



AKG – Experience of delivering employment, skills and personal wellbeing programmes for young people NEET and / or with multiple complex needs.

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Introduction to AKG

AKG is a purpose-driven organisation delivering government programmes and services across seven countries globally, headquartered in Australia. AKG's UK operations span four business units delivering employment, health, learning and behaviour change programmes, helping over 20,000 individuals across the country to thrive each year.

AKG is a “profit-for-purpose” organisation, aiming to help people with a range of complex needs through our delivery of integrated high quality employment, learning, health and wellbeing services. We work with individuals, employers, commissioners, and partners to co-design and deliver services that enable people to move forward with confidence, building their skills, improving their health, and achieving real, lasting progress in their work and lives.

Our four businesses across the UK comprise:

- **AKG Employment:**
Delivering employment-focussed programmes including the DWP's flagship Restart Scheme, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and localised Jobcentre Plus provision for unemployed people.
- **AKG Health:**
An allied healthcare team of health coaches delivering integrated health and wellbeing interventions for unemployed and disadvantaged individuals, helping to address health conditions acting as a barrier to employment.
- **AKG Learning:**
Delivering a range of adult skills provision, apprenticeships, ESOL for Work, Skills Bootcamps and employability skills.
- **Intuitive Thinking Skills:**
A lived experience organisation operating at the forefront of behavioural change specialisms, supporting complex groups experiencing mental health, addiction, domestic abuse and criminogenic needs to develop pro-social attitudes towards lasting rehabilitation.

We bring together employment support, skills development, wellbeing services and behaviour-change under one umbrella, because success in one area often depends on support in another. That's why our teams include specialists with lived experience, career coaches, health-support practitioners, skills tutors, and mindset and motivation coaches.





Executive Summary

The Milburn Review arrives at a pivotal moment for the UK, as rising youth unemployment and economic inactivity signal deepening structural barriers for young people, particularly those not in education, employment or training (NEET) and those with complex needs or health related challenges. Drawing on AKG's extensive experience across more than 25 UK youth employment, skills and behaviour change programmes, alongside international delivery in Australia, Korea, Singapore, Canada, Sweden and Italy, this response outlines the systemic challenges young people face and the principles that consistently underpin effective support.

Despite the presence of long standing employment and skills provision, outcomes remain uneven. Across the UK and internationally, AKG's experience delivering employment, skills and personal wellbeing programmes demonstrates both the significant opportunities and the real complexities involved in supporting young people who are NEET. We have seen how integrated, person centred services can unlock meaningful progression for a young person. At the same time, our experience delivering services for central and local Governments has highlighted systemic challenges such as siloed funding streams, rigid eligibility rules,

varying local labour market conditions, health, wellbeing and social factors impacting on a young person's sustained engagement in employment and skills support.

AKG's programmes show that young people thrive when support is relational rather than transactional, practical rather than abstract and integrated rather than siloed. The evidence demonstrates that sustainable youth engagement and progression depend not only on labour market interventions but on coordinated support that reflects the realities of young people's lives, including their mental health, cultural context, confidence and development to adulthood.

International comparison reinforces these insights. Models in Singapore, Korea and Italy show the value of early intervention, career connected education, employer integrated programme design and person centred support that adapts to individual complexity. These lessons, combined with AKG insights, data and independent evaluations (such as the SomersetWorks pilot), have informed a set of clear recommendations for a reformed UK youth employment system that is preventative, relational and attuned to employer needs.

Summary of Key Recommendations

1. Build trusted, relational support as the foundation of youth engagement

Young people sustain engagement when supported by consistent mentors or coaches, using strengths based communication.

2. Prioritise practical, experiential and hands on learning

Young people respond best to learning by doing, through work trials, job shadowing, employer led projects, personalised career diagnostics and short cycles of real world practice.

3. Integrate employment, skills, health and wellbeing support

Barriers are rarely singular. Mental health, confidence, neurodiversity, social circumstances and skills gaps interact. Programmes must integrate employment coaching with other support structures.

4. Design flexible, person centred services

Support must adapt to the young person's needs with service providers having discretion to tailor pathways and respond dynamically to local labour market conditions.

5. Bring employers into the heart of programme design and delivery

Employer involvement should begin at the design stage enabling early exposure to the workplace for young people to better understand employer needs and reduce their perceived risks of employing young people.

6. Embed system level reforms that start earlier and measure wider outcomes

A reformed system should begin in schools and colleges to prevent disengagement and treat young people as developing adults.

AKG UK and international experience demonstrates that programmes succeed when they focus on authentic relationships, practical experience, integrated support, flexible delivery and strong employer partnerships.

These principles should underpin a reimagined youth employment system that equips young people not only to enter work but to thrive in it.



Introduction

The Milburn review into the causes of record unemployment and inactivity among young people provides an opportunity to closely examine and address the rising numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

By seeking to understand the complex challenges and barriers faced by this diverse group, including but not limited to young people with health conditions or disabilities, the review aims to take a comprehensive look at how our welfare, health, skills and employment systems can better support all young people to learn, work and thrive.

We have drawn upon AKG's broad experience of supporting NEETs through over 25 employment, skills and behaviour change programmes in the UK and internationally, across Australia, Korea, Singapore, Canada, Sweden and Italy, to present recommendations, detailed below, on the key elements which this experience tells us need to be present in future programme design. Aligned to the objectives of the Milburn Review, our recommendations offer:

- A better understanding of how young people interact with the health and disability, welfare, skills and employment system; and
- Recommendations for future policy aimed at increasing opportunities for young people.

Employment and skills opportunities for young people have long existed, as have targeted programmes commissioned and delivered by central and local government, local charities and wider providers to help them on their journey into work.

Our observations conclude that programmes could become consistently more effective when applying the same core underlying principles in their design and delivery, which we have described below.



Our experience, learning and recommendations

This response seeks to bring together our insights, learnings and experiences in the UK and globally of supporting young people to find, access and sustain employment, to provide recommendations that may inform how support and services in the future may better enable more young people to remove their barriers to employment, education and training; and which encourage more young people to actively participate.

01

Ensuring authentic behaviours and approaches are used to affect sustained engagement of young people in programmes and services.

Our Experience

Independent evaluation of the SomersetWorks Partnership Pilot (IES 2023) in which AKG UK business Intuitive Thinking Skills worked alongside a range of partners to address barriers faced by young people NEET with complex needs, showed that one of the strengths of delivery was the importance of trusted, consistent, and considered relationships between the young person and their mentor or coach.

Each young person engaged more effectively in this programme than had been seen in others because they had a single, named coach or mentor, providing regular contact over time and someone who was non-judgemental, showed empathy, care and authenticity to truly understand their needs. Working with a complex cohort of young people, independent evaluation of the pilot found that 74% of young people sustained engagement through the duration of the programme. A transformational approach to engagement with young people is widely acknowledged in academic studies, which attempt to define 'engagement'.

In a separate report 'keeping young people who offend engaged' (Mason and Prior,

2008) it suggested true engagement is when the young person is committed to the objectives of the programme, form positive relationships, are motivated to change and are aware of the impact of their behaviour on their future prospects.

AKG's delivery of the DWP Restart Scheme since June 2021 has seen the lasting impact of Covid-19 on young people. Our AKG Health team of allied healthcare practitioners have delivered over 32,000 hours of health coaching for Restart participants and have seen that young people missed critical developmental years during Covid, affecting their social skills, confidence, and mental health and wellbeing.

Many young people in particular present with health anxieties or misinterpret mental health symptoms as physical problems. We have seen the importance of face to face social interaction and seen that digital support is far less effective in engagement, with progress depending on getting young people more physically and emotionally resilient. Our unstructured, informal group sessions with young people help build confidence, communication, social skills through peer networks.

We have seen rising Neurodiversity and a need for adapted support for young people accessing Restart, which requires more tailored programmes to individual needs. Positive framing, identifying and sharing a young person's "superpowers", helps shift perceptions and supports employment outcomes.

AKG Australia's RISE (Remote Indigenous Sustainable Enterprises) Ventures is a business focussed on supporting indigenous and first nations people, co-owned by the community in which it establishes programmes and services for local people. RISE provide training, employment and business pathways which embeds local indigenous culture as a key factor for engagement. RISE Ventures Community Development Programme in far North Queensland includes the Indigenous Youth Coaches Programme delivered at AKG's 'Oasis' Youth Hub in Gimuy (Cairns). Oasis is designed exclusively by and for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people aged between 15 and 24.

Our Indigenous Youth Coaches programme focuses on young people unable to engage with local services to meet their needs because of cultural disparities. At the Oasis

Hub, young people are able to meet and engage with indigenous Youth Mentors to provide support with life coaching, mental and emotional wellbeing, building a strong connection with them through culture, country and engaging local indigenous leaders. Young people are supported to engage with local health, addiction recovery, counselling and social services and to develop money management skills.

AKG Korea deliver the National Employment Support Programme across 18 sites in Korea, providing support from pre-employment to post-employment, including initial counselling, career diagnosis, and tailored career roadmaps for young people. Our service embeds relationship-based counselling from first contact and throughout the young person's journey on programme, maintaining a person-centred approach, retaining their engagement to build confidence and motivation.

The programme connects young people to vocational training in high-demand fields such as IT, administration, accounting, and design, and provides practical work experience through internships, field training, and short-term projects to help the young person gain their first professional experience.





Learnings and recommendations for what works

Young people respond positively to relational, authentic and person-centred approaches to engagement, as opposed to transactional, bureaucratic, or compliance driven approaches.

We have found that young people disengage quickly from services if they do not feel valued or do not believe the support available is authentic, delivered by people who understand them and the pressures they experience. Effective programmes prioritise building trust between the young person and the service, with the development of sustainable, human relationships being more important than the process. Relationship building cannot be rushed to comply with a target, as young people need time to open up and trust the service and its staff.

Key elements needed to attract young people onto a service and sustain them through a journey into employment include:

- Staff acting as mentors or coaches, not caseworkers, allowing the young person to build trust and take control of their own future.
- Mentors drawn from relevant communities, so the young person can more readily connect with them through a better understanding, acknowledgement and respect for their shared environment.
- Providing a consistent adult presence to counter instability in a young person's life.
- Using active, literal language which is strengths-based, rather than taking a clinical, therapeutic or deficit-based framing of services.
- Demonstrating respect for a young person's autonomy and self-determination through coaching, mentoring and guiding them to make positive choices for their future.
- Having cultural and developmental competence, by being authentic, to understand the complex needs of young people.
- Building the foundations before employment support by understanding values, strengths, interests, and personality is essential before work-focused interventions begin.

02

Practical tools and methodology - Learning by doing, not classroom instruction.

Our Experience

AKG' Korea's National Employment Support Programme integrates career diagnosis, vocational training, internships and 3–6 months of post-employment coaching as a single pathway tailored to each young person's needs and goals. 'Business exploration' and project-based internships co-designed with employers and young people, enables young people to experience the work environment, understand the culture of a work environment, without the need for a long-term commitment, reducing anxiety and enabling the young person to fully understand the types of work they want to do, without fear of losing benefits.

AKG UK business Intuitive Thinking Skills delivered the TRAC 11-24 Project across North Wales, supporting young people aged 11-24 who were disengaging from education and at risk of becoming NEET. Young people on the TRAC programme had access to counselling, provided by counsellors and mental health workers, well-being and attendance support, provided by Educational Support Workers, Well-being Workers, Attendance Support Officers, and youth workers, as well as one-to-one sessions with a sport and health focus, and education support and development. Training was delivered in practical hands-on

courses, working in partnership with Careers Wales services, including Activate, individual and group sessions, and tailored work experiences with local employers. 247 young people (including young people NEET, at risk of NEET and people with special educational needs and disabilities) completed the course (completion rate of 84%) gaining a recognised NOCN qualification and were able to gain the confidence and motivation to continue and / or access employment and skills provision available to them.

AKG's Intuitive Thinking Skills (ITS) support young people in Coventry who are finding mainstream education difficult and require additional help and assistance by creating a positive, relaxed space where they feel listened to and valued. ITS' Positive Behaviour Course helps young people build confidence, understand their emotions, and learn practical ways to handle challenges and everyday situations. Through activities, discussions and one-to-one support, we help learners recognise their strengths, make better choices, and set goals for their future. The course is designed to be supportive, not judgemental, helping young people feel motivated and ready to take their next steps into education, training, or work.



Learnings and recommendations for what works

Young unemployed people, we have seen, can respond poorly to abstract or academic learning. Practical exposure, short cycles of action and reflection and real-world application are critical to helping young people engage, develop and progress.

Key tools and methods include:

- Career diagnostics and personalised roadmaps.
- Project-based learning and interaction and engagement in real employer challenges.
- Short work trials, job shadowing and internships to know what an employer expects and how to behave in the workplace.
- Structured critical thinking techniques and mindset development practices which are trauma-informed, using language that young people understand and can relate to.
- Post-placement coaching to support young people to retain employment or learning, which features wider wellbeing support.

03

Integration of service delivery - Employment, skills and wellbeing cannot be separated.

Our Experience

AKG UK's delivery of the DWP's Restart Scheme since June 2021 has seen over 9,000 young people aged 18-24 start the programme, 11.9% of total participants. Our job start rate for young people is 52.1%, compared to an all age rate of 38% in the Restart performance data for all providers, and 40.5% for all ages in our own delivery. 53.3% of the young people who started work have achieved a sustained job outcome, compared to 58% amongst all age groups we support. This demonstrates that whilst we get more young people into work, we appear to face more challenges in keeping them in work than we do with other age groups.

More than twice as many young Restart participants aged 18-24 are referred to integrated specialist health interventions and support from AKG Health when compared to all age groups on programme, demonstrating health and wellbeing is a significant barrier to employment for young people with support required twice as often than our general Restart Scheme population. Of those young people access AKG Health interventions, 23% reported mental health barriers compared to 8.9% reporting physical health barriers. Through analysis of this group, we have identified that one of the dominant factors in their sustainability is how young people

acclimatise to the workplace, specifically how they build resilience and are able to manage their health conditions effectively.

Similarly, AKG Korea's National Employment Programme operates employment and wellbeing counselling in parallel, acknowledging that good mental wellbeing and labour market participation are intertwined outcomes for young people in particular. Delivery requires a wraparound support approach, with routine case conferencing to review progress against both participant goals.

AKG Australia's Jobfind business launched a Youth Employment Consortium (YEC), to collaborate with other youth employment specialists and young people to share insights to create more joined up career pathways and job outcomes for young jobseekers. Through the consortium we developed specialist Youth Mentors, introducing young jobseekers to a network of providers and opportunities they never knew existed, through regular Careers Days in our offices. AKG have also established Youth Workshops bringing in employers and training providers to provide a range of employment and training options for young people.

Learnings and recommendations for what works

Young people's barriers are rarely singular. Programmes that silo employment away from mental health, wellbeing and social support consistently underperform. Equally being able to streamline access to skills provision which is integrated with employment support has been a long-term challenge, due to misalignment of funding across siloed Government departments, compliance, eligibility, language and inflexibility of services.

Key recommendations for better integration of services enabling progression for young people include:

- Employment and skills support needs to be delivered alongside health and wellbeing support as a single pathway. Health support needs to be firmly rooted in a work-related mindset. Too often, health support sees employment as a contributor to ill-health; and guidance from health professionals can often follow this narrative. Where AKG have seen real success in this area is by embedding AKG Health's clinically trained Health Coaches within our Restart employment programme delivery, working alongside Employment Coaches. Health Coaches view through an employment lens and see the positive value of work as a contributor to the individual's wellness and to having a better relationship with their health removing it as barrier to employment.
- Using distance travelled measures to ensure every young person progresses on all employment, skills, health and wellbeing indicators, as they are intrinsically linked to the development of the young person's confidence, resilience and ability to sustain and progress in employment and training.
- Clear referral routes into mental health services where needed, embedding better mental wellbeing outcomes within the journey towards and into work.
- Employer engagement is embedded from programme design stage ensuring their needs are met, so that programmes are designed and delivered collaboratively. Commissioned employment and skills programmes need to remain flexible, to adapt to prevailing labour market conditions and to meet the changing needs of employers and the local workforce. For example, building in new health and wellbeing initiatives locally available through NHS services or public health programmes.
- Alignment with welfare, skills and local systems, to simplify skills, health and employment practices into a common language, where outcomes combined create a whole-person approach to enabling the young person to think positively, identify, access and then progress in employment.



04

Flexibility in how services are delivered - One-size-fits-all models fail young people.

Our Experience

AKG UK business Intuitive Thinking Skills' (ITS) deliver their flexible person-centred My I-D.E.A.S programme for young people with complex needs accessing our Prevention of Future Violence Project, delivered in Anglesey. The My I-D.E.A.S™ sessions are specifically written to deliver key personal skills sets which provide focus, motivation, and planning for young people engaged across a range of public service environments, such as Drug and Alcohol Treatment, Health/Mental Health, Young People's Alternative Education and Criminal Justice services. My I-D.E.A.S™ sessions are tailored to the individual, taking into account challenges they may face at home and within their peer groups, which may contribute to the young person becoming NEET, where they may be struggling with their mental health, or involved within the Criminal Justice System. Our programme is impactful because of its flexibility with no constraints on how the My I-D.E.A.S™ sessions are delivered. Participants on completing their sessions receive a nationally accredited NOCN Level 1 Award in Developing Critical Thinking Skills to Enhance Decision Making, further enhancing their confidence, commitment and motivation to find a successful pathway for their future learning needs.

Intuitive Thinking Skills also deliver the Intuitive Recovery Ketamine Course to young people in North Wales. The course aimed to equip participants with the skills and mindset to overcome ketamine use, empowering them with self-control, resilience, and future-focused decision making. The course is

delivered over a number of weeks, to build engagement, teaching the basic science of addiction along with an understanding of addictive desire (thoughts, feelings and rationale for continuing to use, drink or gamble). This provides young people with the skills, knowledge and tools to recognise the consequences of their behaviour, therefore encouraging full responsibility for their own choices whilst also removing fear of change. On completion the outcomes and anecdotes made by each student are collated to form an impact report. Each graduating student is presented with their NOCN qualification at a celebration event ensuring their achievements are fully recognised but also highly visible to other service-users and partner agencies.

AKG Australia have delivered a host of specialist localised tailored programmes for young people NEET including through their Transition to Work Programme. For example, working in partnership with the Cairns Aviation Skills Centre to design a pathway into the local jobs in aviation for young people, AKG Mentors supported six unemployed young people to engage in a six week training program, which provided an immersive, hands-on course tailored to prepare job seekers with the skills needed for immediate employment within the Cairns Airport General Aviation precinct. This programme specifically targeted roles in maintenance, stores, technical records and compliance. All candidates successfully completed the course and secured work.

International approaches

AKG's Workforce Singapore programme, supports unemployed people only aged 30 or over, with flexible employment support for unemployed people under age 30, received through the education system (including developing new vocational skills where needed). Singapore's early integrated model of Education and Career Guidance (ECG) begins at secondary school (13–16), delivered by experienced and trained coaches through 1-2-1 appointments, workshops and webinars to enable young people to understand the local labour market, what employers are looking for and to experience the workplace environment.

Following on, polytechnics and universities provide dedicated Career Centres focusing on internships and first jobs for young people. Singapore's approach is preventative, flexible and with an upstream

orientation. The education system retains employability responsibility up to age 30 to minimise the risks of duplication of service delivery and confusion. Young people (aged under 30) know who to turn to when they need support. Career Centres provide early skill-building (career planning, CVs, interviews), work trials, workplace visits, and reference tools such as mapped Industry Career Pathways to provide young people with realistic expectations of jobs they can access and how quickly they can progress through the ranks.

Support for Vulnerable Groups and Disability Inclusion is provided by SG Enable (government-associated) providing a centralised disability-related support and training. Current capabilities skew toward sheltered workshops/blue-collar opportunities, with aspirations to expand white-collar provision in the future.

Learnings and recommendations for what works

Rigid eligibility rules, fixed curricula and prescriptive contracts driven by compliance and inflexible processes reduce a young person's engagement, particularly for those furthest from the labour market. Programmes need to be flexible and able to respond effectively to the often chaotic lives that young people NEET with complex needs experience.

Key flexibility principles include:

- Enabling variable time on programme and intensity of engagement based on each participant's distance from the labour market, complex needs or other personal circumstances. Truly person-centred programmes are designed around the individual.
- Personalised pathways, adapting the pace and nature of support rather than linear programmes work better in building progression for a young person.
- Integrate in outreach locations, in community environments where young people already frequent and feel comfortable accessing.
- Ability to adapt training and skills provision that best fits the demands of the local labour market and what local employers want.
- Incentives based on achievement of milestones to sustain a young person's participation on programme, recognising progression at every stage of their journey towards employment. This could include celebration events and awards, or vouchers to be used for work-based tools and resources when a young person enters and / or sustains employment for a period of time.

05

Employer integration and labour market alignment - Employers must be part of the solution, not just the destination.

Our Experience

AKG Korea's Customised Job Placement Programme provides young people with direct contact with employers through job-focused training to cultivate vocational talent, provide practical support to develop the skills for the workplace sought by employers; and opportunities to receive mentoring support from business professionals.

The programme provides job matching with local businesses, organises job fairs and recruitment events, and leverages regional corporate networks to create direct opportunities for young job seekers, for example, initiatives where small groups of young people work on real business challenges, providing practical problem-solving experience and deeper engagement

with employers. The Korea Government's SME wage subsidy scheme, a feature of their employment programmes for young people, is harnessed alongside our programme delivery, to make more small and medium employers more viable and attractive job options for young people, to widen the jobs pool beyond the large corporate organisations' attractive higher salaries and benefits.

AKG's delivery of SomersetWorks in the UK and Transition to Work in Australia used work trials and supported placements to overcome employer scepticism and enable young people to explore sectors and working environments, building confidence. These facilitated accessible, inclusive routeways into employment.

International approaches

AKG Italy work with the Italian Government's national Youth Guarantee Programme, which designs vocational training programmes around specific local employer demand, with pre-selected candidates progressing directly to job interviews with engaged employers.

The programme is based on a European Union initiative designed to combat youth

unemployment by ensuring young people receive a high-quality offer of employment, education, or training within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.

As of early 2026, the program operates under the "Reinforced Youth Guarantee" framework, which has expanded its

target age range to include individuals between 15 and 29 years old and provides a tailored offer of a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or further education within four months of registration with person-centred career guidance, vocational training, work placements and support for self-employment. The programme is delivered through a coordinated multi-level governance structure including central and local government structures and delivered day to day through a partnership of public and private employment agencies and the education system.

AKG Singapore work closely with Workforce Singapore (part of the Singapore

Government's Ministry of Manpower), to deliver are employment programmes. We utilise Workforce Singapore's online Job Transformation Maps for different employment sectors. The Maps set out the career pathway for people wishing to enter the sector, the types of job roles available in the sector, the qualifications, skills and attributes required, the progression and development routes available and for employers, the changing nature of the skills and expertise that their workforce are expected to acquire in the future, where these are changing and developing due to the impact of digital technologies including AI.

Learnings and recommendations for what works

Young people struggle most at the interface with employers because they typically have very limited experience or understanding of the place of work. Through social media, peer pressure and the influences of constant communication being at our fingertips, we have seen a gap widen for many young people between the reality of a 'career journey' and the work environment; and their expectations of employers responsibilities to fulfil their employment and career goals and land their dream job.

Employers have a role to shape 'expectation' but to nurture and guide young people to better understand the career pathway and progression route through their organisation; and the skills they will need in the future as digitisation increases. Many young people lack a fundamental understanding of workplace soft skills such as how to interact and communicate with colleagues and managers, skills which could be developed as part of the curriculum whilst at school alongside engaged mentor employers. Effective programmes will actively prepare both parties and reduce perceived risk.

Key employer-facing approaches could include:

- Employer-informed training and skills provision designed to meet workforce needs.
- Wage subsidies and incentives for SMEs to hire young people, who they may perceive as a greater risk and less likely to stay in employment.
- Supported transitions into work, ensuring employers and young people are equally supported as the young person moves into work.
- Bringing employers closer to education so that they can build partnerships with schools and colleges, working with providers to prepare young people at an early stage to develop workplace behaviours.
- Job matching with recruiting employers linked directly to the completion of vocational and soft skills training sought by employers.
- Post-placement mediation and coaching, helping employers and the young person to better understand each other's needs.

06

System-level design principles to be embedded in delivery of programmes and services for young people.

Across our experience of delivering services for young people NEET in the UK and internationally, there are common features which consistently present themselves as key to success:

- Start early, working with schools and colleges to prevent disengagement, provide advice and guidance on the working environment, provide jobsearch skills and advice on the labour market, rather than only reacting to a young person's NEET status once it occurs. Explore and pilot opportunities for schools to partner with more specialist employment institutions, either through local commissioning or via a national programme, whereby employment programme specialists such as AKG are able to engage and help to bring the job market to life, dispel myths and start to establish that understanding of the realities of work.
- Treat young people as developing adults, not failed jobseekers. Young people with complex needs need help to develop their critical thinking skills as they progress through adulthood. They need to be supported through active language and simplified messaging to enable behaviour change, to make positive decisions which will enable them to manage and achieve their health, wellbeing, employment and skills goals.
- Measure progress, not just job outcomes. It is important for young people to be self-aware and recognise the journey they have been on, so they can see what the path ahead needs to provide for them to thrive.
- Allow providers discretion to respond to complexity. Flexibility, and removing bureaucratic process and compliance as much as is possible, allows providers to deliver person-centred support, which young people buy into and flourish within. Too much regulation stifles creativity. Co-design involving young people, employers and key anchors such as health services enable youth employment programmes to drive flexibility rather than compliance.

These principles directly align with the aims of the Milburn Review and the need for a reformed youth employment system that is preventative, relational and labour-market grounded.



Thank you for reading.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to get in touch.