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## TOMORROW'S UNEMPLOYED YOUTH ALREADY KNOWN TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

- New research shows that 67% of unemployed 17-19 year olds in Newcastle come from the 25% of 17-19 year olds who have had multiple contacts with Children's Social Care
- Young people who face personal challenges warranting social care support, spend more than three times longer Not In Employment, Education Or Training (NEET)
- Earlier intervention, including family support, could help young people move successfully into adulthood
- We must look beyond the 70,000 Looked After children in England. Half a million children in regular contact with social care are also at high risk of unemployment.

An analysis of 8,000 17-19 year olds in Newcastle, carried out by Social Finance and Newcastle City Council, and in partnership with Impetus-PEF, shows that 67% of unemployed youth in the city had had repeated contact with Children's Social Care. This, despite the fact that only 25% of the total population of 17-19 year olds in the city, had been in contact Children's Social Care.

While care leavers are widely acknowledged as a high risk group for unemployment and a range of poor social outcomes, the analysis concludes that vulnerable young people – those on a Child Protection Plan or even those who have only had six interactions with Children Social Care – spend more than three times as long in unemployment or out of education.

These findings have real significance for the wider population. In England, there are nearly 70,000 children who are Looked After by the state. The government recently launched the Care Leavers covenant to make their transition to youth adulthood smoother. But if the data from Newcastle is representative of the unemployed youth population across the country, there are an additional 440,000 children under Children's Social Care plans who are at very high risk of unemployment and other negative outcomes in the future.

While the number of unemployed youth has fallen recently, the UK NEET rate at 12.7% is still four times that of the best performing OECD countries. As the NEET challenge costs government approximately £25 billion a year, including lost taxes, benefits and additional public services spend, central and local government should identify those at risk of NEET at a much earlier stage.

David Hutchison, Social Finance CEO said:

*“To continue to make real progress on youth unemployment, we must be able to identify, through solid evidence, who the most vulnerable are. Our analysis shows that by using a rich data source and analysing it through different lenses, we can shed new light on those most at risk. This will enable scarce resources to be better spent for greater impact.”*



By identifying the groups at greatest risk of poor life chances in the future through social care, the government alongside the charitable and philanthropic sector can focus their efforts and limited resources by targeting services more effectively. While the data cannot explain the causality between a vulnerable childhood and a poor transition to adulthood, it does provide evidence that strengthens professionals' intuition about which youth to prioritise and how to support them – and it suggests that broader support for family functioning will have long term beneficial effects.

Councillor Joanne Kingsland, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People in Newcastle, said:

*“One of the most important roles we have as a local authority is to support the most vulnerable children and young people in our city. Most young people are able to move successfully into adulthood, but for some this transition can be very challenging. In Newcastle we are committed to finding the most effective way of supporting these young people to build the foundations for stability in adult life.*

*“We undertook this analysis because we wanted to understand more about the young people who don't make successful transitions. The findings will help us to give the right support at the right time to those at greatest risk, giving them a far better chance to fulfil their potential.”*

The research makes clear that NEET prevention efforts should focus much more sharply on family functioning and young people's responses to challenges: improving educational attainment is important, but not enough. Traditionally, GCSE attainment has been seen as a bellwether for identifying youth at risk of becoming NEET. But we have found that poor GCSEs alone do not predict NEET rates, as few children with poor GCSEs and no other risk factors become NEET. Engagement with social care – and the underlying family dysfunction it signals – is far more instructive. Still, for children most at risk, good GCSEs do serve as a protective indicator. Similarly, the choice of post-16 education can influence the likelihood of becoming NEET. Across all populations, young people who stay in school through sixth form are least likely to become NEET.

Andy Ratcliffe, Impetus-PEF CEO said:

*“This report shows that for many, support at school doesn't go far enough to address the barriers they face. If we are to help them thrive, we need to be relentless in finding the young people who need more help with all the challenges they face – including those outside of school. Local authorities, schools, social services and charities must commit to delivering the right support, so that we can knock down the barriers that prevent so many from fulfilling their potential.”*

The data in the report confirms that young people in the higher risk groups were far more likely to experience a range of negative outcomes including homelessness, offending and early parenthood. It shows that those engaged with Children's Social Care face nearly as much risk of these poor outcomes as Looked After children, compared to other groups such as children with challenging behaviour or those on free school meals.

Social Finance publishes the findings of the data analysis today in the “New Insights Into Improving Outcomes For At-Risk Youth” paper, in partnership with Newcastle City Council and Impetus-PEF.

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Notes for editors:

- 1) The full report can be downloaded from the Social Finance website:  
[www.socialfinance.org.uk/resources/publications](http://www.socialfinance.org.uk/resources/publications)
- 2) Social Finance is a not for profit organisation that partners with the government, the social sector and the financial community to find better ways of tackling social problems in the UK and beyond. Since its formation in 2007, Social Finance has mobilised over £100 million of investment and helped to design a series of programmes, including the Social Impact Bond model, to improve outcomes for individuals with complex needs. As part of efforts to share lessons, Social Finance is publishing a new series of policy reports sharing Insights into Improving Outcomes for specific high-need populations. This report is the first in that series, which we hope will support and encourage those seeking to redesign public services through outcomes based commissioning.
- 3) Newcastle City Council is the Local Authority for Newcastle upon Tyne. The city has a growing population and the council, and partners, are ambitious for the city and the people that live and work in it. Newcastle has a track record of radical service reform that improves outcomes and helps to balance the books. The innovative use of data and analysis underpins the approach to reform. [www.newcastle.gov.uk](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk)
- 4) Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation transforms the lives of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring they get the support they need to succeed in education and employment. It does this by partnering with the most promising charities and social enterprises which serve young people, and providing them with a combination of sustained management support and long-term core funding. This support helps them become highly effective organisations that transform lives; then helps them expand. Impetus-PEF currently works with more than 20 charity partners, which in turn reach over 80,000 young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Impetus-PEF believes a data-led approach dramatically improves both the design and delivery of services and is pleased to be supporting the publication of this work.  
[www.impetus-pef.org.uk](http://www.impetus-pef.org.uk)