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**Identifying barriers to the employment of young people
classified as not in education, employment or training
within the construction sector**

Stephen Sugden

MSc Construction Project Management

September 2019

Student Number: 16036535

Declaration

This study was completed for the MSc in Construction Project Management at the University of the West of England, Bristol. This work is my own. Where the work of others is used or drawn on it is attributed.

Signed:

Steve Sugden

Date: 9th August 2019

Word Count: 13,981

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Abstract

The construction industry is facing a skills crisis that goes back to the 1980's and this could potentially be exacerbated by the vote to leave the European Union. To address this, industry must consider who it recruits and how it attracts new talent. This dissertation explores the opportunity of recruiting young people classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), as a possible pool of new entrants. The research uses the mixed methods of qualitative and quantitative data collection through an online survey targeted at construction employers and employees.

The research has produced findings that indicate the industry is open to recruiting from this pool and feels it is able to support a number of the factors identified as being indicators of the risk of becoming NEET. To achieve this, it is acknowledged that external support would benefit both employers and NEETs.

A number of barriers have been identified through the research and would require addressing in order to increase the possibilities of this group gaining access to the industry. These include the negative connotations with the term NEET, employer expectations on new entrants, the lack of resources available to small and medium enterprises and microbusinesses to support individuals with complex personal issues, and the perception and promotion of the industry to this group, as well to young people overall. The conclusion recommends further research into these areas to identify actions that could increase interest from this group, and enhance their chances of successful employment in construction.

Contents

<i>Declaration</i>	2
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	3
<i>Abstract</i>	4
<i>Contents</i>	5
<i>Abbreviations</i>	6
<i>Tables</i>	7
<i>Introduction</i>	8
<i>Literature Review</i>	10
Construction's Skills Crisis	10
NEET barriers to construction	15
Employer barriers to engaging with NEETS	20
Supporting NEETs into construction	23
<i>Research Methodology and Design</i>	26
Survey Trial and Delivery	28
<i>Research Analysis</i>	29
The NEET Perspective	30
The Employers' Perspective	34
Alternative Routes into the Industry	40
Final Comments	46
<i>Conclusions</i>	47
<i>References</i>	54
<i>Appendices</i>	65
A: Online Survey – Clean Version	66

Abbreviations

AELP - Association of Employment and Learning Providers

BIS – Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

CEBR – Centre for Economics and Business Research

CIOB – Chartered Institute of Building

CIPD - Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

CITB – Construction Industry Training Board

CLC - Construction Leadership Council

CSCS – Construction Skills Certification Scheme

BIS – Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

DfE – Department for Education

DfEE – Department for Education and Employment

ESM(s) - Employment and Skills Manager(s)

EU – European Union

FMB – Federation of Master Builders

HBF – Home Builders Federation Ltd

HSE – Health and Safety Executive

IAG – Information, Advice and Guidance

IfATE (IfA) – Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

ILM – Intermediate Labour Market

KPI – Key Performance Indicator

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

NHBC - National House Building Council

OFSTED – Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills

ONS – Office for National Statistics

RICS – Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

SME – Small/Medium Enterprises (Employer)

YWT – Young Women's Trust

Tables

Table 1: Annual recruitment requirements	12
Table 2: London 2012 Olympic Park Employment	23
Table 3: Survey response by organisation type	29
Table 4: Survey response by organisation size	29
Table 5: Reason for lack of interest in the industry	30
Table 6: NEETs barriers to the industry	31
Table 7: Respondents area of work	34
Table 8: Respondents role	34
Table 9: Non-apprenticeship roles	35
Table 10: Employing under-24s in apprenticeship roles	36
Table 11: Employing under-24s in non- apprenticeship roles	36
Table 12: Barriers supportable in a construction environment	37
Table 13: Organisations already employing NEETs	38
Table 14: Perceived positive impact of alternative options	40
Table 15: Funding for alternative options	41

Introduction

This dissertation explores the barriers faced by young people, Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), in accessing employment within the construction sector, and those preventing employers engaging with them. In addition, options that may address these barriers will be considered. This dissertation builds on the author's previous experience in construction and subsequent work in supporting NEETs into employment.

For many years construction has suffered from a skills crisis due, in part, to low numbers entering the industry. A Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) forecast (CITB, 2018b) anticipates around 158,000 additional workers are required between 2018 and 2022 to meet demand. Combined with this is the potential impact of the vote to leave the European Union (EU). Research by the Home Builders Federation Limited (HBF) (HBF, 2017) indicated that a large percentage of the housebuilding workforce comes from the EU. A report on apprenticeships published by CITB (CITB, 2018a), stated that construction was one of the few sectors seeing an increase in apprenticeships, claiming 26,195 apprenticeship starts in 2017. This would deliver around 131,000 new entrants by 2022, 27,000 less than the predicted demand.

The Office of National Statistics (ONS) (ONS, 2017) defines NEETs as anybody, aged 16-24, who is not in any of the form of education or training, or employment. Education and training is defined as:

- being enrolled on an education course and still attending or waiting for term to (re)start
- undertaking an apprenticeship
- on a government-supported employment or training programme
- working or studying towards a qualification
- received job-related training or education in the previous four weeks

Employment is classified as paid work including part time.

Those not in employment are classed as either unemployed, those who, in the previous four weeks have looked for work and are available to start within the next two, or economically inactive, including students or carers, and who are unable to take up employment.

The ONS identified 808,000 young people, aged 16-24, as NEET, with 39.9% actively seeking employment (ONS, 2018). This would indicate around 322,000 young people whom construction could target. The Chartered Institute of Building (CIOB) in its submission to the parliamentary inquiry into construction and youth employment (CIOB, 2016) suggested that it may be possible for the industry to employ between 75,000 – 100,000 of young unemployed.

The suggestion that construction could provide a route away from being NEET was the basis of a cross-party parliamentarians' inquiry in 2014, and its report 'No More Lost Generations' (Chevin, 2014). This reviewed a number of initiatives, identifying that no one solution fits all, a view supported in the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP)/Pearson report 'Routes into Work... it's Alright for Some' (2016). In addition, it recognised a number of the potential barriers facing NEETs and employers. The aim of this dissertation is to identify what are the barriers that may impede employment, and what could mitigate their impact.

Literature Review

This literature review examines previous research and reports into barriers that present an obstacle to NEETs securing employment within construction, and those that potentially hinder employers in engaging with them. In order to provide context, issues impacting the industry and that require new entrants to address will be examined.

Construction's Skills Crisis

The skills crisis in construction has been widely reported in both trade and national press, and highlighted by professional bodies including the Federation of Master Builders (FMB) (FMB, 2018), Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) (RICS, 2018), and the CIOB (CIOB, 2013). This encompasses both skills shortages, i.e. difficulties in recruiting to specific roles arising from a scarcity of individuals with the required skills, and skills gap, i.e. a deficit in necessary skills within an organisation (McGuinness, Pouliakas and Redmond, 2018). Both are highlighted by Wiseman, Roe and Parry (2016) as negatively impacting the construction sector.

This is not a new phenomenon, Egan warned of skills shortages in his report *Rethinking Construction* (1998), while Chan and Dainty (2007) cite Clarke's (1992) observations of an impending skills crisis. A Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (2000) report stated that during the late 1980s employers had difficulty in recruiting bricklayers and carpenters, the same trades in short supply today (FMB, 2018; Marriott and Moore, 2014).

While its impact is still unclear, the vote to leave the EU, Brexit, will potentially exacerbate the issue. A report by HBF identified that, nationally, 17.7% of the housebuilding workforce comes from the EU, while in London this was nearer to 50% (2017). Chevin (2014) reported that the UK construction sector has relied on migrant labour to address the skills shortage, while Dromey, Morris and Murphy (2017) argue that ending free movement risks pushing current skills shortages into a crisis.

Various reasons have been identified as to why construction struggles to attract new entrants. It has been acknowledged that there is an image problem, a Laing O'Rourke (2016) report suggested that it is seen as an unexciting industry, where the work is dirty, strenuous and low skilled. A Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR) (2017) report defines construction as a 4D industry, dirty, dangerous, demeaning and depressing.

That said, Clarke and Hermann (2007) found only 11% of employers felt image was the reason for the low levels of interest.

Egan (1998) acknowledged that there appears to be a crisis in training, with concerns over its quality, resulting in a decline in those entering the industry (Clarke and Hermann, 2007; DfEE, 2000). Dromey, Morris and Murphy (2017) described the skills system as dysfunctional, highlighting high numbers of construction courses failing to result in employment, only 41% of participants being employed six months after completion, 16% of these in apprenticeships. A DfEE report (2000) suggested this is due to training failing to meet employers' requirements. Chan and Dainty (2007) pointed to the increase in self-employment within the sector as disincentivising employers from investing in training, or employers abdicating responsibility to train, deferring this to the CITB through levy payments. Marriott and Moore (2014) suggested that young people have low regard for vocational training overall, possibly indicating a reason behind the low numbers of young people undertaking construction training (Wiseman, Roe and Parry, 2016).

Construction has an aging, with Pye Tait Consulting (2015) identifying up to 400,000 retiring between 2015 and 2020. Failure to attract new entrants will further exacerbate the skills crisis. The CEBR (2017) report predicts that, in order to meet house building and infrastructure plans, the industry will require more than 400,000 entrants between 2016-2021. Table 1. (page 12) details their identified roles and proposed recruitment targets between 2016-2021.

The British Annual Recruitment Requirement for Housebuilding and Infrastructure 2016-2021									
	Total	South East	London	East of England	South West	North West	Yorkshire and The Humber	Scotland	Wales
South East	2,176	612	1,280	387	457	352	-	1,307	415
London	2,135	528	739	522	961	450	4133	362	1,915
East of England	2,184	345	372	451	605	210	4,771	288	752
South West	1,909	908	779	101	691	379	3,731	-	1,376
North West	1,124	593	392	538	284	240	2,431	207	2,047
Yorkshire and The Humber	2,152	675	515	841	437	280	3,491	-	1,162
Scotland	1,133	367	-	812	88	254	1,860	111	805
Wales	748	360	-	278	370	131	1,940	-	1,606
Northern Ireland	404	289	195	350	213	93	879	-	916
East Midlands	2,176	612	1,280	387	457	352	-	1,307	415
London	2,135	528	739	522	961	450	4,133	362	1,915
East of England	2,184	345	372	451	605	210	4,771	288	752
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London	2,135	528	739	522	961	45			

Source: CSN, DCLG, ONS, Cebr analysis

The same report also indicated a potential loss of 214,000 EU workers depending on the outcome of Brexit. A CITB (2018b) report suggested the industry will require a more conservative 158,000 entrants between 2018-2022, to meet predicted demand, though it is unclear if this includes replacing those retiring or leaving the industry. The difference could also be due to those roles that sit outside the scope of CITB, such as engineer, architect or fenestration.

Apprenticeships are acknowledged to be the main route into employment within construction (Kashefpakdel and Rehill, 2017; Pye Tait Consulting, 2015; Chevin, 2014). In 2015 the UK government committed itself to creating 3,000,000 apprenticeships by 2020 across all sectors (Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS), 2015). Following the Richard Review of Apprenticeships (Richard, 2012), they have undertaken a complete reform of apprenticeship delivery, moving away from apprenticeship frameworks and onto apprenticeship standards (BIS, 2014). In addition, an apprenticeship levy has been implemented on employers with wage bills over £3,000,000 per year (Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, 2016), and an Institute for Apprenticeships, now the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education (Foster and Powell, 2019), created to oversee the development of new apprenticeship standards, and maintain them once approved.

A CITB report (CITB, 2018a) stated that construction has seen a 49% increase in apprenticeship starts since 2012, with 26,195 undertaking construction apprenticeships in 2017. These figures differ from those reported by the Department of Education (DfE) (DfE, 2018d) which indicated 21,210 starts in 2016/17 and 22,458 in 2017/18 for construction. Accepting the CITB data, and assuming all complete and progress into employment, this only results in 131,000 new entrants by 2022, a 27,000 shortfall of the CITB figure of 158,000 (CITB, 2018b). It should be acknowledged that not all new employees will enter the industry through the apprenticeship route.

UK government has set aspirational targets in terms of infrastructure projects and housebuilding, committing itself to £163 billion expenditure in its 2016-2020 strategy (Infrastructure and Projects Authority, 2016). In terms of house building estimates are that between 240,000 – 330,000 new houses will need to be built each year to meet demand in England alone (Wilson and Barton, 2018). These targets will be at risk if the skills crisis is not addressed.

Sector productivity is also being affected by the skills crisis, already considered poor when compared to other sectors (Farmer, 2016; Dainty, Isons and Briscoe, 2005)

'Productivity has been a thorn in the side of construction for decades.'

(Green, 2016)

Marley (2015) identified that employees' skills are being under-utilised, employees undertaking work below their skills capabilities, in order to compensate for skills gaps, resulting in lower productivity.

This highlights the precarious position construction currently finds itself in, and in order to meet future demand it will need to consider how it attracts new talent. New technologies may help alleviate some, but not all, of the impact of the skills crisis (CEBR, 2017), even then there is a shortage in operatives for these technologies (Nadim and Goulding, 2010). An alternative could be to look at who, and how, industry recruits, and what obstacles need to be challenged in order to change this.

NEET barriers to construction

NEET is a catch-all term that pigeonholes young people with a diverse range of barriers to employment (Rüdiger, 2012). Maguire (2015) identified the difficulties in developing effective policy to address the NEET issue due to the lack of clarity in defining this group. This is also found to be an issue in Exploring the diversity of NEETs (Eurofound, 2016), although this report also suggested that the term has helped raise awareness of the issue.

The term was first coined by New Labour in the 1990s to classify 16-18-year-olds who disappeared from Careers Services records, it was seen as an improvement on the original classification, 'Status Zero' (MacDonald and Shildrick, 2011; Istance, Rees and Williamson, 1994). Subsequently it has been adopted across many countries and applied to young people from 15-29 (Elder, 2015). Differences on how the term is applied, and changes implemented by different governments, both in the UK and around the world, also cause complications on identifying the specific needs within this group.

A recent government publication defined NEETs only in terms of having engaged or not engaged with education, employment or training within a fixed period, and identified their characteristics solely on academic background, gender and ethnicity (DfE, 2018C). MacDonald and Shildrick (2011), adapted Coles *et al.* (2010) research to produce a list of proposed factors that could indicate an individual at risk of becoming NEET

- Having parents who are poor and/ or unemployed
- Living in a poor neighbourhood and/ or near schools with poor overall average attainment
- Pre-16 educational disengagement (truancy and/ or school exclusion)
- (Some) ethnic minority background (e.g. Afro-Caribbean, Bangladeshi, Pakistani)
- Low-level or no qualifications at age 16 plus
- Living in or having lived in care
- Becoming pregnant and/ or a parent in mid-teenage years
- Having a disability, special educational need or learning disability
- Being a young carer
- Having a mental illness
- Being homeless
- Misusing drugs or alcohol
- Being involved in offending

MacDonald and Shildrick (2011)

The same, or similar, have been identified by Widdowson (2018), Buzzeo *et al.* (2016), Hutchinson and Kettlewell (2015), Maguire (2015), Simmons, Thompson and Russell (2014) and Spielhofer *et al.* (2008). While the list identifies a range of the common issues that can result in an individual becoming NEET Maguire (2015) warned that others do not meet any of these, and as such are at risk of becoming invisible.

Often one factor indicating a risk of becoming NEET can bring others into play. Goldie, Hull and Sims (2016) found that 67% of those at risk of becoming NEET in Newcastle had engaged with children's Social Care. Low academic achievement, as mentioned above, is a common characteristic amongst care leavers (Jackson and Cameron, 2012), while Jackson (In: Abrams, Christian and Gordon, 2007) reported that care leavers make up nearly half of young offenders. That said, Bäckman *et al.* (2014) found a majority of youths committing crime are in work and not classed as NEET, though their actions risk them moving from employed to NEET if the crime results in a custodial sentence. Byng *et al.* (2015), in an article on suicide attempts among young offenders, also identified that this group are at an increased risk of homelessness, unemployment and mental illness, all identified as factors indicating a risk of becoming NEET.

Simmons and Thompson (2013), Bysshe *et al.* (2008) and Yates and Payne (2007) described how the term implies a deficit in the individual, that they are 'NOT' doing something, but fails to address why. Maguire (2015) highlights how the term could lead to stereotyping young people, such as mainstream media's portrayal of NEETs as 'feral youth' (Butler, 2018; Gillespie, 2018; Sergeant, 2009)

Yates and Payne (2007) suggested that NEETs fall into three subgroups:

- Transitional - those temporarily NEET but expected to move on with limited support.
- Complicated - those with significant barriers hindering progression.
- Economically Inactive – those, such as young parents, or with significant health issues, where personal circumstances prevent them from moving from this group.

While it is acknowledged that NEET has negative connotations, it is a recognised term. As such, for the purpose of the research undertaken for this dissertation it will be the term used when referring to this diverse group.

As noted previously, apprenticeships are seen as the accepted route into construction. Fuller and Unwin (2017) proposed that apprenticeships support social mobility, and as such provide a progression from being NEET. That said, information produced by the government for 2016/17 showed that 46% of current apprenticeships went to over 25s, and 47% were at advanced, or higher, levels (Powell, 2018), thus unlikely to be accessible to many NEETs.

At the time of writing there were 45 reformed apprenticeship standards approved, or under development within construction at Level 2 (IfA, 2018). None stipulate academic requirements, though some indicate these can be determined by the employer. This suggests that, although a young person may not have achieved through their compulsory education, lack of qualifications should not be a barrier to apprenticeships. That said Buzzeo *et al.* (2016) concluded that qualifications can be used by employers in order to sift applicants, with Rüdiger (2013) identifying grades as the most common selection criteria when sorting applications.

Buzzeo *et al.*, (2016) identified a number of reasons why apprenticeships may not be suitable for some NEETs. Both the previous framework apprenticeships and the reformed apprenticeship standards contain a requirement for off-the-job training and/or qualifications. They suggested that some NEETs may equate off-the-job training as a return to education. Previous negative experience within mainstream education, for example exclusion (including self-exclusion), underachievement in qualifications, bullying, or being unable to complete due to external issues, may result in some NEETs rejecting an apprenticeship for fear of repeating their experiences.

Research by BIS (2013) identified a negative attitude to education, linked to behaviour and attendance issues, acted as a barrier to learning, resulting in low, or no, achievement. Low academic achievement is identified as a common characteristic within the NEET cohort (DfE, 2018c). Maguire (2015) suggested that negative views on education, and low performance, are more prevalent with NEETs. As such, the academic requirements, including maths and English in apprenticeships, could present a barrier to some.

Financial issues are often cited as a barrier to NEETs accessing apprenticeships, (Fuller and Unwin, 2017; Buzzeo *et al.*, 2016; Connell-Smith, 2015; BIS, 2013). They suggest that the minimum rate of pay for apprentices, £3.70 per hour (Gov.uk, 2018), prevents NEETs taking up opportunities as often they are supporting themselves, without additional financial support necessary to be able to survive on this wage. This issue was considered in an

article in The Independent (Kingstone, 2017). It concluded that, without parental support, undertaking an apprenticeship is not financially viable for a young person. This article, in addition to the financial concerns, highlighted areas such as low confidence, mental health, lack of a permanent address and financial pressures as barriers for NEETs securing apprenticeships.

A report by the Young Women's Trust (YWT) addressed a range of issues that are more likely to affect young women. This included data suggesting that women are paid less on average than men on apprenticeships, £6.67 compared to £7.25 (YWT, 2017b). It also identified that 25% of young women who are NEET are also single parents (YWT, 2017a) and may have to consider childcare costs, likely to be unaffordable on an apprentice wage.

Another financial issue, potentially preventing a NEET accepting a low paid role, is pressure within their family. A young person's move into employment may impact the benefits claimed by a family member that are not be compensated by the wage. This may result in the young person rejecting employment in order to protect another family member's benefits (BIS, 2013).

Marriot and Moore (2014) highlight the role of parental influence in choosing to undertake an apprenticeship. A care leaver, or homeless individual, may not have access to this guidance, and thus not identify apprenticeships as a route away from being NEET. The Edge Foundation (2018) identified parents and teachers as the biggest influencing factors for career choice.

Alternative guidance support may be available through schools' careers counsellors, and David (2014) highlighted the importance of this in choosing a career. A report by Gracey and Kelly (2010), quoted a 2008 Skills Commission's inquiry recommendation that quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) be provided from the age of 14. Chevin (2014) identified the need to improve IAG in relation to construction, suggesting the Construction Leadership Council (CLC) and CITB work together to explore how this can be achieved. That said, an Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) report, 'Going in the right Direction?' (Ofsted, 2012) stated that only 20% of schools inspected were providing sufficient careers information. In terms of NEETs, even where a school has been providing sufficient information, an excluded individual may not have access to this support.

Goldman-Mellor *et al.* (2016) found that at age 18 16.3% of NEETs reported cannabis dependence as opposed to 2.7% non-NEET, while 17.7% reported alcohol dependence compared to 12.1% of non-NEETs. While drug/alcohol dependency would be an issue in most roles, it is especially relevant to construction, and would be a major barrier for a NEET entering the industry. This would appear to be one barrier that cannot be overcome in the short term, although the possibility of employment once 'clean' may encourage an individual to seek help.

This has identified some of the barriers face in entering the construction industry, the next section considers the barriers employers face in respect to engaging with them.

Employer barriers to engaging with NEETS

The introduction to 'What do recruiters think about today's young people?' (Mann and Huddleston, 2015.) claimed that young people today are more qualified and have more years of education than previous generations, a view supported by Rüdiger (2012), yet they are four times more likely to be unemployed than older people. At the time of writing youth unemployment stood at 11% (Phelan, 2018) compared to 4.1% overall (ONS, 2018). This would appear to indicate employers are reticence to recruit young people.

A National House Building Council (NHBC) produced report focused on attracting young people, not specifically NEETs, into housebuilding (Marriot and Moore, 2014). It found that a lack of awareness, or negative perceptions of the industry to be a major barrier for employers in attracting new talent. They also suggested the industry recruitment practices prevented many from accessing opportunities, proposing that they need to become more 'younger person friendly'. Waters (2014) considered the views of primary school pupils and had similar findings, a lack of awareness of the opportunities, and construction being seen as unexciting and underpaid, already embedded with this demographic. These perceptions would present a barrier to NEETs if they dissuaded them from applying for future opportunities, and importantly be a barrier to employers if their target audience already held negative views of the industry.

Many employers appear unaware that the industry has a negative image for young people with only 11% seeing this as a reason for their low interest (Clarke and Hermann, 2007). Indeed, research by YouGov Research (YouGov, 2015) indicated that only 3% of 18-24-year olds, 4% of males and 1% of females, had searched for a construction role. In the same survey 45% felt that the industry was more suited to men, 26% felt construction jobs were insecure, 19% thought construction was an undesirable industry to work in and 14% felt it was poorly paid. This appears to indicate that, even if employers are keen to engage with NEETs, how the industry is viewed, and its unattractiveness, are major barriers in securing new talent.

Employer expectations may produce a barrier to engagement if they are focused on requirements a NEET may find difficult to meet. Newton *et al.* (2005) identified a wide range of employer expectations when recruiting. These included perceived benefits of previous work or work experience, an issue for a NEET if they are coming from an unsettled background such as care, have had health or family issues, or are ex-offenders. Previously young people may have been able to gain work experience, and money, through Saturday

jobs. A UKCES report identified a reduction from 42% to 18% of young people with these (Conlon, Patrignani and Mantovani, 2015).

Newton *et al.* (2005) identified qualifications and soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem solving and planning, as attributes employers expect in young recruits. As was identified in the previous section, employers often equate qualifications as evidence of soft skills. Fixed expectations create a barrier, even where an employer is open to engaging with NEETs. If they are looking for skills NEETs are unable to evidence their application may be rejected, a barrier to both.

There are a number of myths often quoted as fact within construction in relation to why young people cannot be employed (CITB, 2019a). Health and safety concerns, and additional requirements placed on employers in recruiting young people, were examined by Beers and Greaves (2015). The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) states that this is not the case. Although there may be some work unsuitable for under 18's, this is an exception, not a rule (HSE, 2019a). Another myth often cited is the need for employers to carry out additional risk assessments specifically for young people. Again, this is dispelled by the HSE, who clarify that, providing existing risk assessments consider factors that relate to a new entrant, such as lack of experience, there is no requirement to carry out additional risk assessments (HSE, 2019b).

Beers and Graves (2015) also considered the perceived financial impact on a company's employee liability insurance, with the cost of additional premiums imposed by insurers when a young person is employed. Guidance from the CLC (Build UK, 2016) states there is no need for additional insurance for young people, and, although the insurer should be notified, their employment may only result in small financial adjustments. This is not to suggest employers use these as excuses not engage, many may believe these myths to be true, but they present an obvious barrier to employment.

Entry level and trade roles within construction are often recruited at short notice, and are frequently short term (Lockyer and Scholarios, 2007). Clarke and Hermann (2007) identified word-of-mouth as a common recruitment practice. This may result that employment opportunities, albeit often short term, may be missed by NEETs without connections within the industry, especially pertinent for a care leaver, or homeless person, without access to extended groups of contacts. This was also identified by Tunstall *et al.* (2012) and Newton *et al.* (2005). An additional impact from this form of recruitment is that this it can lead to underutilisation of skills, where a qualified operative takes on a lower skilled role in order to

maintain employment (Marley, 2015; UKCES, 2014). This would appear to indicate that construction's recruitment practices inadvertently create barriers for employers wishing to engage with NEETs, who may have been suitable for entry roles taken by those working below their skills level, or those unaware of opportunities due to a lack of contacts with the industry. Rüdiger (2012), in a report for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), looked at how employers can be engaged in tackling youth employment issues. The main reason given by employers for not recruiting was lack of demand in suitable jobs. Again, this may be due to the fact that these suitable roles are going to skilled operatives.

With short notice recruitment employers require operatives who can function on site from the outset and do not have time to train new entrants, even for very junior roles. A Pye Tait report for the FMB (Pye Tait Consulting, 2015) and Rüdiger (2013) addressed the 'fear factor' faced by employers in regards to employing apprentices. This included barriers to hiring, their ability to train and support new entrants, or uncertainty of being able to provide continuous work. All of which could dissuade an employer from employing someone from a NEET background and as such present a barrier for the employer.

Construction is a fragmented industry with over 300,000 construction companies, less than 300 of which are large employers (Statista, 2019), indicating a vast majority of companies are small/medium enterprises (SME), each with their own needs and potentially limited resources. Major construction companies, who possess the resources and supply of work to support new entrants rarely employ at that level, subcontracting to SMEs. It has often been commented that construction is a risk adverse industry (Farmers, 2016) and historically quicker to be affected by financial downturns, taking longer to recover, thus financially cautious. This is true for SMEs who may not possess the resources or finance to be able to support new entrants, especially where there may be additional support requirements (Pye Tait Consulting, 2015). This risk averse attitude presents a barrier to companies who may have suitable roles but err on the side of caution when it comes to recruitment.

Supporting NEETs into construction

This final section considers options that may address some the barriers identified in supporting NEETS into employment within construction.

No More Lost Generations (Chevin, 2014) identified a number of activities that may assist NEETs into employment including the use of Section 106 commitments, part of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This stipulates obligations on developers in terms of community benefit in order to gain planning consent. It recommended NEET engagement be a key performance indicators (KPI), placing a commitment on the developer to ensure that NEETs are engaged on a project. That said Chevin also highlighted that Section 106s are often considered tick box exercises, frequently having the get-out clause of 'use of best endeavours'.

The report also recommended employment and skills teams on major projects. One of the UKs largest construction projects, the Olympic Park set KPIs for the employment of a range of underrepresented groups within the industry, BAME, women, disabled, local residents (residents of the five host boroughs), and long term unemployed, but not NEETs. To support this endeavour a team of Employment and Skills Managers (ESMs) were employed to support contractors in achieving these targets (Minnaert, 2014).

At the end of construction, a number of 'lessons learned' documents were produced, one focussing on the success of the ESM team in meeting the project's KPIs, with comparisons to the overall achievements of the Park development (Thrush, Eley and Martin, 2011). While employers on the project exceeded three of the five KPIs, where the ESM team were measured, all but the unemployed category, the outcomes far exceeded all KPIs.

Employee category	Original KPI Benchmarks	Actual percentage of Park workforce	Percentage of ESM brokered employees
Black, Asian and minority ethnic	15%	21%	60%
Women	11%	4%	17%
Disabled	3%	1.10%	6%
Local resident (five host boroughs)	10-15%	24%	71%
Unemployed	7%	13%	No details

Table 2: London 2012 Olympic Employment

A lack of experience, is often cited as a barrier to NEETs entering the industry. Unpaid work experience may not be suitable for many NEETs if it impacts benefits, but paid work experience may provide a possible alternative. In the early 2000's there were a number of organisations across the country operating Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) programmes. These provided paid work experience, with support and ongoing personal development training (Marshall and Macfarlane, 2000).

Evaluation of an ILM programme delivered in Wales concluded that it generated significant benefits to the participants, 55% securing employment by the end of the programme (Roberts *et al.*, 2012). It should be noted that this was during the economic downturn following the 2008 recession, it could be assumed that if not for the recession success rate would have been higher. Finn and Simmonds (2003) found construction made up the largest proportion of ILM based work experiences. It was highlighted in the report that some considered ILMs an expensive method of engagement and did not provide value for money.

Job-carving is a method utilised in developing roles suitable for individuals with disabilities. Graff (2013) defines job carving as reviewing a skilled job role, identifying elements that could be taken on by someone with no specific skills in that role, and using these to create a supporting role. A range of articles review this process (Citron *et al.* 2008; Condon *et al.*, 2004; Nietupski and Hamre-Nietupski, 2000; Griffin, 1994). They detailed the benefits these roles offer both to the individual; including the ability to gain work experience and earn a wage, and to the employer; including improvement to productivity.

Griffin (1994) detailed how this allowed the skilled tradesperson to focus on the key areas of their role, and as such become more productive, while other tasks are undertaken by a support operative. Although this has been targeted at people with disabilities, which may include NEETs, it could provide a route into the industry for NEETs with no previous experience. It would allow them to gain insight in to a role while earning a wage and developing the employability skills, lack of which has already been identified as a barrier to employment.

An OFSTED report (2010) identified that NEETs are attracted to short courses, in small groups, and in non-traditional settings. There are a number of third sector organisations that manage style of training, such as Serious About Youth, Prince's Trust Get into Construction, Down to Earth and Construction Youth Trust. These courses provide learners with the opportunity to develop basic construction skills and gain an insight in to the industry through guest speakers from the sector. Many offer the opportunity to gain the qualification

required in order to undertake a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) test. Post-course the organisations provide employment support. It appears that many organisations involved in these types of projects do not publish success statistics, which makes it difficult to quantify the benefits they offer. As such this could present an area for future research, both in terms of NEETs' progression into employment, and their value to employers.

Simmons *et al.* (2014) propose a number of possible actions that could be implemented to reengage NEETs. Among these are the use of licence to practice, currently not a requirement in most areas of construction, although CSCS and Construction Plant Competence Scheme are often mandated by employers, and a reintroduction of training levies, which the construction industry still has and which funds the CITB. In addition, they propose a Youth Resolution, this would guarantee a living wage, structured training, workplace support and mentoring and personal development. This resolution would address a number of barriers faced by NEETs moving into construction.

Research Methodology and Design

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the barriers to NEETs entering the construction industry, those that hinder employers in recruiting them, and potential alternatives to address. The literature review highlighted the current skills crisis impacting the industry and identified that, if construction is to address this, one option is to review who, how, and from where it recruits.

The literature review identified a wealth of research into the obstacles that can hamper NEETs in securing employment. What was less apparent was research into the barriers employers face if they wish to engage with this cohort. The literature review identified that often the barriers NEETs face in entering employment, also present obstacles to employers.

As Kothari (2004. pp 2) stated that, 'the purpose of research is to discover answers' and Naoum (2013) and Fellows and Liu (2008) identified two main areas of research, quantitative and qualitative were identified. Cresswell (2014) proposed mixed methods, a combination of quantitative and qualitative. Fellows and Liu (2008) considered how quantitative and qualitative supports applied research, research that addresses issues and attempts to identify solutions. The literature review identified three questions that meet the description for applied research:

- What barriers are faced by NEETs that prevent them from entering the industry?
- What barriers may obstruct construction employers engaging with them?
- Are there alternative options that could address these barriers?

The research for this dissertation will focus on the views of the construction industry, and, in order provide a robust analysis, it will be necessary to gain the views from as wide a range of respondents as possible. Kelley *et al.* (2003) stated that a survey can be used to gain the views from a large, pre-selected, group, the results presenting views of that particular group at a specific time. This meets the aims of the research for this dissertation, to gain current views of the sector regarding the employment of NEETs.

Walliman (2011) proposed that sampling, which in the case of this research, would entail targeting those linked to the construction industry, allows for the collection of data that it is hoped will be representative across the industry. He also identified that the larger response

the more valid the findings. As such, in order to best reflect industry's views, a significant number of responses will be required.

The primary research will be conducted through an online survey and this will be developed based on the findings of the literature review. It will be divided into four sections with section three restricted to those engaged directly in construction. This will reduce the number of questions some participants will be required to answer. As Biggam (2015) identified, too many questions may dissuade individuals from taking part. Using a survey will enable the collection of both quantitative data (tick box questions) and qualitative data (comment boxes). As such the research conforms to Cresswell's (2014) 'mixed method' approach.

Encouraging construction professionals to complete the survey, firstly on behalf of their organisation, and then as an individual, may identify differences of thinking between an organisational perspective, which may consider the positive image presented in being seen to engage with NEETs, and those of individual employees, who may be responsible for the day to day supervision and mentoring of the NEET, and whose work would be impacted by such engagement.

The survey will be disseminated online and, as recommended by Harlow (2010), will be trialled prior to going live. This will be via personal contacts within the industry to ensure that the purpose of the survey is clear and the questions understandable, identifying any necessary editing or clarification. The ambition is that respondents should be able to complete the survey within 15 minutes.

Section four of the survey will relate to possible alternative options that may address the barriers faced by NEETs and employers, providing potential solutions as recommended by Fellows and Liu (2008). Short vignettes will be used to describe each, covering work experience, employment support teams, job-carving and short courses. These are based on projects the author has previous experience of when supporting those with barriers to employment.

Survey Trial and Delivery

The initial trial was undertaken and feedback indicated that the questions were understood and felt to be relevant, although some required rephrasing for clarity. All respondents indicated that the survey was taking longer than the 15 minutes proposed, feedback suggesting that this was due to the number of comment boxes. These were reduced and section four made optional. If insufficient responses were received to this section semi-structured interviews would be used to gain additional qualitative data. A clean copy of the survey can be found in the appendix.

The survey was live for four weeks and promoted through posts on LinkedIn, with a request that it be shared to gain as wide a response as possible. These posts received approximately 530 views. 110 contacts from across the sector were directly approached through LinkedIn or by direct email. The author contacted SMEs in the sector to encourage responses from trade-based individuals, an assumption being that a majority of responses were likely to come from office-based staff. A number of major contractors and construction organisations shared the survey via their intranet and encouraged participation on social media.

In total 150 respondents viewed the first page with 53 completing the full survey, 33 others completed in part but having not clicked through to the final page their responses were not recorded. A note was added to the survey after the first week to ensure respondents were aware of the need to progress through to the final page in order for their views to be registered.

As previously stated the comment boxes were reduced in number and made optional. At the close of the survey over 300 responses and comments across 16 questions had been received. The semi-structured interviews were not undertaken as the responses received on the alternative options provided sufficient content to enable analysis. All comments were coded to assist in analysing the information provided.

Research Analysis

Participants were first asked to identify their type of organisation, its size, and whether their responses were in an organisational or personal capacity (survey questions 1-4).

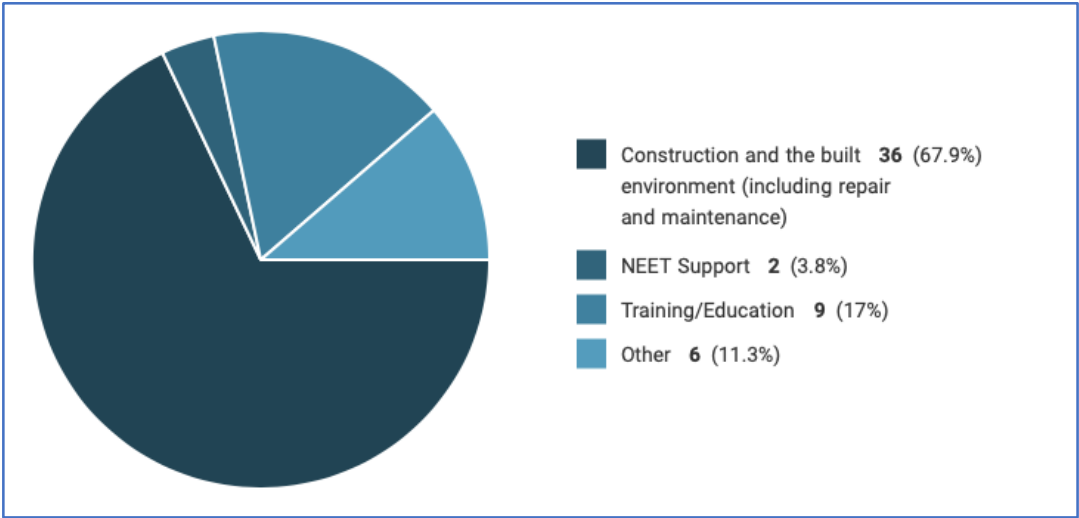


Table 3: Survey response by organisation type

Of those indicating ‘Other’, three were from trade association/sector bodies, one an engineering consultancy, one PR/Communications and one who met all three types.

In terms of organisation size the breakdown was as follows:

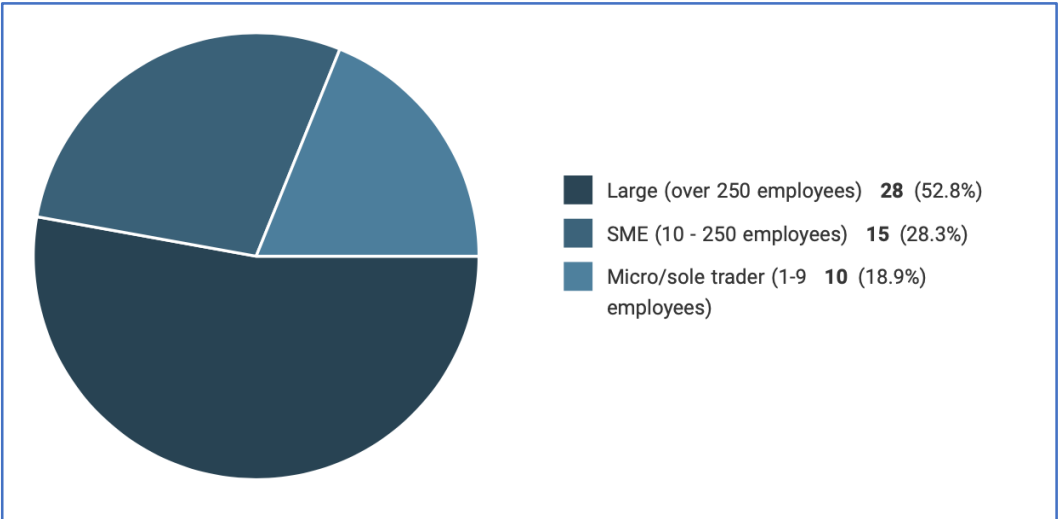


Table 4: Survey response by organisation size

22 respondents completed the survey from an organisational perspective and 31 from a personal.

The NEET Perspective

Section 2 of the survey (survey questions 5-10) explored how employers assumed NEETs perceived the industry, and what they believed NEETs would consider to be barriers. The literature review indicated a low interest in the industry (YouGov, 2015) and this sought to identify reasons employers felt this could be. The first question asked whether the respondents felt NEETs had an interest in working in the industry, 57% suggesting that they were. The YouGov survey found only 3% of all young people actually searched for jobs within construction. This may indicate that the industry is unaware of its lack of attraction to young people, identifying an immediate barrier to recruitment if they assume NEETs will be looking for opportunities.

Those who felt that NEETs were not interested where asked to quantify why they felt this to be the case. The main reason, suggested, by 42%, was a lack of awareness, potentially identifying a reason for the low numbers actively searching. 12.5% of the respondents selected the image of the industry as the reason for lack of interest, similar to the findings of Clarke and Hermann (2007) of 11%, this could also link to the lack of awareness.

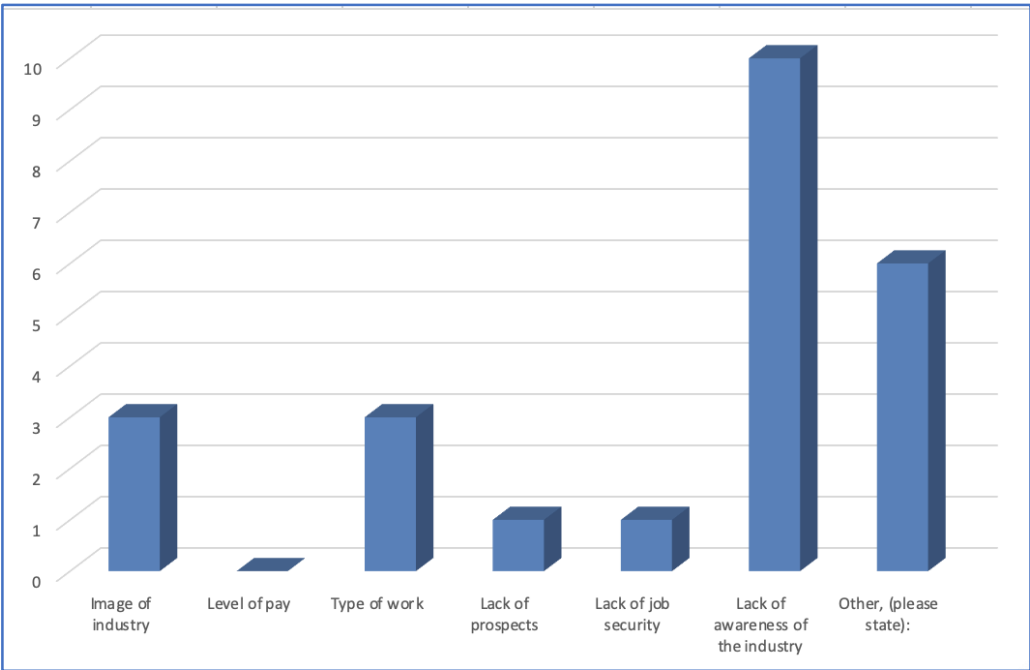


Table 5: Reason for lack of interest in the industry

The other views, type of work, prospects and lack of security, could also all relate to the lack of awareness in the industry. In addition, comments received suggested that drug and alcohol testing could be perceived as a barrier by NEETs. Only three respondents felt that

NEETs lack a work ethic and have no interest in the industry, preferring to remain on benefits.

98% of respondents felt that there were suitable roles that would be accessible to NEETs, but 87% felt the industry is not promoting itself as a positive career. This lack of promotion suggests a possible reason for the findings above, that there is a lack of awareness of the industry and supports the findings of the YouGov (2015) survey. If industry is not promoting itself then unless, as identified by Clarke and Hermann (2007), the young person already has a connection with the industry, they may not be aware of the opportunities it can provide.

The final question in this section asked respondents to identify what they assumed NEETs would consider as a barrier to employment in the industry. Respondents were asked to select maximum of four in order to identify those felt to be the most significant.

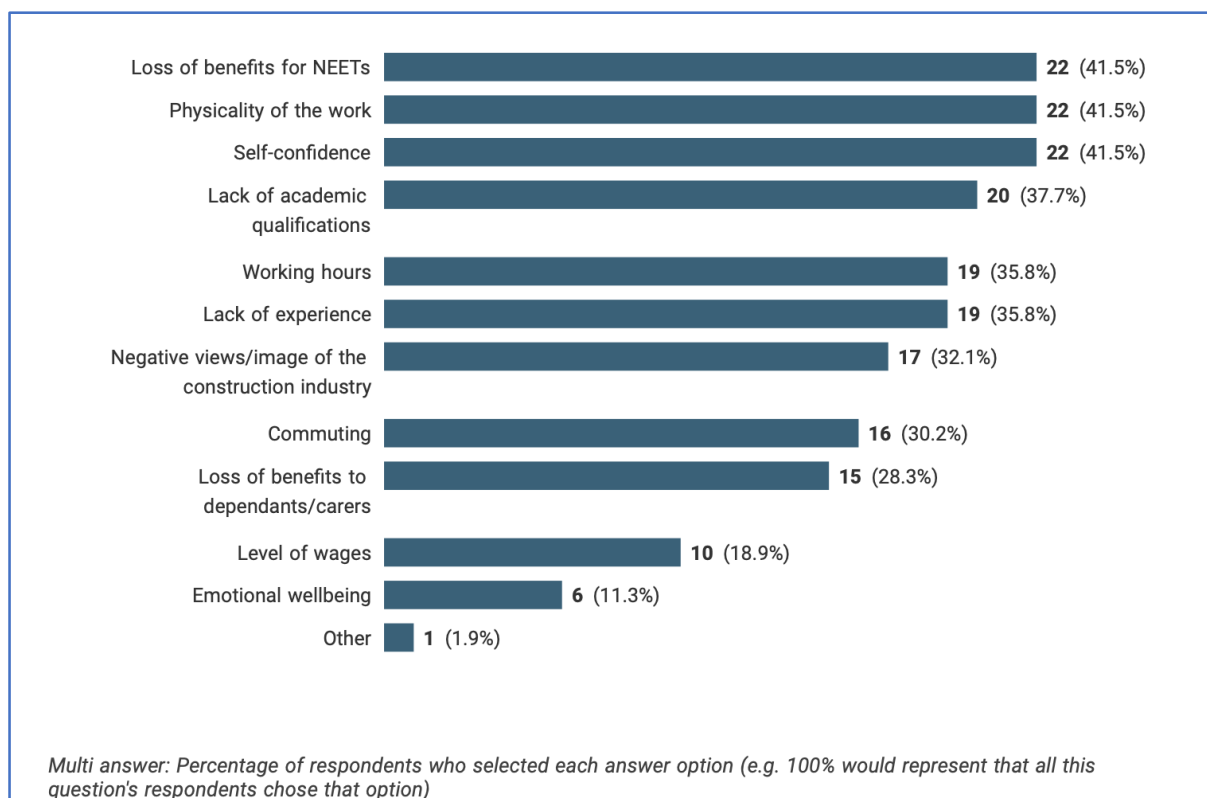


Table 6: NEETs barriers to the industry

The view here was that a loss of benefits was a major barrier, this may be due to perceived low wages for new entrants. As indicated by Buzzeo *et al.* (2016) and others in the literature review, this can dissuade applicants if they feel, they or their family, would suffer financially from accepting employment. Less than half the number which identified a loss of benefits

as a barrier selected level of wages as one. This may indicate that industry feels that the wages available are sufficient to compensate for a loss of benefits, although if NEETs are unaware of the potential earnings they are unlikely to apply. It may also indicate that there are many in the industry who feel that NEETs prefer to be on benefits, as suggested by comments in the previous section. Filtering the results by organisational size, and also whether the survey was completed in an organisational or personal capacity, found the loss of benefits as the main perceived barrier to employment in all cases.

The physicality of the work scored the same as loss of benefits as a barrier, indicating that industry assumes others perceive work in it as strenuous, further evidence of the lack of awareness. Low self-confidence scored the same as the previous two responses and this may be an area that would require support prior to a NEET applying for an opportunity or ongoing support once in a role. It may be assumed that this could improve once in employment.

Whereas in a previous question only 12.5% of respondents felt there was an image problem here 32% selected it as a barrier in terms of NEETs. As acknowledged previously this may be due to industry's problem in promoting itself, possibly suggesting employers assume the industry is seen in a more negative light by NEETs. This supports the view expressed in the literature review that individuals without connections will be unaware of the opportunities, or the reality of work in construction. The one response as 'Other' suggested that a lack of knowledge and appropriate careers advice would be a barrier to NEETs not understanding what the industry can offer. This again could link to industry not promoting itself to young people,

23 additional comments were received in relation to this section, many reinforcing comments made in the survey. The lack of industry awareness and insufficient advice and guidance was highlighted, with one respondent critical of the impact of some trade bodies in promoting the industry. The impact of a lack of contacts within the industry was highlighted, due to the word-of-mouth recruitment practices identified in the literature review. The view that support for both employers and NEETs, as well as employers' need for assurances that a potential recruit was committed, was also emphasised. The unreliable nature of work was identified as a potential barrier, especially where travel was required and the additional costs this could entail, 30% identified commuting as a possible barrier in the previous question. It was suggested that the infrequent, or lack of, public transport, especially in rural areas, would be a major barrier to employment.

The need for new roles which would be more suited to NEET, was also highlighted; this is explored in the last section of the survey. It was also suggested that employers must acknowledge that, when engaging with this group, there was likely to be a high failure rate. 50% was suggested by one respondent based on personal experience, while claiming that the other 50% would make exceptional employees.

Government insistence that, for apprenticeships, individuals must achieve at least a Level 1 maths and English (for a Level 2 apprenticeship) was seen as a major barrier.

'I am a bricklayer and have employed several apprentices over the years. The majority are not academically inclined but won't pass their NVQ unless they achieve an equivalent to a D in maths and English. This is blocking people who could otherwise go on to become good tradesmen.'

Micro/sole trader

One respondent felt that the CSCS health and safety test may represent a barrier for individuals who struggle academically, with a recommendation that recruitment should focus on attitude not qualifications. As was identified in the literature review (Buzzeo *et al.*, 2016; Rüdiger, 2013) while many apprenticeships may not require qualifications these still play a significant role when selecting which applicants to interview, and are often used in lieu of evidence for attitude and soft skills (Newton *et al.*, 2005).

Introductory training courses, explored in the final section, were also criticised as being too short and too classroom based. This conforms to the view identified in the literature review regarding perceived problems with industry training, and the low numbers moving from these courses into employment (Dromey, Morris and Murphy, 2017), and that the courses are not preparing the learners for the industry.

The responses to this section indicate that a major barrier from the NEETs perspective is awareness of the industry, possibly linked to its image. As this section was asking industry what it feels NEETs may perceive as barriers, it seems that it is aware of this issue. This raises the questions of why so little has been done to address it, who is responsible, and what could be done to improve it. If NEETs are unaware of the opportunities available, or have a negative perception of the industry, then they will not consider construction as a viable route into employment, providing a significant barrier to both NEETs and employers.

The Employers' Perspective

The next section (survey questions 11-29) considered the barriers employers face in recruiting new employees from a NEET background. This section was specifically for those engaged in the delivery of construction related projects, 43 participants confirmed that this was the case. These included training providers and NEET support where they had a construction focus. Results for this section were filtered to just this group.

Participants were first asked to select the area of work they were mainly involved in and their role with the following responses:

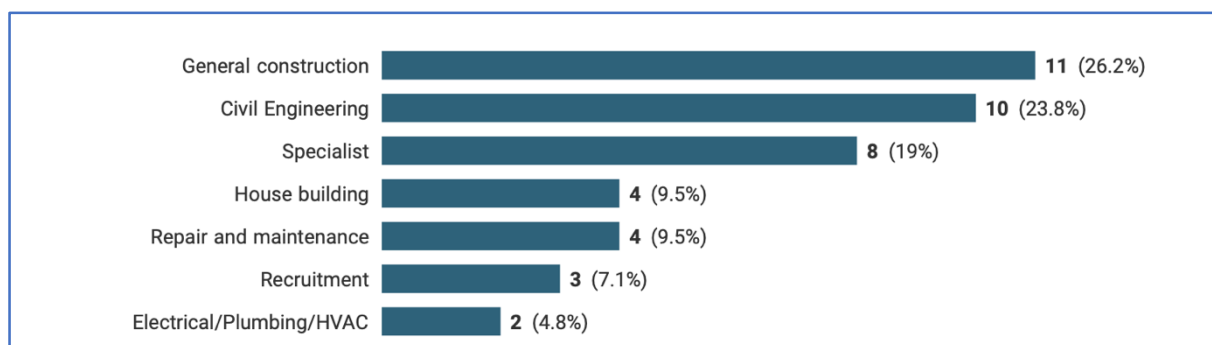


Table 7: Respondents' area of work

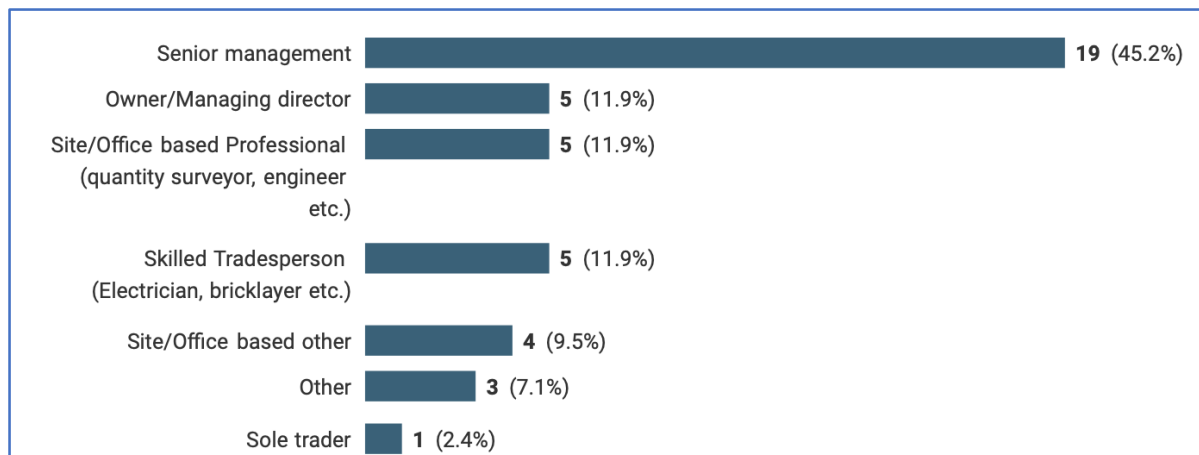


Table 8: Respondents' role

It should be noted that the high response rate from those in a senior management view may sway the responses towards more positive views. They may be considering the positive image engagement with NEETs would provide to their organisation. For many NEETs, if they are able to secure employment in construction, they would more likely be working alongside skilled or semi-skilled operatives, where there were only five responses

to the survey from skilled operatives, and none from semi-skilled. These may have differing views due to an unwillingness to take additional responsibilities in supervising and supporting NEETs, and the impact this could have on their time and productivity. The three that selected 'Other' were from a sector body, human resources, and a social value organisation.

The first question related to non-apprenticeship roles in construction. As detailed in the literature review, (Fuller and Unwin, 2017; Buzzeo *et al.*, 2016), apprenticeships can be unsuitable for many NEETs. 79% of respondents suggested that these roles exist. This is lower than the response given in section 2 where 97% considered there were roles suitable for NEETs. This difference may be due to the original responses including apprenticeships, indicating that employers are unaware of the barriers these present to some NEETs. That said, a majority felt that there are already suitable roles which raises the question, why are NEETs not securing them?

Those indicating they felt these roles existed were asked to clarify these. with the following suggestions:

Suggest Role	Times Suggested
General labourer/operative	16
Trade assistant/mate	8
Traffic Marshall	7
Logistics	4
Stores	3
Admin	3
Railway engineering/ Track Maintenance & Signalling	2
Gate person	2
Banksman	2
Site cleaner	2
Land drilling support	2

Table 9: Non-apprenticeship roles

In addition, 18 other roles each recommended once. These were generally trade specific such as hod carrier, forklift operator, plant operator, drilling, demolition, concreting as well as site office-based entry roles within different teams including document control and HR.

Participants were asked if they employ young people under the age of 24 in apprentice and non-apprenticeship roles, this provided the following responses:

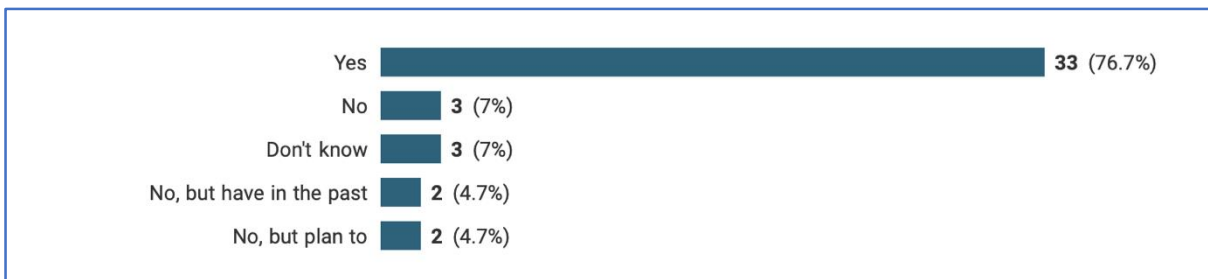


Table 10: Employing under-24s in apprenticeship roles

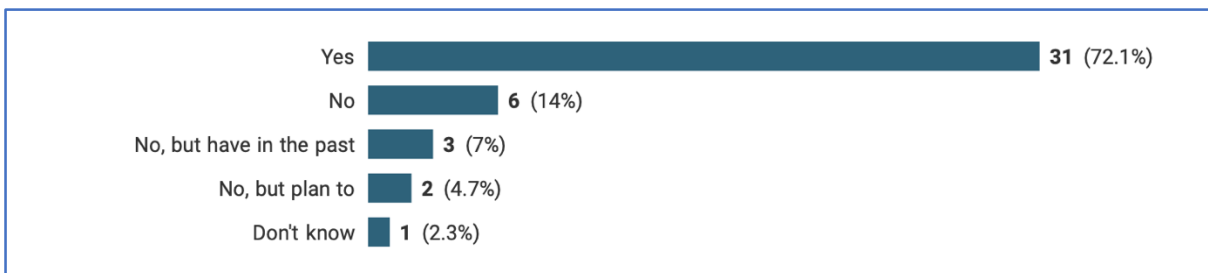


Table 11: Employing under-24s in non- apprenticeship roles

When these results were filtered by either large or SME/micro/sole trader the results showed large employers more likely to recruit to these roles as opposed to SMEs and micro-employers, 92% of large employers having apprentices and 96% non-apprentices compared to 58% and 42% for SMEs/micro/sole traders. This may confirm the findings of the Pye Tate Consulting (2015) report which suggested SMEs have limited resources in regards to the recruitment and support of young people, compared to large organisations

The literature review identified NEET as a catch-all term encompassing young people with a wide range of issues. The next group of questions focused specifically on recruiting young people from a NEET background, Firstly, expanding on the underlying factors as identified by MacDonald and Shildrick (2011) to include other issues identified in the literature review, participants were asked which they felt could be supported within a construction environment, and as such should not be seen a barrier to recruitment.

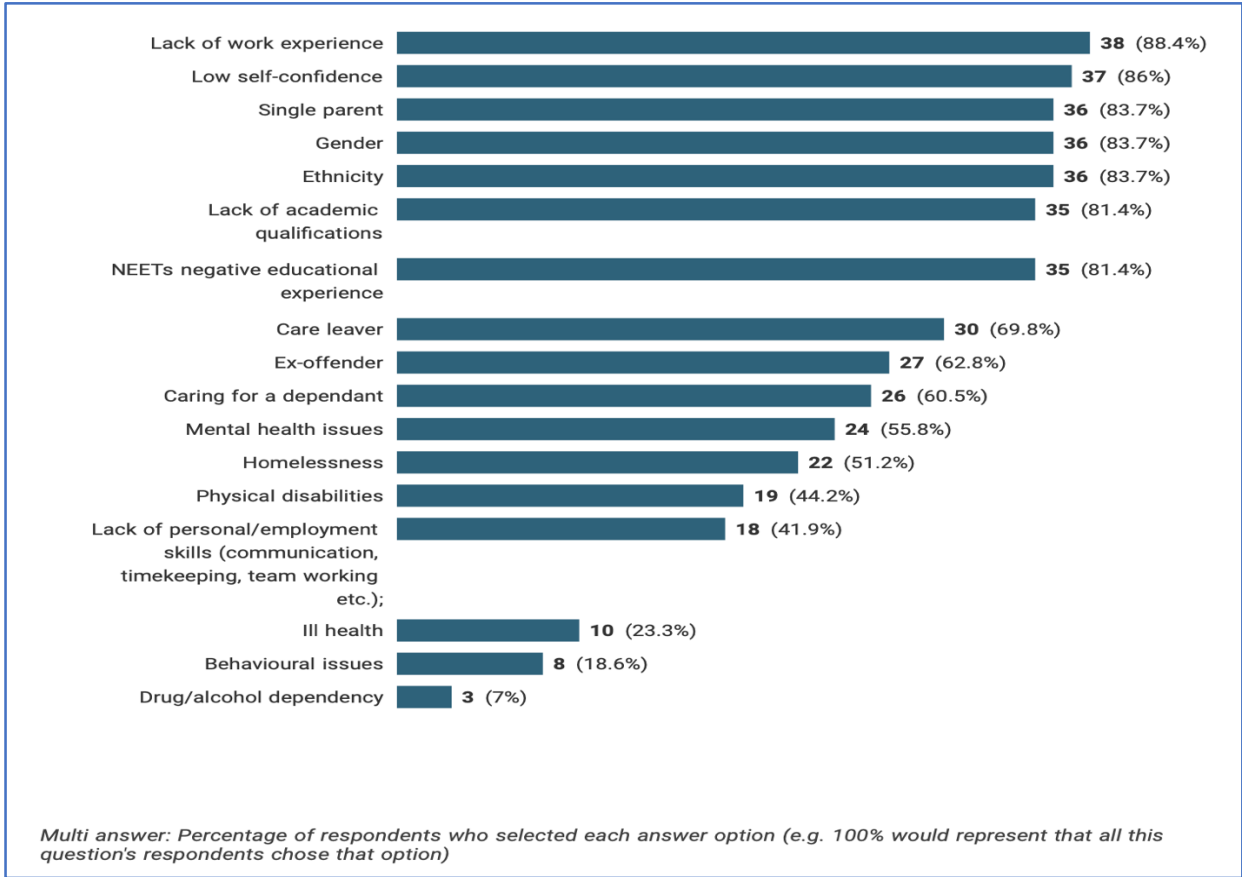


Table 12: Barriers supportable in a construction environment

Table 6 showed that the main issues employers felt NEETs perceived as barriers were lack of experience, self-confidence or lack of academic qualifications. The responses suggest these are barriers employers see as supportable within the industry, along with gender, ethnicity, and a negative view of education all being selected by over 80% of respondents. This suggests that many of the factors identified by MacDonald and Shildrick (2011) as indicators of someone at risk of becoming NEET should not preclude them from entering the industry.

The main area of concern was drug/alcohol dependency and was generally felt that this was not a barrier that could be supported due to obvious health and safety implications. That said, it was suggested in the comments to this question, someone may be classified as an addict, but provided they were now clean, and remained so, it should not be an issue.

Participants were also asked to expand on any of these issues and it was suggested that, just as NEET is a catch-all term, the barriers detailed also have underpinning levels of concern, with many NEETs being affected by more than one. It was highlighted that ill-health, mental health and disabilities could be supportable dependant on the type and

severity of the issue, and ex-offenders can be employed, dependant on offence. One commented that reliability is an issue and felt that this was something that NEETs cannot cope with, while another stressed the importance of the soft employment skills necessary for NEETs to move into employment, as detailed in the literature review these could be a barrier to a NEET if they are unable to evidence them.

One respondent was concerned that, due to negative stereotyping in mainstream media, as identified in the literature review, being labelled NEET was itself a barrier.

‘I actually believe labelling this group as NEET is a barrier, due to the adverse publicity, public perceptions the term NEET is not helpful.’

Large Employer

That said, when respondents were asked what was the main influence of their views of NEETs only 17% selected mainstream media, 62% claiming it was based on professional experience

Respondents were asked if they felt their organisation would be open to recruiting someone from a NEET background, with 42 of the 43 respondents providing a positive response. They were also asked if their organisation already employ from this group, providing the following responses.

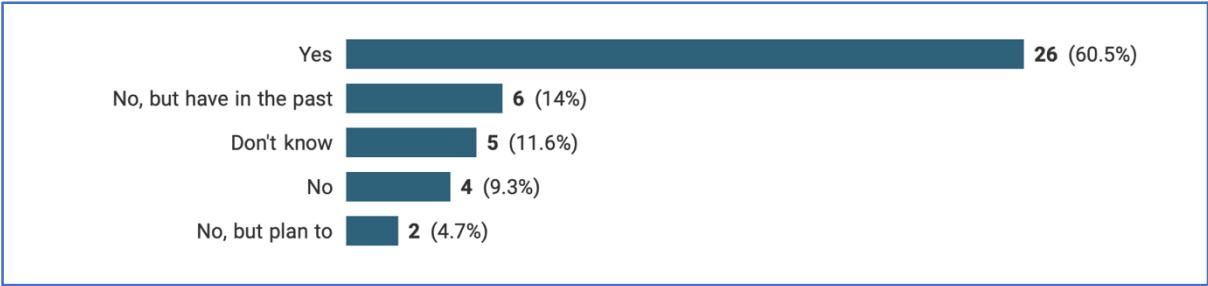


Table 13: Organisations already employing NEETs

When this question was filtered between SME/micro/sole traders the number employing NEETs fell to 37%, opposed to 79% of large organisations. As with Figure/Table 11 above this may be linked to the lack of resources SMEs have to support young people.

The survey next considered resources required, if any, to support an organisation in employing NEETs and 74% of respondents felt that construction companies already have the ability and resources required for this. It should be acknowledged here that over 50%

of those completing this section were from a large organisation. When just the views of micro/sole traders were considered, this fell to 56%. That said, when asked what support their organisation would require if they were to recruit someone from a NEET background only 2 selected 'none'. 65% felt that having a support worker available during the first 6 months would be the most beneficial, along with staff training (59%) and financial support to cover potential additional costs (44%).

Participants also had the option to suggest other support with four comments, although two emphasised the benefit of a NEET supporting organisation. It was also suggested that a case history of the NEET could aid recruitment, and support, as well as a phased start to bring the young person in, along with support with benefits until they received their first wages, and a workplace mentor. Any support would come with a cost and options were given on where the funding should come from. The three most popular sources being central government (28%), the apprenticeship levy (23%) and the CITB levy (14%), no respondent felt that the employer should be required to fund this work.

The final two questions in this section related to the inclusion of clauses and KPIs in public sector contracts as recommended by Chevin (2014). 67% agreed with the use of clauses, while 60% supported the idea of KPIs. As highlighted in the literature review the Employment and Skills project on the Olympics surpassed all the KPI although NEETs were not included. In terms of the contractual clauses and KPIs it was commented that these can only be applied if funding and support was available to meet them, it also suggested they can become a double-edged sword, at risk of just becoming a tick box exercise, similar concerns were raised in the literature review.

It was stated in the comments that while the sector needs to engage with NEETs, it does not have the resources necessary to support this, and as such must be open to assistance from external specialist organisations during initial phases of employment. It was also highlighted that a one size fits all approach would not be suitable due to the differing issues that prevent NEETs' progression into employment. One respondent approved of the use of the apprenticeship levy but it was also suggested that the source of funding should be dependent on the barrier, or that it come from a combination of the sources. It was recommended that there needs to be improved training, leading to support roles, where they could gain the experience. This is one of the alternative options considered in next section.

Alternative Routes into the Industry

The final section of the survey asked participants to consider four alternative options to support the recruitment of NEETs into the industry. A short vignette described each and can be found in Appendix A, (pages 75-79) based on the author's previous experience on similar projects.

The first option considered was paid work experience. As highlighted in the literature review issues faced by NEETs may mean they have not had previous work experience, or the opportunity to develop soft skills employers' value, Newton *et al.* (2005). The second is employment and skills teams. These provide support to both NEETs and employers in the recruitment and through the early stages of employment and was recommended by Chevin (2014). Respondents were asked to consider support operative roles, NEETs working alongside skilled tradespeople, gaining an insight into the role, and supporting the development of the soft skills employers' value. Lastly, short training courses in construction skills were considered. These cover basic skills training as an engagement tool to attract NEETs, with providers then offering support in securing employment in industry.

Each section consisted of four questions relating to the perceived benefit of each approach, with the exception of the employment and skills team who would not deliver training. In addition, participants were asked how each option should be funded. The following responses were received.

	Intermediate Labour Market		Employment and Skills Team		Support Operative		Short course - Local		Short course - National		Short course - International	
Question	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Do you feel that this type of project would encourage construction companies to offer opportunities to NEETs?	91.3%	8.7%	97.8%	2.2%	84.1%	15.9%	88.6%	11.4%	59.1%	40.9%	27.3%	72.7%
Would this type of project make construction more accessible to NEETs?	93.6%	6.4%	97.9%	2.1%	89.1%	10.9%	93.2%	7.8%	61.4%	38.6%	27.3%	72.7%
Would this type of project provide an opportunity for someone from a NEET background to develop basic skills necessary for working in the construction sector?	91.5%	8.5%	-	-	93.2%	6.8%	95.5%	4.5%	59.1%	40.9%	29.5%	70.5%
Would a young person from a NEET background who has completed this type of scheme be of interest to you?	97.4%	2.6%	93.0%	7.0%	92.3%	7.7%	82.9%	17.1%	51.2%	48.8%	24.4%	75.6%

Table 14: Perceived positive impact of alternative options

These results support comments made in the previous section that a one size fits all approach is not suitable, the preferred option for each for the four questions has been highlighted for clarity.

Most options scored highly, 84%+, with the exception of national and international short courses. In relation to the short courses most participants had not selected either yes or no. It has been assumed that those not selecting 'Yes' did not favour the option, and figures adjusted accordingly. A number of comments on in this section related to costs and funding. This was anticipated and respondents were given options on how each could be funded. For all four options the preferred source was Central Government.

'The reason why I have consistently said that this should be funded by central government is that it is their education and social policy that has led to an increase NEET's.'

SME

	Intermediate Labour Market	Employment and Skills Team	Support Operative	Short courses
The Employer/Main Contractor	2.1%	17.4%	17.4%	8.9%
Central Government	44.7%	28.3%	37.0%	37.8%
Local Government	4.3%	8.7%	4.3%	13.3%
Jobcentre Plus	8.5%	10.9%	8.7%	4.4%
Apprenticeship Levy	21.3%	13.0%	10.9%	11.1%
CITB Levy	14.9%	19.6%	15.2%	13.3%
NEET Supporting Charities	4.3%	2.2%	6.5%	11.1%

Table 15: Funding for alternative options

Comments were raised around the issue of the bureaucracy with state funding, suggesting this could become a barrier to engagement of NEETs, more so for SMEs lacking staff or experience in unpicking funding rules.

To complete each option respondents were given the opportunity to add comments.

Intermediate Labour Market (ILM)

A number of positive comments were recorded for ILMs (survey questions 30-36), paid work experience, overseen by a placement officer who supports both the trainee and employer. Some felt this would provide NEETs with an insight into the industry, with that experience making them more attractive to employers. It could also provide introductions to employers which, as identified in the literature review, can be barrier for many NEETs who sit outside word-of-mouth recruitment practices (Clarke and Hermann, 2007). The societal benefits were highlighted in supporting NEETs to move from benefit claimants to tax paying individuals.

It was felt these would provide an opportunity for NEETs to demonstrate their willingness to work, learn, and develop personal skills which, as was suggested by some, is all industry looks for in new recruits. One respondent suggested that completion of the programme would give the individual something to be proud of, building self-confidence. The positives of the ongoing support were welcomed, one respondent stating they had run a similar project previously, delivering a 50% success rate, similar to those identified by Roberts *et al.* (2012).

It was felt that this type of project would benefit industry, helping to address the skills shortages, as well as providing the opportunity to keep construction skills alive. It could provide employers with a 'try before you buy' vehicle, giving confidence that, as previously suggested, the individual was committed. One respondent felt that this type of programme could help address barriers, such as gender, by encouraging individuals from under-represented groups to apply with the knowledge that there would be support during their placement.

Concerns were raised as to whether this type of programme would be suitable for all organisations, with one suggesting that it would only suit larger companies. It was highlighted that smaller employers may not have resources to support the barriers that affected NEETs. This was supported by the view that skilled tradespeople may not have the skills or knowledge to be able to offer mentoring, and that it would have a negative impact on their productivity. It was also suggested that this could result in a large throughput of applicants if individuals found the sector not to be suitable for them. This had been previously highlighted with the comment that employers should accept that 50% of new entrants would leave the programme early.

A number of concerns were raised over possible health and safety implications, claiming that this limits the work NEETs are able to undertake, with clients viewing young trainees as liabilities, although it was stressed that risk assessments mitigate this. As addressed in the literature review, the limits on the work young people can undertake are more the exceptions than the rule (HSE, 2019a).

There were a number of comments regarding funding with some suggesting this is an expensive option, and that the bureaucracy involved would limit the uptake amongst SMEs. Others suggested that having a funded programme may encourage employer involvement, although some may view this as cheap labour.

Employment and Skills Team (EST)

The second option was employment skills teams (survey questions 37-42), described in the survey as a team that liaises with contractors on a project in forecasting labour demands, identifying potential employment opportunities and sourcing and supporting applicants and employers.

Positive views of an EST included the impact a consistent and structured approach would provide employers, with a single point of contact helping to streamline engagement. This would address some of the concerns with the industry's recruitment practices, helping to source suitable candidates in advance and ensuring they were work ready prior to meeting an employer. Having the opportunities identified early in order to identify and prepare new entrants for the roles, as well as the in-work support, would encourage recruitment.

It was proposed that ESM teams should include those from a construction background, with an understanding of the employer's needs, and the realities of work within the sector. As with ILMs, it was stated that this type of project would help address skills shortages and provide an opportunity to pass on skills. One comment highlighted the positive impact this team could have on corporate social responsibility and community engagement.

Concerns included the time and money spent supporting a particular group, the London 2012 ESMs focused on a number of under-represented groups, although not NEETs. Another concern was that it would only suit large developments with funding available to employ the specialist team, London 2012 being a one-off. While it may suit large projects, it could be problematic with the type of short-term work carried out by many SME and micro employers. There was also a concern that employers, being risk averse, would not buy in,

preferring to maintain current recruitment practices and would take convincing to change these. In terms of cost, this again was felt by some to be an expensive option, one comment suggesting that the London 2012 programme, while impressive, could have delivered more given the funding available.

Support Operative

This option (survey questions 43-49) was described as similar to a 'mate', providing support to a tradesperson by undertaking the basic tasks, allowing them to concentrate on the skilled work. Similar comments were offered for this option as for ILMs and ESTs, that it provided a positive introduction to the industry, offered the opportunity to pass on skills and knowledge, and supported an understanding of work within the industry, as well as helping to address the skills shortage.

Some respondents commented that these roles currently exist, or had previous experience of similar schemes, and that these had been successful; while other comments suggested that industry does not operate this way anymore. It was felt that this type of role could be beneficial within large teams and that using the 'old mate system' would allow new entrants to gain insight into the industry. A concern was that SMEs/micro businesses often offered these types of role to family and friends, through the word-of-mouth recruitment practice. As such there is the risk that NEETs would not be aware when they become available, as highlighted in the literature review. That said, it was suggested that working alongside an experienced operative could provide NEETs, who have no connection to the industry, a first contact.

A major concern highlighted was the negative impact on productivity this type of role could have, along with additional costs relating to the employment of a support operative. It was commented that the skilled tradesperson would spend time supervising the support operative, impacting their own work. This may be alleviated where the support operative is part of a larger team, with a number of individuals supporting and supervising their work. There were also comments suggesting employers may not engage with new roles due to industry's resistance to change and that these roles would not provide adequate support for NEETs.

Short Course Training

This option (survey questions 50-56) proposed short training courses to engage those with barriers to employment, providing basic construction skills and health and safety, as well as ongoing employment support, and introductions to industry. Three alternatives were offered, local: training provided within a community in a non-traditional setting, national: bringing individuals together from across the country, and international: where the skills would be developed in mixed teams, small groups travelling overseas to train alongside others from the host nation. These types of programmes are often delivered by third sector organisations.

Of the three options, local projects were preferred, with suggestions that this would gain support of local employers and projects. Along with the basic construction skills the embedding of employability skills and teamworking were identified as benefits, based on a respondent's experience of similar projects. It was also suggested that these projects help build confidence, identified in the literature review as a significant barrier to employment for some NEETs (Kingston, 2017), potentially encouraging the individual to progress onto further qualifications, improving their employability.

There were concerns with some of the main third sector providers of these types of courses, highlighting the lack of success rates and the difficulty in obtaining data from the organisations, as well as suggestions that the quality of training was poor. It was implied that they are more interested in securing funding than achieving success. These comments come from two individuals, one of whom claimed experience in working alongside such providers.

Final Comments

Once the survey was completed respondents were provided with the opportunity to add additional comments (survey question 57). Respondents emphasised that the range of factors resulting in someone becoming NEET requires support to be bespoke, as identified in the literature review (Maguire, 2015), and in respondent comments, and that a one size fits all approach is not viable. This highlights the issue with the term NEET, it provides no indication on underlying factors or support required. It was recommended that more needs to be done to encourage employers to engage with NEETs, dispelling the myths often portrayed in mainstream media, and in understanding where barriers stem from.

The use of client mandated targets for NEET engagement was suggested as a way to secure employer buy-in. It was also proposed that funding be provided to employers who engage with NEETs directly, not to third parties or training providers, with a suggestion that employers signing up for such schemes gain access to public projects. As with previous comments respondents highlighted that the bureaucracy attached to such projects acts as a barrier to SMEs. It was felt that NEET engagement was easier for larger companies with the resources to support. To address this, it was suggested that government has to do more to in supporting SMEs to engage with NEETs.

Industry awareness was identified as a barrier, the roles and opportunities not being apparent to NEETs. It was proposed that industry needs to do more to promote itself, and it should take responsibility for this. A lack of direct employment within the industry was also highlighted, with the use of labour agencies common within the industry which may exclude NEETs without the relevant experience.

Positive comments regarding the employment of NEETs included one stating that as far as they were concerned there were no barriers that could not be addressed. This view was supported by responses to the survey and the questions regarding the factors that indicate a risk of becoming NEET. Another commented that many contractors did not have a problem employing NEETs, and once in a working environment the individual will thrive. It was suggested that, prior to introduction to the industry NEETs need to be developing the personal and employability skills employers' value. The literature identified that a lack of these skills presents a barrier to securing employment.

Conclusions

The purpose of this dissertation was to identify barriers to the employment of NEETs in construction, and to consider alternatives that may help address this. As the research for this dissertation was being undertaken a contact within the CITB forwarded a copy of unpublished research recently undertaken into NEET engagement. It addressed a number of similar areas to this dissertation but was received too late to be incorporated in the literature review, instead it will be referred to during this conclusion.

A number of factors were identified indicating someone at risk of becoming a NEET (Buzzeo *et al.* 2016; Maguire, 2015; MacDonald and Shildrick, 2011 and others), all potentially presenting barriers to employment. These factors were addressed in the primary research with responses identifying most as being supportable within the industry, and as such not necessarily barriers to employment (Table 12). Some factors, ill health, behavioural and drug/alcohol dependency did raise concerns, and could present as barriers. Given the importance of health and safety within the industry, and potential negative impacts these factors may present, these views are understandable. That said, comments suggested that, depending on severity, even these factors may be supportable in certain circumstances.

Based on the author's previous experience in supporting NEETs into construction, it was assumed that the industry was reticent to employ them but this would suggest that being NEET is not in itself a barrier. It should be noted that a majority of responses come from larger organisations with the resources to support.

Analysis of the research has identified other issues that present as barriers. It should be noted each could potentially act as barriers that prevent NEETs accessing opportunities and employers recruiting from this cohort. The identified issues fall into four broad groupings:

- The limitations and negative connotations of the term NEET.
- Construction's recruitment practices and employer expectations.
- The limited resources available to SMEs and their ability to support.
- The image, perceptions and promotion of the industry.

The term NEET was identified as pigeonholing young people with a broad spectrum of issues, each requiring specialised support. It was noted that this term fails to quantify the

actual issues that obstruct NEETs engagement with education, employment or training. Instead it implies that they are in this situation because of something they are NOT doing. Presenting someone solely as NEET results in a lack of clarity regarding the type(s) of support necessary to ensure a successful transition from NEET to employed. If support provided is unsuitable the outcome may be a negative experience for both the young person and the employer, dissuading the employer from considering future applicants from this group, and the young person in considering the industry.

The negative connotations associated with the term, identified in both the literature review and comments in the research (page 38), indicated that perceptions of this group could represent a barrier. Employers may be discouraged from engaging due to perceived negative attitudes and behaviours. A respondent detailed a poor experience with one young person as a reason to not engage. A limitation with the use of online surveys is that it is not possible to further explore statements. It would have been interesting to discover if the same negative attitude would be applied to over 25's if an employer received a similar experience from an older employee.

The issues with the term NEET are not something that construction itself can address, and its impact is not limited to construction alone. It is an accepted term and any revision would require approval from a wide range of government and non-government organisations. That said, construction could look to educate itself. A group from across the industry could undertake research and produce advice and guidance which could help in better understanding this cohort and the support required.

Ultimately this may only be resolved by replacing the term, identifying one with less negative connotations. Any new term must provide clarity, allowing for a better understanding of the issues presented, which in turn would enhance support. As has been identified, a one-size-fits-all approach is not the answer.

The recruitment methods construction utilises, and entry requirements were highlighted in the literature review and respondents' comments as posing barriers for both NEETs and employers. The literature review detailed why apprenticeships may not be suitable for some NEETs, positing financial implications and academic requirements as barriers preventing NEETs pursuing opportunities. In addition, the off-the-job training requirements for these roles may dissuade those with a negative experience in mainstream education, addressed in the comments (Page 33).

Word-of-mouth recruitment, highlighted in the literature review and some comments, is common within the industry and was identified in the CITB research (CITB, 2019b) as being especially important to microbusinesses, stating it was felt young people recruited through this method had a better understanding of the role. This presents an obvious barrier, a young person has no contact with the industry will not gain sight of these opportunities, those roles instead going to friends or family, or, as suggested, skilled personnel taking on less skilled roles in order to maintain employment. As with the barriers posed by apprenticeships, employers face the potential barrier in recruiting NEETs due to a lack of applicants.

Employer expectations were identified as barriers to NEET employment in respondent comments and the literature review. These include soft and employability skills which employers often say is all they look for in a new recruit. A NEET's circumstances could make these difficult to develop or evidence. An interrupted education, or a lack of previous work experience, may result in a NEET failing to gain the qualifications employers would accept as evidence of their expectations, or being able to provide examples of how they have met them through previous roles. This means NEETs will struggle to get through the application stage and as such be unlikely to gain an interview where they may be able to demonstrate their aptitude for the role in other ways.

The myths that surround the employment of young people in the industry, often quoted when employers are challenged on their recruitment of young people, were highlighted by some respondents. These responses covered both the awareness they are myths, as well as stating them as fact. The literature review identified sources of information, HSE (2019a), Build UK (2016), to counter these myths. The fact that they are still quoted indicates clarity around these issues is required to ensure employers are aware of the reality. This is especially pertinent to SMEs, where the research indicated a lower level of engagement with this group.

If the construction industry wishes to engage new entrants from this group, it needs to consider these practices. The research has identified the recruitment practices detailed pose major barriers to engagement with NEETs. This identifies an area for further research, what, where, and why specific recruitment practices are used, and identifying alternatives which open the industry to those currently facing barriers in accessing it.

An area frequently cited though the survey, and supported by the differences in responses to questions when filtered, are those SMEs face, as opposed to larger employers, in the

recruitment and support of NEETs. Responses to questions and comments indicated that SMEs are less likely to have resources readily available to provide support for NEET employees, yet they form the bulk of construction employers. The primary research indicated that 92% of large employers, but only 58% of SMEs, employed apprentices, with 96% of large employers claiming they also employed under-24's in non-apprenticeship roles, for SMEs this figure was just 42%. In addition, 70% of large employers stated that they had employees from a NEET background, this fell to 37% when only SMEs were considered. This could be an indicator of the difficulties SMEs face in employing from this cohort due to lack of support resources (Tables 10, 11 and 13).

The CITB research (CITB, 2019b) recommended the possible use of grants or funding to help mitigate impact on employers, and suggested that employers would welcome measures that simplified engagement and recruitment. This offers a second area for further research, what can be provided to assist SMEs in employing NEETs and where should this come from?

The final area identified as a major barrier for both employers and NEETs is the perception and promotion of the industry. The lack of quality IAG on the industry available to NEETs, was raised in the literature review and research comments. As stated, the industry is often seen as a 4D industry, and as such may not be attractive to many. People working within the industry will see it differently but if those providing IAG do not understand what it can offer this is likely to be the picture they paint.

It was identified that the main sources of guidance for young people were either family or school, and as detailed these are sources many NEETs may not have access to. A care leaver, homeless individual, and in some cases ex-offenders, may have no contact with family, indicating they will not have access to family support. The lack of a family network also produces a barrier to word-of-mouth recruitment. In addition, someone with a negative educational experience, potentially having not completed their formal education, may not have access to schools' career guidance.

Information is available, the CITB Go Construct website provides guidance on the industry, but with a focus on apprenticeships and qualifications, as previously discussed these present barriers for many NEETs. There are many other websites providing information of careers but few focusing exclusively on construction. Unless an individual is specifically looking for a role in the industry, just 3% according to the YouGov research (YouGov, 2015),

the lack of quality IAG produces a barrier to identifying opportunities. A major barrier for employers wishing to recruit NEETs, as already stated, is a lack of applicants.

A surprisingly high 87% of those responding to the survey felt the industry does not promote itself to young people (Page 31), also considered in the CITB research (CITB, 2019b) which produced a lower 51%. The reason for the difference is not apparent though the CITB research had a larger, and broader range of respondents, over half of the responses to this survey coming from large employers. This is a clear barrier to employers; if the industry is not being promoted then, unless a young person already has connections, they are unlikely to be aware of opportunities in the sector.

This identifies a third area for further research, if industry is aware of its failure to promote why has nothing been done to address, and whose responsibility should this be? This could also investigate how the image of industry is perceived among young people, consider the backgrounds of those taking up opportunities, and those who are not, and look to identify reasons why this is. It would need to quantify potential negative perceptions NEETs and their influencers have of the industry, and identify how they can promote the reality. Waters (2016) suggested a campaign similar to that used to promote the armed forces, could offer an alternative view of the industry. In addition, promotion of the new technologies coming into the industry that may utilise alternative skills young people have gained through leisure activities may help to attract young people from all areas, not just NEETs.

The alternative options presented were based on the author's previous experience and were used to begin discussions on what alternatives would be acceptable. The general response was highly favourable suggesting industry is open to new ideas (Table 14). Comments proposed that many of the barriers identified, recruitment practices and SMEs' lack of resources, could be addressed by the alternatives proposed.

Taking the most favoured options a possible full engagement programme would provide:

- Short courses in basic construction skills, potentially those required for a support operative, delivered locally. These would provide learners with a basic understanding of the industry and simple construction skills as well as helping to develop and evidence and of the soft skills detailed previously.
- A specialist team (ESMs) supporting employers and NEETs through the recruitment process and initial stages of employment. These teams would take on much of the pastoral support work on behalf of the SMEs, removing pressure from

the employer that may otherwise result in them not recruiting from this cohort. This was also identified in the cross-parliamentary inquiry (Chevin, 2014) as a method to overcome many barriers. That said, comments during the research suggest that these types of teams are only suited on larger projects where there was the budget, work, and major employers who would employ the team.

- Initial employment through a funded ILM programme in a support operative role. This would reduce risks for the employer if the participants' wages were funded, and provide the opportunity for the learner to gain an insight into the industry and develop personal and trade-based skills.

This would suggest that a collaborative approach, one involving employers, NEET support organisations, and national and local government or other funding bodies, would be beneficial. The CITB report (CITB, 2019b) also confirmed that partnerships would be welcomed in addressing NEET engagement.

The main concern raised in relation to the alternative options was in relation to cost and where funding would be sourced, with some suggesting these were expensive options. Central government was the most popular option for funding (Table 15), but it was also noted that, as the factors indicating risk of becoming NEET cover a broad spectrum, and many face multiple factors, funding may be provided from a number of sources. The bureaucracy attached to many funding schemes was identified as a potential barrier, especially for SMEs who may not have the staff to take this on. This would be further complicated if the funding comes from multiple sources. Government funding also carries the risk that changes in government or policy result in its withdrawal at a future date.

Further research is needed to clarify what types of programme, or combination of, are achievable and acceptable to industry to enhance the employment opportunities for NEETs. In addition, this should investigate the social return on investment that the alternatives could deliver, identifying who would gain the most financially. A reduction in benefits and the income tax paid by a NEET moving into employment would benefit central government, who therefore should be encouraged to fund.

As was identified, the UK construction industry consists of over 300,000 companies a vast majority of which are SMEs (Statista, 2019), and is risk averse and resistant to change (Farmer, 2016; Egan 1998). Industry should explore the option of building regional networks, especially of SMEs, who could work together in supporting NEETs into the sector, sharing responsibility and thus sharing risk. Ideally these would utilise existing regional

networks, CIOB, FMB, CITB or Local Enterprise Partnerships as opposed to developing new.

Four areas for future research have been identified:

- construction recruitment practices
- support requirements that would encourage uptake from this group by SMEs
- promotion of the industry to young people and addressing the image and perceptions of certain groups.
- Alternatives entry routes and their social return on investment

Any future research needs to consider the fragmented makeup of the industry as detailed above when exploring these areas and it is unlikely to find a solution that suit all, as with NEETs, a one size fits all approach is, most likely, not an option.

This dissertation began with a review of the current skills crisis and it is clear that this can only be addressed by attracting entrants from outside the usual market. NEETs, while not solving the issue, may provide a group that may help address the shortfall.

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Appendices

A: Online Survey – Clean Version

p. 1 Barriers to NEET recruitment in the construction sector. – Research Survey

This survey is being carried out in support of the dissertation for my Masters in Construction Project Management. Its purpose is to investigate the barriers faced in employing young people, classified as Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEETs), in securing employment within the construction industry. NEETs are young people between the ages of 16-24 who are not in any form of education or training and not in employment. Consequently, a person identifies as NEET will always be either unemployed or economically inactive.

Your contribution will help to identify whether there is an appetite within the industry for engaging with this group, what the barriers could be that may hinder this engagement, and gain insight into industry's views on alternative routes of entry for this group. Please feel free to share the link to this survey with colleagues and contacts who may have an interest, the more participants I have the more robust will be the results.

The survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete and consists of four sections. Section 1 and 2 are for all participants to complete, Section 3 is only for those working within the construction and built environment sector and Section 4 looks at potential alternatives to support NEETs into construction. Section 4 is optional but if you can complete it will support the research into alternative routes into the industry. A comment box is provided at the end of the survey for any additional views or comments that you have regarding the employment of NEETs within the construction sector.

I can confirm that all measures will be taken to ensure that your responses are confidential and nothing will be published that can identify any individual or organisation unless express permission has been granted. You will have the right to withdraw your views up to the research deadline of 19th April 2019.

If you have any questions regarding this research, or would be interested in its findings, then please do not hesitate to contact me at stephen2.sugden@live.uwe.ac.uk.

Thank you for your participation.

Kind regards

Steve Sugden

Msc Construction Project Management

p. 2 Section 1 - Respondent Information

1 What is the main focus of your organisation?

- Construction and the built environment (including repair and maintenance)
- NEET Support
- Training/Education
- Other

a If you selected Other, please specify:

2 If you selected 'Construction and the built environment' in the previous question, how many years experience do you have in the sector?

- 0-3 years
- 4-10 years
- 11-25 years
- 25 years +

3 Size of organisation/business

- Large (over 250 employees)
- SME (10 - 250 employees)
- Micro/sole trader (1-9 employees)

4 Are you completing the survey?

- From the viewpoint of your company/organisation
- In a personal capacity

Note: If you are completing this survey on behalf of an organisation it would be beneficial if you also could complete it in a personal capacity by following the link again once you have completed the survey.

p. 3 Section 2 - The NEET Perspective

5 Do you think that NEETs are interested in securing employment within the construction sector?

- Yes
- No

6 If you answered 'No' to the above why do you think this is?

- Image of industry
- Level of pay
- Type of work
- Lack of prospects
- Lack of job security
- Lack of awareness of the industry
- Other, (please state):

a If you selected Other, please specify:

7 Do you think that the construction sector has employment opportunities that would be accessible to someone from a NEET background?

- Yes
- No

8 Do you think the construction sector does enough to promote itself as an attractive career to young people?

- Yes
- No

9 Which of the following could someone from a NEET background perceive as the main barriers to their employment within construction? (Please tick a maximum of four options)

- Level of wages
- Loss of benefits for NEETs
- Loss of benefits to dependants/carers
- Working hours
- Physicality of the work
- Commuting

- Lack of academic qualifications
- Lack of experience
- Self-confidence
- Emotional wellbeing
- Negative views/image of the construction industry
- Other

a If you selected Other, please specify:

10 Do you have any other comments you would like to add regarding the questions asked in this section?

p. 4 Section 3 - Construction's Perspective

The following section looks at the barriers an employer may face in employing someone from a NEET background.

If you wish to end the survey once you have completed this page please **click through to the final page** to ensure your responses are recorded. The following section is optional but your thoughts would be valued.

11 Please confirm that you/your organisation is involved in the delivery of construction related projects.

- Yes
- No

12 What area of construction are you/your organisation predominantly engaged in?

- Civil Engineering
- Demolition
- Electrical/Plumbing/HVAC
- General construction
- House building
- Recruitment
- Repair and maintenance
- Specialist
- Utilities

13 Which of the following best describes your role:

- Sole trader
- Owner/Managing director
- Senior management
- Site/Office based Professional (quantity surveyor, engineer etc.)
- Site/Office based other
- Site/trade supervision
- Skilled Tradesperson (Electrician, bricklayer etc.)
- Semi-skilled (labourer, plant operator etc.)
- Other

a If you selected Other, please specify:

14 Do you think there are currently non-apprenticeship roles within the construction industry that would be suitable for NEETs?

- Yes
- No

15 If you answered 'Yes' please state the roles you consider would be suitable.

16 Does your organisation employ young people under 24 years of age as apprentices?

- Yes
- No
- No, but have in the past
- No, but plan to
- Don't know

17 Does your organisation employ young people under 24 years of age in non-apprenticeship roles?

- Yes
- No
- No, but have in the past
- No, but plan to
- Don't know

18 NEET is a catch-all term that covers a wide range of issues that can be barriers to employment. Which of the following would NOT be a barrier to you recruiting them? (Please tick all that apply and add any comments that you feel are relevant to these barriers).

- Lack of academic qualifications
- NEETs negative educational experience
- Care leaver
- Physical disabilities
- Mental health issues
- Homelessness
- Single parent
- Caring for a dependant
- Ex-offender
- Drug/alcohol dependency
- Lack of work experience
- Low self-confidence
- Ill health
- Behavioural issues
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Lack of personal/employment skills (communication, timekeeping, team working etc.)

19 Please add any comments that you feel are relevant regarding the barriers listed above.

20 Does your organisation employ any young people from NEET backgrounds?

- Yes
- No
- No, but have in the past
- No, but plan to
- Don't know

21 Would you/your organisation be open to employing someone from a NEET background?

- Yes
- No

22 Which of the following statements do you feel are reasons not to employ someone from a NEET background? (please tick a maximum of six).

- NEETs are not interested in working within the construction sector.
- NEETs are too unreliable.
- NEETs have a negative attitude to employment.
- NEETs have unrealistic expectations about work.
- NEETs do not have the employability skills previous generations had.
- NEETs do not have the education or skills required to enter the industry.
- The industry is not suitable for NEETs
- Employers are not able to take on the additional health and safety requirements necessary for employing NEETs (enhanced risk assessments etc.).
- The additional insurance costs make it uneconomical to employ NEETs.
- Do not believe that NEETs would be productive for the organisation.
- Unable to guarantee ongoing work to provide continued employment
- Employment for new entrants can only be through an apprenticeship route.
- Young people today are not as mature as previous generations.
- None

23 What do you feel is the biggest influence on your response to the question above?

- Own personal experiences.
- Own professional experiences.
- Own family.
- Mainstream media
- Views expressed by peers

24 Do you think construction companies have the ability and resources to support someone from a NEET background?

- Yes
- No

25 If your organisation wanted to offer opportunities to NEETs what support, if any, do you think would be required. (Please tick all that apply).

- None
- Staff training on NEETs prior to employment
- A support worker being present on the first day
- A support worker being available during the first six months
- Financial support for additional costs to organisation.
- Job roles designed specifically for NEETs
- Wage subsidies
- Other

a If you selected Other, please specify:

26 If financial support was required in order to support a NEET in employment, should it be provided by:

- No additional funding would be required
- The employer
- Central government
- Local government
- Department for Education
- Apprenticeship Levy
- CITB Levy
- NEET supporting 3rd sector organisations (charities)

27 Should public sector contracts have a specific clause relating to the engagement and employment of NEETs

- Yes
- No

28 Should NEETs be included in public sector contract employment Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (targets a contractor must meet)?

- Yes
- No

29 Do you have any comments you would like to add regarding the areas covered in this section?

p. 5 Section 4 - Addressing the barriers

This section looks at previous activities that have been taken to address barriers to employment. It is **optional** but if you are able to complete it will help identify possible future NEET engagement activities.

If you do not wish to answer these questions please **scroll down and click through to the final page** to ensure your responses are recorded.

Please read each description and answer the questions that follow.

Intermediate Labour Market

An Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) offers paid work experience, supported by a placement officer who works with both the trainee and employer. It can run for up to six months and includes off-the-job personal development training. The trainee works alongside a skilled operative and has the opportunity to develop employment skills as well as gaining insight into a specific role.

ILMs are often managed by local authorities or 3rd sector organisations.

30 Do you feel that this type of project would encourage construction companies to offer opportunities to NEETs?

- Yes
- No

31 Would this type of project make construction more accessible to NEETs?

- Yes
- No

32 Would this type of project provide an opportunity for someone from a NEET background to develop basic skills necessary for working in the construction sector?

- Yes
- No

33 This type of project would require significant funding to pay for wage subsidies, training and the support worker/organisation. If this project was to be run how should it be funded?

- The Employer
- Central government
- Local government
- Jobcentre Plus
- Apprenticeship Levy
- CITB Levy
- NEET supporting 3rd sector organisations (charities)

34 Would a young person from a NEET background who has completed this type of scheme be of interest to you? (Construction and the built environment companies and employees only)

- Yes
- No

35 What are the positives you could see for this type of project?

36 What are the negatives you could see with this type of project?

Employment and Skills Team

A site-based Employment and Skills Team liaises with contractors on a project in forecasting labour demands and identifies possible employment opportunities. They work with local employment support organisations to ensure local residents are trained and job ready prior to the job roles being required, as well as supporting contractors with recruitment. In addition, as they are site based, they support the employer, and employee, during the initial employment phase. This model was successfully deployed on London 2012 Olympic Park construction securing around 1,500 employees across the project.

37 Would having an employment and skills team present on a project encourage the employment of NEETs?

- Yes
- No

38 Would having an employment and skills team on a project make construction more accessible to NEETs?

- Yes
- No

39 How should an Employment and Skills Team should be financed?

- Main contractor(s)
- Central government
- Local government
- Jobcentre Plus
- Apprenticeship Levy
- CITB Levy
- NEET supporting 3rd sector organisations

40 Would it be easier to employ a NEET if this type of scheme was available on a project? (Construction companies and employees only)

- Yes
- No

41 What are the positives you can see from this type of scheme?

42 What are the negatives you can see with this type of scheme?

Support Operative

A review is carried out to identify basic tasks undertaken by a skilled tradesperson but not directly linked to their role. These are combined to develop a separate role, a Support Operative (similar to the old 'Mate' role), for new entrants to the industry. Prior to commencing work, they are trained in the basics of the job role as well as areas such as health and safety. They work alongside a skilled operative, carrying out the basic tasks, allowing the tradesperson to concentrate on the skilled work, improving

productivity. A Support Operative role allows the trainee to gain an insight into a trade and develop employability skills, while also earning a wage. Similar schemes have been delivered in the past by organisations such as Remploy to promote opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment.

43 Would this type of role encourage you to offer an opportunity to a NEET?

- Yes
- No

44 Would this type of role make construction more accessible to NEETs?

- Yes
- No

45 Would this type of project provide an opportunity for someone from a NEET background to develop basic skills necessary for working in the construction sector?

- Yes
- No

46 This role would require a short training course prior to starting with an employer. Funding would be required to pay for the training, and for an allowance for the individual during the training. Who should fund the training and wage subsidy during this time?

- The employer
- Central government
- Local government
- Jobcentre Plus
- Apprenticeship Levy
- CITB Levy
- NEET supporting 3rd sector organisations

47 Would a young person from a NEET background who had gone through this type of scheme be of interest to you? (Construction companies and employees only)

- Yes
- No

48 What positives can you see for this type of scheme?

49 What negatives can you see for this type of scheme?

Construction Skills Training Programme

Local community training is delivered by local authorities and/or 3rd sector organisations. They deliver short courses in basic construction and employability skills. Learners gain practical skills which are then used to carry out a community project such as refurbishments to a community centre. These can be run within a local community involving local residents, or nationally, by bringing together NEETs from across the country to work together on a community project. This provides the opportunity to work alongside others from outside of their peer group, developing their personal and construction skills. International projects build on the previous examples and involves small groups, with support, travelling overseas to work alongside similar young people from the host nation. They deliver community-based projects such as facilities for elderly or sensory gardens. These projects build self-confidence, as well as demonstrating their ability to work outside their comfort zone, such as by communicating with speakers of other languages, as well as developing their construction skills.

Organisations such as Serious About Youth, Prince's Trust Get into Construction and Construction Youth Trust manage these types of programmes.

50 Would a NEET who had completed a project as detailed be of interest as an employer within the construction sector?

- Yes - Local projects
- Yes - National projects
- Yes - International projects
- No - Local projects
- No - National projects
- No - International projects

51 Would this type of project make construction more accessible to NEETs?

- Yes - Local projects
- Yes - National projects
- Yes - International projects

- No - Local projects
- No - National projects
- No - International projects

52 Would this type of project provide an opportunity for a NEET to develop the basic skills necessary for employment in construction?

- Yes - Local projects
- Yes - National Projects
- Yes - International projects
- No - Local projects
- No - National projects
- No - International projects

53 How do you think these types of project should be financed?

- Employers
- Central government
- Local government
- Jobcentre Plus
- Apprenticeship Levy
- CITB Levy
- NEET supporting 3rd sector organisations (charities)

54 Would a young person from a NEET background who had gone through this type of scheme be of interest to you? (Construction companies and employees only)

- Yes - Local projects
- Yes - National projects
- Yes - International projects
- No - Local projects
- No - National projects
- No - International projects

55 What are the positives you can see from these types of projects?

56 What are the negatives you can see for these types of projects?

p. 6 Additional Comments

57 If you have any views regarding the barriers that NEETs face in securing employment in the construction sector, or those faced by employers who wish to be able to attract NEETs into the industry, and that have not been covered by this survey please detail them below.

p. 7 Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

If you are interested in the results of this survey I will be making them available once my dissertation is complete at the end of September 2019. Please contact me at either Stephen2.sugden@live.uwe.ac.uk or steve.sugden@me.com and I will be happy to forward you an overview of the results.