strain on schools to act as social safety nets**. The **parent-school-child relationship** was identified as having weakened, with many schools now taking on responsibilities that extend far beyond education. This is driven by factors including COVID-19, cost-of-living crisis and gaps in parental knowledge about child development through the closing of child centres and initiatives focused on engagement with parents.

Despite criticisms of the education system, it was widely acknowledged that schools in Surrey are being asked to do too much—often without the necessary resources or training. The additional responsibilities placed on teachers detract from their primary role of delivering quality education, which remains one of the most significant factors in shaping young people's futures.



FAMILY AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

In thoroughly understanding the causes behind at-risk and NEET categories, the **cost-of-living crisis and austerity** were frequently cited as key factors influencing family and economic circumstances. In Surrey, the **stark economic divide** creates an additional barrier, as those from more privileged backgrounds often struggle to grasp the level of inequality in opportunities. Many initiatives are accessible only to those who can afford them, leaving disadvantaged young people with fewer options. At the same time, in areas with **generational histories of low education and employment**, attitudes towards education differ significantly from those in more affluent parts of the county.

Community-Based Solutions and Mentorship:

Grassroots community work has shown promise in bridging the gap, especially for families that do not typically engage with education initiatives. In situations where **positive role models are absent within families, mentorship and role-model development programmes** have had a measurable impact. These initiatives provide guidance, structure, and encouragement, helping young people stay engaged in education and avoid the path to becoming NEET.

The Breakdown of Trust Between Families and Institutions:

One of the biggest challenges is the **disconnect between families and formal institutions**. While official NEET figures in Surrey stand in the 500s, data suggests that over 800 young people remain unknown NEETs – individuals who have fallen off the radar due to difficulties in contacting parents or tracking their situation. Schools, alternative education providers, councils, and the police attempt to pull together a support network, but gaps remain.

Family Instability and the Role of Parents:

Instability and lack of parental guidance significantly shape young people's futures. The closure of children's centres has left many parents from the 2010s without access to parenting education and support. Limited awareness of modern educational and career pathways leads some to discourage non-traditional routes or struggle to provide guidance. It is important that parents are not singled out in this respect when the vast majority clearly work hard managing impossibly challenging caring duties alongside employment. Within families, however, there is a clear intersectionality of pressurised, challenging issues which often leads to a breakdown in one or more areas of a child's development in ways that previous safety nets and security systems supported.

Economic Hardships and Their Ripple Effect:

At an economic level, many **support thresholds are rigid**, meaning families who narrowly miss qualifying for assistance are often left worse off. Financial strain can lead to a broader sense of hopelessness, increasing the risk of young people turning to gang involvement and crime. Additionally, with parents working full-time, there has been a rise in children being left at home, sometimes resulting in attendance issues or disengagement from school altogether.



HEALTH AND WELLBEING FACTORS

The Prevalence of Anxiety and Mental Health: As previously noted, the prevalence of anxiety (both diagnosed and undiagnosed) is a recurring theme among NEET individuals in Surrey. While the root causes are unclear, discussions with interviewees routinely illustrated reveal that self-confidence issues and lack of motivation appear as early as primary school. This trend coincides with the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted in-person education and its developmental benefits, as well as the increasing exposure to social media at younger ages.

Emotional Stress and School Avoidance: These issues contribute to emotional stress in schools, leading to school avoidance, which in turn increases the risk of permanent exclusion or disengagement during key educational transitions, such as moving to secondary school or post-16 pathways.

Challenges for Children with Complex Needs: Once again, children with more complex needs are disproportionately affected, as there is a lack of initiatives, alternative education options, and staff to support them. Even when alternative education pathways, such as forestry schools or animal-assisted learning, are available, many of these programs lack OFSTED accreditation, making it difficult to secure funding. As a result, vulnerable children often fall through the cracks.

Initiatives and the Role of Parents: These include speaking and confidence-building lessons for primary school children, as well as non-academic programs focused on small, confidence-boosting achievements. The role of parents is also crucial, with the police and other institutions increasingly identifying cases of neglect, even within affluent families. This further exacerbates the growing mental health crisis among young people in the county.



SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY FACTORS

Cuts to Community-Based Institutions

For the past 15 years, almost every community-based institution has faced cuts and closures, including youth groups, mentoring programs, social spaces, and vocational activities.

These spaces have historically served as early intervention points for children who might have become NEET. However, the remaining spaces tend to serve only children who are at risk of being NEET, meaning those who would have used these spaces regularly in the past are now using them less. Many children who still attend these facilities are often in need of other services, leading to the idea that many more children are falling through the cracks.

The Erosion of Community Support

Even where community facilities remain open, they are often operating with fewer days and locations. There is a lack of a coordinated approach between these facilities, including police services, schools, councils, and other services.

Within Surrey, despite the best efforts of many key stakeholders, there remains no county-wide, all-inclusive, truly unified structure or approach to successfully preventing children who are 'at risk' of becoming NEET. The pressure to identify and intervene with at-risk children has increasingly shifted to schools, while social and community groups that were once able to address these issues quickly and effectively are now scarce.

The involvement of institutions like the police in securing places for children in social programs highlights the strain on overloaded social services, which are struggling to manage the demand.

The Strain on Social Services

At the heart of the issue is the overloaded system designed to provide social services. Social casework careers are under unprecedented pressure, with low pay and high turnover, making it difficult for parents to even know who their caseworker is.

The system has unfortunately eroded trust within communities, leaving parents and children disillusioned and doubtful about available support. While there are many small initiatives that could make a difference, there is a need for a more centralised system to share information and engage with these resources more effectively.



SKILLS AND TRAINING FACTORS

Apprenticeships and Vocational Training: In the view of many interviewees, the slow but steady decline of apprenticeships in Surrey has contributed to the rising NEET population. Apprenticeships and vocational training offer an ideal alternative for young people who do not fit into traditional education systems and wish to transition into work more quickly. However, businesses are increasingly unable to offer these opportunities, and educational institutions are less inclined to promote them over more academic routes. This is a real pity, and indeed a shortcoming, because there is a strong demand from students, but the financial structures and incentives surrounding apprenticeships have not been conducive to providing these alternative pathways. While initiatives in fields like construction and engineering are promising, a broader range of apprenticeships and vocational training, along with better communication about these opportunities to schools and universities, would be highly beneficial.

The Role of Mentoring

Mentoring also plays a significant role in influencing skills and career direction. Positive mentoring can guide young people toward potential pathways they might not have considered. However, it's important to recognise that mentoring programs often target students who are already engaged in the education system, leaving out many NEET individuals who are harder to reach. Nevertheless, for those who are still interested in education, employment, or training, mentoring has proven to be an effective way to support them in navigating their future.

Employment and Qualifications Mismatch: From the employment perspective, there is a mismatch between the qualifications young people are achieving and what employers in Surrey are demanding. Many employers continue to request qualifications like GCSEs or certain levels of maths and English, despite there being no specific relevance to the job requirements. A few employer-led initiatives that look beyond qualifications have been more successful in engaging young people. Additionally, early intervention and career discussions starting at the primary school level have proven beneficial not only for young people but also for employers, who can plan their future workforce needs years in advance.

Supporting Those with Special Needs: This is especially true for young people with special needs, who are entitled to work that aligns with their abilities. By starting career conversations earlier and being more open about the types of work available to them at a local level, there have been powerful examples of increased engagement in education and training. This early focus helps these individuals develop the skills they know they will need for future employment.

In concluding our interviews, we must keep the importance of the individual at the heart of this report. All of those we spoke to have had different and varying experiences with young people, and every single person also noted there was no one-size-fits-all approach that could be brought together. As we move into our conclusion to this report, we hope that these interviews have helped to bring together a range of observations, insights, and expertise-driven feedback to the challenge of NEET in Surrey.



PART V

CONCLUSION

EXISTING CHALLENGES: NEETS IN SURREY

As evidenced above, Surrey's NEET population is predominantly focused around the areas of Guildford, Spelthorne, Waverley, Epsom & Ewell. Typically, NEETs are based within households, and multiple family and economic factors impact individual children's educational attainment and ability to engage with the educational system. Early intervention is crucial to breaking this cycle, providing support before disengagement occurs.

Four overarching factors stood out from our report as some of the largest barriers and challenges in Surrey that have likely contributed to the recent rise in NEETs:



Disconnected Services and Gaps in Care

A critical gap in communication and support between the various services – from social care to education, healthcare, and the police – has left many children unsupported, often falling through the cracks at crucial moments. The system in Surrey, currently, remains fragmented and uncoordinated but through creating an integrated approach to support, with seamless communication across services, no child need be left behind. Bridging these gaps will not only prevent children from becoming NEET but also create a more nurturing environment where every young person can thrive.



Mental Health and Wellbeing Challenges

The mental health crisis among Surrey's youth is a stark reality, with rising anxiety and emotional distress often originating from home, school, or social situations. The isolation and school avoidance that stem from these challenges can be devastating for young people, and trigger NEET status. And yet they can be overcome. There is an urgent need for a more compassionate and coordinated approach to mental health, one that offers young people the support they need to rediscover their confidence and sense of belonging.





Family Instability and Economic Hardship

The breakdowns in family structures, often beyond anyone's control, combined with the pressures of the cost-of-living crisis, have deepened the educational disengagement of many young people. Economic hardship, lack of support, and sometimes neglect have pushed some towards risky alternatives, leaving them vulnerable and marginalised. By strengthening Surrey support systems for families and young people, by offering guidance and resources at every stage, it is possible to break the cycle of disadvantage. A collective effort to provide stable homes, educational opportunities, and mentorship can empower these young people to find their own path to success.



Educational Barriers & Lack of Appropriate Pathways

The educational system has placed an overwhelming emphasis on traditional, academic pathways, often sidelining diverse and flexible options that could better serve many young people at risk of becoming NEETs. The focus on university as the singular route to success has left a gap in opportunities for those who may thrive in vocational fields. The pandemic has only deepened this divide, leaving many unsure of the best path forward. However, this presents a unique opportunity to reimagine post-16 education, to create pathways that cater to a wider range of talents, interests, and aspirations, igniting the passions of young people who feel overlooked.

The increase of those not in education, employment, or training in Surrey can be widely understood as the constricting of the safety net that has been in place to provide young people with the flexibility to approach life as their needs and wishes dictate. The cost-of-living crisis as well as the shock to much of the education and family system that COVID provided has created ruptures in that safety net that must be rebuilt if we are to stop people from falling through the gaps.

The weaving of the safety net and the provision of flexible pathways into adult life is an essential step to reducing the number of people who become NEET, and earlier intervention is needed to stem those at risk now, as well as intensive work required to build the proper pathways for those already in the process of transition through the stages of education.



PART VI

PATHWAYS TO PROGRESS

Through the collection of evidence for this 2025-2026 Shrieval report, there are pathways to progress we have identified in reducing NEET numbers in Surrey that will be able to focus on over the next few years (and beyond).



Strengthened Coordination Between Statutory Services and Non-Council Initiatives

There is a need to strengthen collaboration not just between statutory services like youth support teams, schools, social care, and the police, but also with non-council initiatives, including local charities, businesses, and community organisations. These partnerships can create formal networks, encourage data-sharing, and ensure that those at risk of becoming NEET receive the timely intervention they need. By bridging the gap between official services and community-driven efforts, we can provide more comprehensive, supportive pathways for young people.



Devolution Opportunities

As we anticipate changes in 2025 with devolution, we must place more emphasis on leveraging local, non-statutory services. These include community-based organisations, youth clubs, mentorship programs, and businesses offering apprenticeships or internships. Strengthening connections between statutory bodies and these grassroots organisations will create a more holistic, interconnected support system that can reach even the most vulnerable young people.



Centralised NEET Prevention and Re-Engagement Strategies

By focusing on prevention, we can address the root causes before a young person becomes NEET. Targeted interventions for those already at risk and re-engagement strategies for those who have become NEET can provide them with a clear roadmap back to education, employment, or training.



Improved Data Systems and Tracking

The development of robust data systems to capture and share information on at-risk youth will allow for more effective intervention. By tracking NEETs across Surrey, including data on both statutory and non-statutory services, we can identify patterns, spot trends, and intervene sooner. A more coordinated data system will ensure no one falls through the cracks. SCC's use of the **EYES Establishment Portal** is a positive step towards this goal.





Building Awareness and Resources for Frontline Professionals

Developing comprehensive training materials for frontline professionals will enhance awareness of the risks and challenges faced by NEET youth, including marginalisation, exclusion, and exploitation. These resources will equip staff with tools to identify and respond to harmful environments, ensuring a proactive approach to supporting vulnerable young people. Additionally, expanding the county-wide NEET risk assessment toolkit, aligned with the Risk of NEET Index (RONI), will provide structured guidance for professionals across education, health, and social services. By integrating these materials into various support settings, those working with young people can better assess risks and implement targeted interventions.



Revitalising NEET Support Services

The restart of the NEET Support Service, initiated in August 2023, represents a fresh opportunity to build on post-devolutionary funding. This service can be pivotal in re-establishing the Surrey Careers Hub and providing personalised coaching to students in Years 12 and 13 (ages 16-18). One-to-one support can help young people actively re-engage with education, training, or employment, ensuring they are equipped with the skills and support they need to thrive.



Expanding Non-Academic Pathways for Young People

Expanding non-academic pathways is key to offering young people diverse opportunities, and early intervention plays a crucial role in ensuring they are aware of and prepared for these options. By increasing apprenticeships, vocational training, and internships, we can support those who thrive outside traditional academics and provide them with structured alternatives early on. Collaborating with local businesses and vocational schools can ensure these pathways are accessible, valued, and introduced at the right time, equipping young people with the skills and confidence they need to succeed.



Supporting Families Through Targeted Interventions

By engaging parents in the process of intervention, we can empower families to provide the emotional and practical support necessary to help young people succeed. This includes equipping parents with knowledge about supporting education at home and reinforcing the importance of emotional well-being in their child's development. With the right resources, families can become integral partners in their child's success.

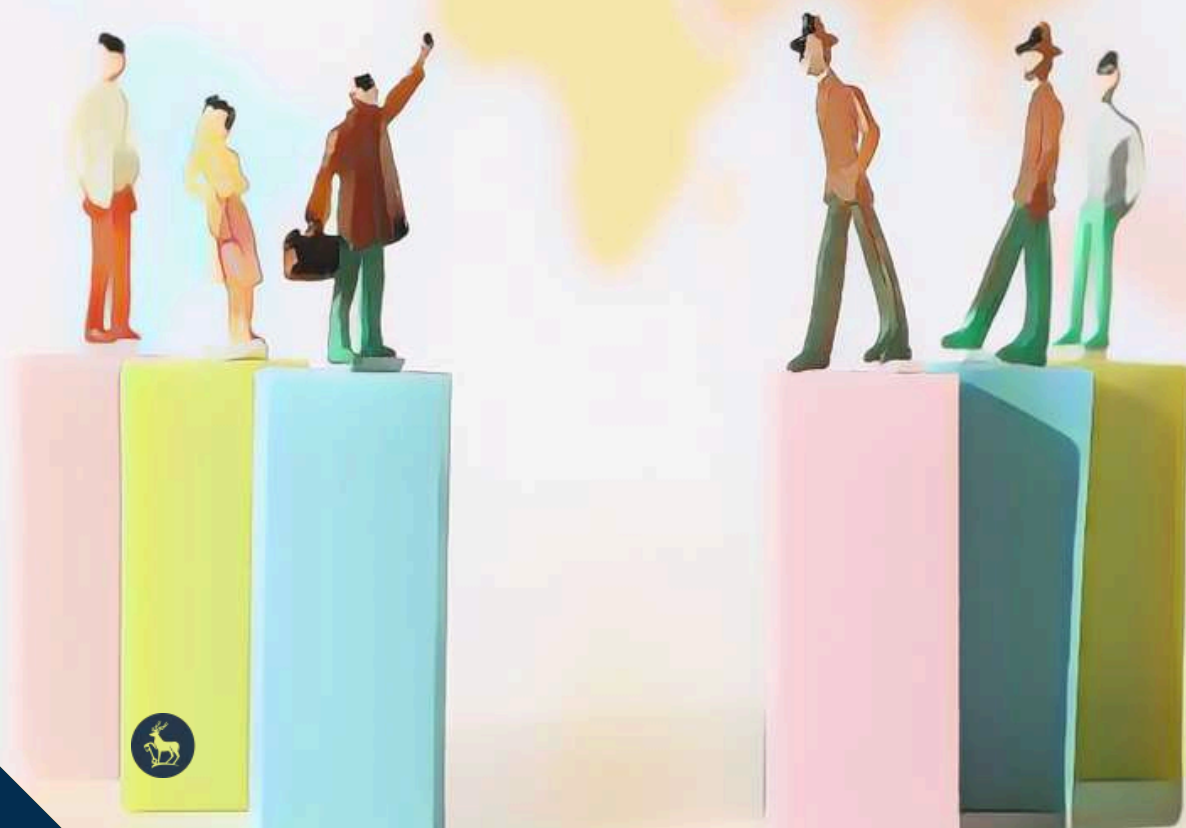




Empowering Young People through Mentoring and Role Models

One of the most powerful tools for engaging at-risk youth is mentoring, particularly when introduced as an early intervention strategy. Connecting young people with mentors who have lived experience or who are currently working in industries of interest can provide inspiration, direction, and tangible career pathways. Younger mentors, who may have recently navigated similar challenges, can be especially effective in building trust and relatability. Offering mentors in education, training, and employment settings gives young people the opportunity to build connections, learn from those who have walked a similar path, and stay motivated throughout their journey.

By focusing on these opportunities and empowering both statutory and non-statutory services, as well as families and communities, we can create a future where fewer young people in Surrey fall through the cracks and more have the chance to realise their full potential. This collective effort can not only reduce NEET numbers but also foster a generation of resilient, supported, and empowered individuals ready to contribute to society.



PART VII

NEXT STEPS

The release of the 'Unseen Surrey' report, commissioned by the incoming High Sheriff of Surrey, Peter Cluff, takes place on the day of his installation, at Guildford Cathedral, and serves to mark the beginning of his Shrieval year, highlighting his choice to robustly tackle the current challenge of NEET in Surrey. As illustrated, the report makes robust use of both qualitative and quantitative methods to drill into both the wide-ranging constitutive risk factors, and the more direct, causal factors by which young people in Surrey find themselves at risk of becoming a 'NEET'. On this basis – as outlined above – the next steps are clearer: namely identifying targeted interventions for NEETS within key categories. We are therefore keen to support Peter throughout his Shrievalty in a number of ways.

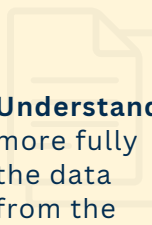
POSSIBLE SHRIEVAL PILOT PROJECTS

To support targeted, sector-specific interventions, potential Shrieval Pilot Projects could include:

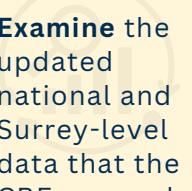
- Multi-Mentor Model: Developing a new mentoring framework such as a 'Mentoring Front Door': Creating a centralized access point for key Surrey-based NEET-related websites.
- Enhanced Data Capture & Sharing: Improving tracking of 'Unknowns' and NEET individuals not currently categorized.
- In-Depth NEET Report: Conduct a second report with a deeper analysis of Surrey NEET data and existing challenges.
- Pilot Project Implementation: Translating key insights from the Pathway to Progress into actionable pilot projects.

CONFERENCE AS NEXT STEP

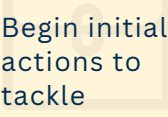
To drive this initiative forward, a Shrieval Conference on NEETs in Surrey will be held in Spring 2025 at the University of Surrey. This event will bring together stakeholders who contributed to the Unseen Surrey report, alongside other committed partners, to:



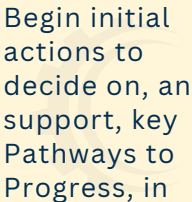
Understand more fully the data from the CBE report



Examine the updated national and Surrey-level data that the CBE research team has analysed since March 2025



Begin initial actions to tackle **Existing Challenges**



Begin initial actions to decide on, and support, key Pathways to Progress, in the form of **Shrieval Pilot Projects** for Surrey NEET



Creating **Working Groups** to kickstart the Shrieval Pilot Projects for Surrey NEET

The conference aims to build a **community of practice** focused on reducing NEET numbers in Surrey. This will involve close collaboration with local authorities, employers, educators, training providers, alternative learning services, the voluntary sector, and other stakeholders. The goal is to create long-term, sustainable solutions to support young people in education, employment, or training in Surrey over the next few years.



ANNEX

The research team analysed the correlation between gender, age group, and recorded cases to identify age groups that may require early intervention. Using Python's* pandas** framework, a Pearson Correlation Matrix (PCM) was generated, as this method effectively visualises relationships between multiple variables. A heatmap was applied to highlight the strength of these relationships. Additionally, a p-value matrix was computed alongside the PCM to ensure that the observed correlations were statistically significant within a defined confidence level.

Chart 8: Pearson Correlation Matrix of Recorded Offences Among Surrey Youth Aged ≤17 Years, January 2025

	Cases	Male	Female	Average age	Youngest	Oldest
Cases	1.000	0.926	0.789	-0.358	-0.766	0.618
Male	0.926	1.000	0.645	-0.281	-0.637	0.555
Female	0.789	0.645	1.000	-0.469	-0.871	0.468
Average age	-0.358	-0.281	-0.469	1.000	0.532	0.234
Youngest	-0.766	-0.637	-0.871	0.532	1.000	-0.359
Oldest	0.618	0.555	0.468	0.234	-0.359	1.000

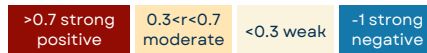


Chart 9: P-Value Matrix of Recorded Offences Among ≤17 Years Surrey Youth Aged ≤17 Years, January 2025

	Cases	Male	Female	Average age	Youngest	Oldest
Cases	0.0000	0.0001	0.0066	0.3101	0.0098	0.0568
Male	0.0001	0.0000	0.0441	0.4316	0.0474	0.0956
Female	0.0066	0.0441	0.0000	0.1718	0.0010	0.1727
Average age	0.3101	0.4316	0.1718	0.0000	0.1134	0.5154
Youngest	0.0098	0.0474	0.0010	0.1134	0.0000	0.3076
Oldest	0.0568	0.0956	0.4680	0.5154	0.3076	0.0000



Source: Surrey Police Data; Pearson Correlation Matrix and p-value Matrix Analysis by CBE (n=203).

*Python is a high-level, interpreted programming language widely used in data science, artificial intelligence (AI), and automation.

**Pandas framework is an open-source Python library used for working with structured data, such as tables and time series.



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