

Research design

In the light of his recent research into NEET issues in Cambridgeshire (Gartshore, 2009), Mr Ian Gartshore was asked to play a leading role in the research.

One of the overarching aims of the project was to obtain information from a wide range of professionals whose work involves working with young people in West Norfolk, and in other parts of the county.

Data collection included the following elements:

- Analysis of data from the Connexions-Norfolk Database
- Visits by Ian Gartshore to the College of West Anglia (COWA), and high schools, special schools and Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) in West Norfolk. This entailed interviews with senior staff (headteachers/heads of inclusion/heads of sixth form) in 11-18 schools, and focus group interviews with sixth form pupils and year 11 pupils.
- Interviews with young people who were currently NEET in West Norfolk.
- Interviews with Connexions Personal Advisors who work in West Norfolk.
- Interviews with Norfolk LEA advisors.
- Interviews with Connexions-Norfolk managers.
- Interviews with senior staff in schools outside West Norfolk where there was thought to be good or innovative practice in relation to NEET issues.
- A literature review of recent and relevant research relating to the issue of post 16 withdrawals from education and training courses and NEET issues more generally, including a study of counties which might be termed 'statistical neighbours' to West Norfolk in terms of demography, and some comparisons with NEET issues outside the UK.

There was a conscious attempt to undertake the enquiry in a spirit of "appreciative enquiry" (Cooperrider and Whitney, 2005) and to look for good practice which might be disseminated, explored and developed across the county, whilst at the same time identifying "key variables" which appear to influence the numbers of young people entering the NEET "churn" (Gartshore, 2009).

The research design was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Education at UEA. Informed consent was sought from research participants before involvement in the study. Data collected in the course of the

project is securely stored and all references to individuals in this report and any other published works arising from the study have been and will be anonymised.