ENTRY TO EMPLOYMENT (E2E) PARTICIPANT STUDY

Final Report

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Entry to Employment (E2E) is an innovative learning programme which is part of the work-based learning route and funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). It is designed to provide opportunities for young people aged 16 and over who are not yet ready or able to take up a Modern Apprenticeship, further education or move directly into employment. Following the E2E pathfinder phase during 2002/2003, the national establishment of the E2E programme commenced in August 2003. The results reported here are key findings from research carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) between February and July 2003 examining E2E participants' perceptions and experiences.

Key Findings

♦ Young people became aware of E2E most commonly via Connexions or the Careers Service, which referred them to providers

♦ The main reason for young people joining E2E was to find employment. Other common reasons related to obtaining qualifications, gaining access to further learning, personal development, financial benefit, and basic or key skills development

♦ Although many young people had very low expectations of E2E, owing to negative experiences of prior education and training, most reported that it had been much better than expected

♦ Participants most appreciated E2E programmes that met their individual needs and which included outward-bound activities, team building exercises, IT, and help in finding jobs

♦ Most participants reported having a positive experience on work placement

♦ Most participants were very positive about the personal support and practical help that they had received from provider staff. They particularly valued developing a relationship of trust with one person who could help them to deal with issues and problems

♦ Participants indicated that they had made several gains from their involvement from E2E, including increased self-confidence, improved communication skills, IT skills and better team working skills. However, fewer reported improvements in their basic skills of literacy and numeracy

♦ Most E2E participants considered that they were more likely to get a job, had a better idea of what work is like and had developed useful work-related skills

♦ Almost all E2E learners reported that they had a better idea of what to do next as a result of taking part in the programme. The majority of these hoped to move into employment, while others intended going onto work- or college-based further education or training.

Background

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds E2E and has lead responsibility for its development and delivery, working in partnership with the Connexions Service. The LSC contracted the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) to provide support and development for the pathfinder partnerships. From August 2002, 11 pathfinder partnerships, including local LSCs, Connexions and training providers, developed and delivered E2E programmes according to a common, overarching framework.

E2E aims to make a significant contribution to reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) by offering them access to flexible provision, including personal and social development, vocational skills and development and basic and/or key skills. The national establishment of E2E commenced in August 2003 when it replaced Life Skills, Preparatory Training and Other Training at level 1 on the work-based learning route.

Participant perception is a major thrust of the evaluation and review undertaken within E2E. The LSDA commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to carry out an independent study of participants' experiences and perceptions of E2E in order to inform the future development of the programme.

The Research

The research was commissioned to gather the views and perceptions of young people on the value of E2E programmes, which could be used to inform the future development of this provision. The participant study was based on a qualitative methodology in order to get under the surface of young people's experience and achieve an in-depth, detailed understanding of their views.

Visits were carried out to key providers in six pathfinder areas and interviews were conducted with E2E learners on two occasions: in February and March 2003, 74 E2E learners were interviewed; a total of 53 learners were interviewed on the second visit between June and July 2003. The research team attempted to contact as many young people as possible who had been interviewed as part of the first round. Where this was not possible, learners were selected who had spent a similar length of time on E2E as the other learners. As part of the second round of interviews, young people were asked to identify on a four-point scale ranging from 'not at all' up to 'lots' what difference E2E had made to them in terms of their confidence, key and basic skills, work-related skills and preparation for moving into employment.

Interviews were also carried out with pathfinder managers and provider staff in each of the areas in order to gather background information on the organisation and delivery of E2E and to gain insights into the characteristics of the client groups.

Young People on E2E

Around one-third of young people interviewed reported negative school experiences. These related to problems with other students, negative relationships with teachers, lack of achievement and the perceived irrelevance of what they were taught. Many had been expelled from school or had excluded themselves.

Around a quarter of research participants had taken part in some form of education or training since leaving school, although most had not completed their courses. A similar proportion had experience of employment, mostly in the form of short-term casual or seasonal work. Most had not found employment a fulfilling experience, not seeing it as a way of developing their skills or establishing a career.

Just under a quarter of the sample had spent a considerable period of time before joining E2E not participating in any form of education, training or employment. One of the main reasons for joining E2E for many of these was to escape the boredom and isolation experienced by them.

E2E providers were found to be catering for a very diverse range of young people with different needs and individual characteristics. Apart from school-related problems, many learners suffered from low self-confidence. Others had severe personal problems or additional barriers that prevented them from participating in learning or employment. Many of those interviewed had some form of special needs or learning difficulties.

Key message:

E2E providers need to respond and tailor their provision to a great variety of needs and experiences among their target group.

Joining E2E

Young people became aware of, and involved in, E2E most commonly via Connexions or their Careers Service. Other common routes onto E2E included being told by about it by a friend or relative or being referred by school or a school careers teacher.

The main reasons for joining E2E for young people were to find employment and to develop the skills and competences necessary to progress into employment. Other common reasons included obtaining qualifications, personal development, financial benefit and basic or key skills development.

Some young people said they had joined to meet new people and overcome feelings of loneliness.

As a result of negative previous experiences of learning, many young people had very low expectations of E2E before joining. However, most of those interviewed said that E2E had been much better than anticipated.

Key message:

Referral agencies need to reassure young people that E2E will be tailored in response to their learning needs and will, in many ways, be different from school and college.

Induction and Initial Assessment

Almost all E2E learners had some form of initial assessment when joining E2E. Very few young people made critical comments about the experience, while others said that they had found it quite interesting. Critical comments related to not getting the results of tests and doing the same tests more than once. Some young people were confused about the purpose of the initial assessment.

A formal induction period when joining E2E was found to be a good way of helping young people mix and set the tone for the rest of the programme. Young people, who were often apprehensive about going to a new place and meeting new people, appreciated formal induction periods, especially if they involved group work and team-building exercises.

Key message:

E2E providers need to ensure that learners are clearly informed about the purpose of the initial assessment and that steps are taken to avoid unnecessary duplication of tests.

Views on E2E Provision

Learners most appreciated E2E programmes that met their needs and which included outward bound activities, team building exercises, IT work, programmes that led to certification, and help in job searching. Learners welcomed the opportunity to contribute to shaping their own E2E programme. A far greater degree of satisfaction and progress was experienced by young people where they were consulted about their learning provision on a regular basis.

Most young people reported having a positive experience on work placement. A few learners did not feel they had been treated like proper employees and consequently, their experience of work was less positive. Other aspects of E2E less enjoyed included basic skills training in literacy and numeracy,

especially where it was taught to a large class without any effort to target different levels of ability or need.

Most learners were very positive about the personal support and practical help they had received from key provider staff. Above all, young people valued developing a relationship of trust with one person whom they could turn to and who provided practical solutions to problems they experienced.

The extent to which Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) were regarded as useful by young people varied. The study suggested that learners felt most ownership of their ILP if they were actively involved in setting and reviewing targets.

Key message:

E2E providers need to design training programmes which reflect young people's preferences for small group work and practical, non classroom-based activities.

Outcomes

The majority of young people indicated that being on E2E had made a significant difference to their self-confidence, IT skills, communication skills and team-working skills. A smaller proportion of learners identified a similar effect on their basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

More than three-quarters of young people felt they were considerably more likely to get a job as a result of participating in E2E. Learners felt that the experience of E2E had better equipped them to move into employment. To this end, participants appreciated the opportunity for work placements and felt that they had developed many valuable job search skills, including how to prepare a CV and interview techniques.

Young people had achieved, or were working towards, a variety of qualifications, certificates or awards, which were seen as important tools for finding employment or future progression.

The majority of young people interviewed felt they had at least a bit of a better idea of what they wanted to do next as a result of being on E2E. A minority of young people still had no idea of what they wanted to do or did not yet feel ready to move on despite spending a considerable amount of time with providers.

Key message:

E2E providers need to ensure that all young people are helped to move on to appropriate destinations, through the use of regular progress reviews which involve planning suitable progression routes.

Conclusion

This participant study has revealed that mast young people interviewed had found the experience of E2E generally positive and that they had gained from their involvement in the programme. The challenge for the national establishment of E2E will be to build on the successes and apply the lessons learned from the pathfinders.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Entry to Employment (E2E) is an innovative learning programme designed to provide opportunities for young people aged 16 and over who are not yet ready or able to take up a Modern Apprenticeship, or a level 2 structured education and/or training programme or move directly into employment. As part of the Government's 14 to 19 education and post-16 vocational training and skills strategy, E2E aims to make a significant contribution to reducing the numbers of young people who are NEET (not in education, employment or training) by offering them access to a curriculum, which comprises **three interdependent core strands**: basic and key skills, vocational skills and development, and personal and social development. The national establishment of E2E commenced in August 2003 when it replaced Life Skills, Preparatory Training and Other Training at level 1 on the work-based learning route.

From August 2002 to July 2003, E2E was in the pathfinder (or development) phase - the purpose of this phase was to develop and identify some of the emerging development and operational issues in respect of the provision. Throughout this phase, the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) undertook a lead role in providing a programme of support, development, monitoring and review, in addition to preparing for national establishment and further refinement of the E2E framework, focussing upon accredited and non-accredited learning and initial assessment. The 11 pathfinder areas were:

- Bedfordshire and Luton
- Birmingham and Solihull
- Derbyshire
- Greater Manchester
- Hampshire and Isle of Wight
- London North
- Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire
- North Yorkshire
- Nottinghamshire
- Tyne and Wear
- West of England

The main purpose of the pathfinder phase has been to develop and work through some of the emerging development and operational issues in respect of E2E. As outlined by the LSDA:[1]

> *Collectively, the pathfinders have sought to identify what the ideal arrangements for E2E should be and how we can best serve the needs of the client group. The pathfinders have informed the preparations for national establishment of E2E.*

The Prospectus for the E2E Learning Framework (2003)[2] presented information on the origin of E2E in addition to outlining its ethos, principles, learning objectives and curriculum. E2E had its origins in the Cassels Report (DfES, MAAC 2001)[3] on Modern Apprenticeships which highlighted the need to provide '*programmes of training aimed at preparing young people for employment*' for those who are not equipped '*to meet the demands of apprenticeship immediately*'. Accordingly, Cassels recommended that '*there should be pre-employment provision to cater for those who are not ready to enter apprenticeship or other employment. It might be known as 'Entry to Employment*' (E2E)'. Subsequently, the Green Paper, 14-19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards (DfES, 2002),[4] included E2E in its proposed reforms of Modern Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeship training.

More recently, the Government Skills Strategy White Paper, 21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential (DfES, 2003),[5] has confirmed the key role of E2E in providing support to those not yet ready to enter a Modern Apprenticeship:

> *Working with the Connexions Service, E2E will offer help with literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills and the full range of support needed by low-achieving or disengaged 16-18 year olds, to help them enter a Modern Apprenticeship, employment or further education..*

The ethos of E2E is based on a set of core values which guide its planning, implementation and evaluation. It is important to note that E2E was designed with the individual and his or her needs as the focus of provision:

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[1] LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL (2003). *A Summary of the E2E Learning Framework*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

[2] LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (2003). 'The prospectus for the Entry to Employment Learning Framework.' In: LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL *Entry to Employment*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

[3] LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (2003). 'The prospectus for the Entry to Employment Learning Framework.' In: LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL *Entry to Employment*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

[4] DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS (2002). *14-19: Extending Opportunities, Raising Standards* (Cm.5342). London: The Stationery Office.

[5] DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS (2002). *21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential* (Cm 5810). London: The Stationery Office.

> *Young people on the programme are central to every aspect of the programme and are treated as individuals.*[6]

Tailoring provision to meet participants' needs in an individualised way is a major challenge for E2E partnerships and providers. The development and use of Individual Learning Plans is an important part of this approach. E2E is designed as a flexible provision within an overarching framework, which will allow young people to progress onto a Foundation Modern Apprenticeship, employment (preferably with training) or further education and learning. E2E is located at entry/level 1 of the national qualifications framework.

The key aims of E2E, as specified in the E2E framework[7], are that young people participating should:

♦ maximise learning and achievement through coherent programmes

♦ develop knowledge, skills, understanding and personal qualities essential to employability and citizenship

♦ attain a qualification(s) where appropriate

♦ be equipped for a variety of positively valued progression opportunities in employment, education and training.

Participant perception is a major thrust of the evaluation and review undertaken within E2E. The LSDA commissioned the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to carry out an independent study of participants' experiences and perceptions of E2E in order to inform the future development of the programme. The aims and objectives of the study are set out below.

1.2 Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the study was to gather the views and perceptions of young people on the value of E2E programmes which could be used to inform the future development of this provision. The research objectives were to:

♦ gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of participants' experience of E2E programmes

♦ examine the extent to which participants have achieved their own learning objectives

♦ identify the critical factors that facilitate or inhibit the successful completion of participants' learning objectives.

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[6] LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL (2003). *A Summary of the E2E Learning Framework.* London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

[7] LEARNING AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (2003). 'The prospectus for the Entry to Employment Learning Framework.' In: LEARNING AND SKILLS COUNCIL *Entry to Employment*. London: Learning and Skills Development Agency.

1.3   Methodology

The participant study was based on a qualitative methodology in order to get under the surface of young people's experience and achieve an in-depth, detailed understanding of their views. In consultation with project steering group, six pathfinders were selected as case-study areas on the basis of ensuring a good geographical spread, a mix of urban and rural labour markets, and the inclusion of areas exhibiting different models of provision.

Interviews were carried out with pathfinder managers and provider staff in each of the areas. These interviews were used to gather background information on the organisation and delivery of E2E and to gain insights into the characteristics of the client groups. In addition, E2E staff supported the research team in identifying and accessing young people for the study.

In-depth, qualitative interviews were carried out with 74 E2E learners between February and March 2003. A second round of interviews was carried out between June and July 2003. The research team attempted to contact as many young people as possible who had been interviewed as part of the first round. Where this was not possible, learners were selected who had spent a similar length of time on E2E as the other learners. A total of 53 learners were interviewed in the second round – of these 36 had been interviewed previously. The main reasons for young people not being available for interview on the second occasion were that they:

- were on work placement/at work and could not get away (15 learners)

- had left due to various personal circumstances (ten learners)

- did not turn up for the interview (five learners)

- were absent due to other concerns (job interview, court appearance) (five learners)

- were away on holiday (three learners).

All except two of the young people (in both rounds) agreed to the interviews being audio-taped. The tapes were transcribed and used for analysis.

1.4   Structure of the Report

The structure of the report is as follows:

- Chapter 2 presents information on the previous experiences and characteristics of the young people who participated in the study

- Chapter 3 explores the ways in which young people found out about E2E, their reasons for joining, their expectations and their initial experiences of joining E2E, including their views on induction and initial assessment

◆ Chapter 4 focuses on interviewees' views of the best and worst parts of E2E, their experiences of work placements, the use of Individual Learning Plans, and their views of the support provided by provider staff

◆ Chapter 5 examines the outcomes of E2E in terms of clients' personal development, the impact on their skills and on their future progression

◆ Chapter 6 concludes the report, draws out the key learning points and makes recommendations relevant to the national establishment of E2E.

Summary key findings and key messages relating to managing the delivery of E2E are provided at the end of chapters, as appropriate.

2. YOUNG PEOPLE ON E2E

This chapter presents an overview of the characteristics of the young people who were interviewed for the research. More specifically, it explores:

♦ their background and previous experiences

♦ the gender, age and ethnicity of those interviewed

♦ their background characteristics.

2.1 Background and Previous Experience

This section explores young people's previous experiences before joining E2E, including school, post-16 learning (including college and other learning provision), employment, and not participating in any form of education, training or employment.

2.1.1 Negative experiences of school

Reflecting the findings of previous research studies focusing on disaffected learners (see, for example, Golden *et al*., (2002))[8], many of the young people interviewed as part of this study talked of negative experiences of school. Around one-third of young people interviewed reported that they did not like school – many of these had either been expelled from school or had excluded themselves. A variety of reasons for non-attendance at school were provided by respondents, including:

♦ problems with other students, including persistent bullying

♦ negative relationships with teachers

♦ lack of achievement and a fear of being made to look stupid

♦ a perceived lack of relevance to their lives.

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[8] GOLDEN, S., SPIELHOFER, T., SIMS, D., AISTON, S. and O'DONNELL, L. (2002). *Re-engaging the Hardest-to-Help Young People: the Role of the Neighbourhood Support Fund* (DfES Research Report 366). London: DfES

These are explored in more detail below.

Many of the learners on E2E interviewed said that negative school experiences had led them either not to attend or to behave in such a way that they were excluded.

A common reason for self-exclusion given was that they did not get on with the other pupils – '*I didn't like the people*' or '*I just didn't get along with no-one*'. Others said that they had been bullied. The following explanation by a female E2E participant for not attending school was typical:

> *I used to get picked on at school, so I never went. I tried moving schools, but I wasn't in their catchment area so I stayed where I was.*

Another young woman explained that she had dropped out of school after getting pregnant:

> *I started sixth form at school and then I got the mickey taken out of me quite a lot for being pregnant so I left school and done nothing. Just had the children and that was it.*

Others referred to problems with particular teachers as reasons for their self-exclusion. Comments such as '*I didn't get on with the teachers*' or '*they always talked down at you – treat as like we was little kids*' were made by many respondents.

Negative experiences of school, including lack of achievement and being made to feel stupid, were frequently linked with bad behaviour and attendance problems. As one young man pointed out:

> *I went to school until Year 9, and then I got kicked out – I wasn't going to school and when I was I was acting up and so I got kicked out. It was just too much work. Having to keep up to the same speed with everybody else, and I'm not that clever and that.*

Several other learners explained their disaffection from school stemming from being made to look stupid by teachers, as illustrated by the following interview extract:

> Q   How did you find school?
> A   I didn't like it at all, that's why I didn't go to college 'cos I thought it would be the same.
> Q   Why didn't you like school?
> A   I don't know – I just, they just make you look stupid.

Such negative experiences led some E2E participants to reject schooling as irrelevant to their lives. As one young man observed:

> *At school they don't know what they are talking about really. They teach you stuff about what you don't need to know. They don't actually*

teach you about life, they teach you about what's happened in the past and that.

This young man's comments suggest that school was not seen as having responded to his interests. Many of the young people expressed similar feelings but were reluctant to talk in any great details about why school had not satisfied their needs. However, their comments suggested that school was seen as imposing a curriculum on them, with no flexibility to respond to their interests or preferred learning styles (see Section 3.3). In particular, some young people bemoaned having to sit still for hours, being taught in large groups and not being given enough opportunities to develop practical, work-related skills.

Interviews with provider staff confirmed the impression gained from talking to the young people. Others felt that large proportions of E2E learners had, in different ways and for different reasons, had negative experiences of school and that school had not responded to their needs. In the words of one provider:

> *I work with 16-18 year old young disenfranchised, disengaged young people. I think they are all disengaged. Yes, but in saying that I am putting them all in one kind of basket. They are all disengaged, maybe disenfranchised, but they are all very different. I would say in a large majority; the education system has failed them. They have been excluded.*

2.1.2 Dropped out of post-16 learning

Around a quarter of those interviewed had experienced some form of education or training since leaving school. However, most had not completed their courses. Many of the reasons given for dropping out of college or other post-16 learning options, including life skills provision, resembled those outlined in the previous section very closely. One young man, for example, explained that he had left due to persistent bullying:

> *I was at college doing electrical installation. City and Guilds. I didn't finish because some of the group were smashing up my work like and cutting wires and that kind of stuff and I slowly got behind and got fed up.*

Others reported that they had been told to leave because of lack of attendance or the same behavioural problems that had led them to be excluded from school. In the words of one participant:

> *I was at college doing a sports and recreation course, but got kicked out after two days for fighting. I've got a behaviour problem – if I get bored I start going mental and the course was really boring.*

Other reasons for dropping out included:

♦ **a change of interest or career choice**: '*I took an IT course for a year, but it wasn't my type of stuff. I decided I didn't want to do IT anymore, I just drifted into it*'

♦ **failing exams or parts of a course**: '*I was at college for a year doing health and social care. But I wasn't very good at exams, so I failed my exams, and so my careers adviser advised me to come here*'

♦ **transport problems**: '*I was at a college trying to do my A level and AS level in music and unfortunately I couldn't do it due to the academic side and the cost of me trying to get there and the hours I was having to do was absolutely ridiculous. I wasn't getting any sleep because I had all my homework to do and getting back at half ten and setting off back at six again in the morning, so it did get pretty silly*'

♦ **personal circumstances**: '*It was leisure and tourism, the units we had to do was to organise any event. (…) One minute I'd be fine with it and another I would be drifting off. But mainly it was because of my brother passing away that I was so muddled up and didn't get very far*'.

2.1.3 Casual work experiences

More than a quarter of the young people interviewed had experience of some form of **employment before joining E2E**. For many this represented short-term casual or seasonal work. As one young woman commented:

> *I was working as a packer – packing clothes for 17 days just before Christmas. It was hard work, but before then I did nothing. I was unemployed for about a year.*

Other E2E participants, most of them aged only 16 or 17, were already able to document a very mixed 'career' of various short-term or casual job opportunities, as illustrated by the following account of a young man:

> *I worked on a building site with my dad, worked with a carpenter that's my uncle and worked with an electrician. I've also done cleaning jobs. It was alright. The money was alright, but I found out it was not me, it did not fit me. I don't want to work outside in the cold; if it rains you probably won't work so you lost your money. And it's like it's a cold and dirty job, your clothes are dirty.*

Another young man, aged 17, had already had several jobs before joining E2E. When asked whether he had had any previous work experience, he replied:

> *Work experience that's one for me, you shouldn't have asked me that. I've had seven jobs prior to this. Catering, hotel portering, gardening, all sorts of odd jobs at times. A paper round when I was nine years old or something as well. But I have worked on my own, it was in a fish restaurant and I worked washing pots every night, and working on a*

salad bar making salads for 250 people a night, which is a lot of hard work.

Others had been employed in more permanent jobs but had either left of their own accord or been made redundant for various reasons, including problematic relationships with other members of staff, their behaviour or due to lack of punctuality, as illustrated by the following examples:

It was in a pub. I enjoyed it, but I just didn't like this one woman. I don't mind being told what to do, but she would scream at you. She was the reason other people started to leave as well. She worked out a rota and gradually she got me working from seven days a week to two and then one, so I thought it's not worth it.

For the last two years I have been working – catering work. I worked at [burger chain] for a year and a half; after [burger chain] I went to [a hotel] and then I went to a cocktail bar. But I have lost all those jobs through poor attendance and punctuality, and on this course I am basically hoping to improve that.

I had a full-time job recycling plastic, but then I quit because I didn't like the people who I was working for and things. It weren't like a happy job if you know what I mean, so I gave it up.

For many of those interviewed, employment had so far not been a positive experience. Most saw work only as an opportunity of '*making some cash*' and not as a way of developing their skills or establishing a career. As discussed in Chapter 3 below, many of these young people hoped that E2E would help open the way for more fulfilling employment opportunities.

2.1.4 Not in education, training or employment – 'doing nothing'

Just under a quarter of those interviewed reported that they had spent considerable amounts of time before coming onto E2E not participating in any form of education, training or employment. Indeed, many had joined E2E after a long period of '*doing nothing*' or '*just staying in bed all day*'. When asked what he would be doing if he had not joined E2E, one young man replied:

It's 10 past 11 now, so I would probably be in bed, about getting up now, having a bath, playing the computer, watching the 'soaps' …

As further discussed in Chapter 3, one of the main reasons for joining E2E for some learners was to escape the boredom of being stuck at home all day without anything to do. In the words of one learner:

It's better than sitting at home because it's so boring. I mean everyone is at work till 5:30pm and I just used to sit there.

There was a range of reasons for young people not participating in education or training. The main reason appeared to be their negative experiences of school and college explored earlier, in Sections 2.1.1 and 2.1.2 above. It should be noted that, for some learners there were other factors relating to their personal circumstances, including illness, care responsibilities, family circumstances or mental health problems. Perhaps understandably, many of the young people were reluctant to provide more personalised details explaining their lack of involvement. However, interviews with provider staff confirmed that many learners faced a great variety of personal barriers which prevented them from engaging in learning or employment.

2.2 Individual Characteristics

This section aims to provider a broader overview of the main characteristics of learners involved in E2E projects, based on interviews with learners and provider staff.

2.2.1 Gender, ethnicity and age of participants

The main background characteristics of the 74 E2E participants interviewed in the first round of this research were as follows:

- **Gender**: 39 learners were male and 35 were female

- **Ethnicity**: the majority of respondents (58) were white, while around a quarter came from minority ethnic backgrounds

- **Age**: 65 learners were aged 16-18, with the largest proportion (37) aged 17; the oldest person we interviewed was 23.

These figures suggest that the sample of young people included as part of this research was pretty evenly split in terms of gender; most were white but still about a quarter came from minority ethnic backgrounds; and the large majority were aged 16-18. Statistics provided by the Learning and Skills Council - National Office showed no noticeable differences between the characteristics of learners within the sample and across all 11 pathfinders.

2.2.2 Typology of learners

Interviews with provider staff and E2E participants indicated that E2E was catering for a **very diverse range** of young people, with very different needs. The following typology aims to give an overview of these needs and characteristics. It should be noted that the different 'types' of young people identified are not mutually exclusive – many of the E2E learners interviewed could be seen as fitting into more than one category.

- **Disengaged/non-participants**: these are young people who have been out of education for quite a while – with a history of exclusion, non-attendance at school and have not really been in any form of learning for quite a while

♦ **Un-decided/drifters**: refers to those who have perhaps left school and drifted into not doing anything with no clear direction or idea of what they want to do next

♦ **Low-achievers/under-achievers**: young people who did not do well enough at school to get onto an FMA or find work; some of these had not achieved any previous qualifications

♦ **Drop-outs**: young people who went onto a college course or started a job after leaving school and dropped out for various reasons

♦ **Facing barriers to progression**: this refers to those with personal circumstances which prevent them from moving onto employment or further learning, including young mothers or carers

♦ **Low confidence**: young people with very low levels of confidence, who were afraid to go to job interviews, or '*clammed up*' in interview situations; others did not feel comfortable in large groups, which stopped them from moving onto college

♦ **Young offenders**: E2E learners who have engaged in criminal activities and/or who have spent some time in gaol

♦ **Severe personal problems**: young people facing serious issues such as drug abuse, alcoholism, homelessness or severe behavioural problems

♦ **Special needs**: young people with various special needs, including dyslexia, learning difficulties or physical disabilities

♦ **Entry-level/Level 1 learners**: young people who see E2E clearly as a springboard onto an FMA; E2E is viewed either as a stop-gap until the course they want to do becomes available or to develop the skills or acquire the necessary qualifications to move onto some other learning outcome.

2.3   Summary of Findings

♦ Around one-third of young people interviewed reported negative school experiences. These related to problems with other students, negative relationships with teachers, lack of achievement and the perceived irrelevance of what they were taught. Many had been expelled from school or had excluded themselves.

♦ Around a quarter of research participants had taken part in some form of education or training since leaving school, although most had not completed their courses.

♦ More than one-quarter of young people had experience of employment before joining E2E, mostly in the form of short term casual or seasonal work. Most had not found employment a fulfilling experience, not seeing it as a way of developing their skills or establishing a career.

♦ Just under a quarter of the sample had spent a considerable period of time before joining E2E not participating in any form of education, training or

employment. One of the main reasons for joining E2E for many of these was to escape the boredom and isolation experienced by them.

♦ E2E providers were found to be catering for a very diverse range of young people with different needs and individual characteristics. Apart from school-related problems, many learners suffered from low self-confidence; others had severe personal problems or other barriers that prevented them from participating in learning or employment; many of those interviewed had some form of special needs.

Key messages for managing the delivery of E2E

♦ A significant aspect of E2E is the re-engagement of young people, whose previous experience of education has often left them lacking confidence in their ability to learn and distrustful of teachers and tutors. Consequently, it is important that E2E providers have sufficiently flexible and individualised approaches to dealing with participants which enable them to understand their needs and ultimately gain their trust.

♦ E2E providers need to respond and tailor their provision to a great variety of needs and experiences among their target group. In particular, they should not assume that all young people are ready to engage in structured learning activities, but need the time and support to help them see the value of learning and overcome personal barriers that prevent them from participating in education, training or employment.

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3. JOINING E2E

This chapter presents the findings on the young people's experiences of joining E2E. It provides insights into:

- how the young people became aware of, and involved in, E2E
- the reasons for joining E2E
- their expectations of E2E and the extent to which these contrasted with their actual experiences
- the young people's initial experiences of E2E, including initial assessment and induction.

3.1   Routes onto E2E

The young people interviewed had become involved in E2E through a variety of routes as follows:

- referred by Connexions and/or their PA
- told about it by a friend or relative
- referred by school or a school careers teacher
- referred by social workers, key workers or care home staff
- moved on from another programme with the same provider
- direct contact with provider staff.

By far the most common route onto E2E for those interviewed was via Connexions/the Careers Service. In fact, more than half of respondents got involved this way, as one young man's experience illustrates:

> *I came for an interview at Connexions and at the interview they said 'Would you like to do this E2E course?' and they just explained that the E2E course is. It interested me and I said 'Yeah, I'll go on that'.*

Some participants said that they had visited Connexions themselves in order to find work or to explore different career options. Others had already decided on a work area and had been referred to E2E to complete a specific entry level or level 1 course. One female interviewee, for example, explained that she had found out about an E2E provider that offered a level 1 qualification in administration listed on the internet:

> *Yeah, it was with a bloke from Connexions – we went on the internet looking for college courses because I told him I want to do administration and stuff like my mum. So we went on the internet and then we found the E2E administration course, so he contacted* [the E2E provider].

This illustration should not be misconstrued as suggesting that E2E is **delivered** via the internet or that an 'E2E administration course' is available.

Others had been contacted by Connexions and been directly referred to E2E as a way of re-engaging them into learning. As one very shy young man who had been out of education for a number of years and was involved in E2E with a college provider explained:

> *I just stayed at home doing nothing then some people* [from Connexions] *came to my house to ask me to go to college but I was saying No, no!, but they were starting to phone me up, so I just said OK I'm going. I said Yes. So that is when I started to go to college.*

Another common way of getting involved in E2E, mentioned by about one in six interviewees, was being told about it by a friend or relative. As one young woman recounted:

> *My friend told me. She said 'They teach you computer skills and they help you get a job and they pay you while you're learning', so I thought I might as well as I can't get a job elsewhere.*

Some young people said they had initially heard about E2E through a friend or relative and had then been told about it by Connexions and that they had agreed to come because of what they had previously been told. In the words of one young man:

> *My mate told me. It sounded quite good, but I never thought of coming here. He didn't really tell me much, only that he comes here and don't do very much, and the staff are really good. And I went to careers and they told me it was a good place, so I came here.*

Around one in ten participants said they were referred by a school or college careers teacher, as detailed by one young learner: '*I was in school finishing Year 11 and then I didn't achieve things I wanted in the exams and then I talked to the careers advisor and I told him I don't know where to go now and he searched for a place and I came for an interview*'.

Other routes onto E2E mentioned only by a few learners included being told about it by a social worker or a care worker, at a careers event, through direct contact with provider staff, or moving on from another programme with the same provider.

3.2 Reasons for Joining

The reasons given by interviewees for joining E2E in many ways reflected their previous experiences, needs and characteristics outlined in Chapter 2.

3.2.1 Getting a job

For many of the young people we talked to the main reason for joining E2E was to find employment: '*to get a job – full stop*', as one interviewee expressed it. Some E2E participants had very little idea of how it would help them find employment, while others could articulate various ways in which they hoped the providers could support them to find the kind of work they wanted. This included helping them to develop the **skills they needed to find employment**, including '*interview techniques, smart dress and how to present yourself, attitude and things like*' and '*finding jobs on the internet and stuff like that*'. Some learners also saw **E2E staff as a valuable resource** for supporting them in the search for work '*rather than going through the Job Centre, where you're left to your own devices*'. Another respondent remarked that '*the people here know people who can get you work and they help you choose where to go and stuff like that*'.

Many others put a strong emphasis on the importance of having **work experience** in order to get a job. Interviewees commented on the way many employers '*expect you to have experience – but how can I get experience without getting a job?*' E2E was seen by many as a way of filling this gap. As one young man pointed out he wanted to get:

> *Some experience. I know by coming on this course it will look good for me with an employer rather than having no experience at all; so I am hoping to get that out of it. If I go on a few work experiences and I can find a job I like, I can say I've been on these.*

For some learners who had previous experience of '*dead-end jobs*', E2E was seen as a chance of finding more fulfilling work. As one female interview explained, '*at the end of it, I suppose I will be able to have some certificates and get a decent job instead of cleaning. I will be able to do what I want to do*'.

3.2.2 Access to further learning

While many of those seeking to get a job as a result of participating in E2E had no specific career objectives, ten learners said they had joined E2E specifically to find employment or gain a qualification in a particular field. Some saw E2E as a way of gaining a work placement, which would help them find work and complete a relevant qualification in their chosen field, as illustrated by the following learner: 'I would like to find a placement in a dental surgery and start training to be a dental nurse'. Others saw E2E as a way of gaining the qualifications they needed to pursue a specific career. Many of these saw E2E as a first step towards further learning that would help

them establish a career in a chosen field. The following statement by a female learner is a good example of this:

> *I joined E2E to get qualifications to look after kids, so I can go and work abroad as a holiday rep with kids. To have a career – to get qualifications. I have always loved kids and I always will but nowadays to get a job you need more than just to love kids. To get a good job, you have got to have qualifications.*

Other learners, on the other hand, hoped that while they had no clear career objectives, E2E would provide them with '*the opportunity to try out new things and maybe I'll find something I like*'.

3.2.3 Personal development

As discussed in Chapter 2, some of the young people interviewed reported having low confidence or other barriers that prevented them from participating in further learning or employment. One of the key reasons for joining E2E was to overcome these barriers. Some simply hoped to get a '*confidence boost – just to make me feel better about myself, so I am not afraid to go out and give it a go*', as one interviewee noted. Others wanted the E2E provider to help them develop more independence. As one troubled young man explained, he hoped that E2E would help him:

> *be able to control my life instead of having my life controlled for me. More independent with it and be more reliable. Basically get on with life; it's more difficult when you are not quite sure how to do it.*

Another female participant had lost a few jobs in the past because of bad attendance. Her main reason for joining E2E was to resolve the issues surrounding her inability to commit herself to a job, as she explained:

> *Basically, I don't think it's worth me going into another job just for me to mess up again basically. Hopefully, at the end of this course my attendance will be better and I can commit myself to a job.*

It is important to note that personal and social development is the third **core strand of the E2E curriculum**, which aims to help young people resolve issues of low confidence and overcome other barriers that prevent them from participating in further learning or employment.

3.2.4 Financial benefit

A minority of young people said that their main reason for joining E2E was to '*get some money – 40 quid a week, that's it*'. However, six of those eight who gave this explanation went on to say that once they joined E2E they had realised that it offered other opportunities to them, which they had not anticipated (as explored in Section 3.3 below).

3.2.5 Basic and key skills development

Another reason for joining E2E given by just under one in six respondents was to improve their basic and/or key skills. In the words of one interviewee, '*my spelling and writing might get a bit better*'. Some learners realised the importance of improving their basic skills for moving onto other learning or employment. As one young man commented:

> *What I was hoping to gain is good skills, good literacy skills, something to get you going so that when I go further I don't get stuck.*

Others put a greater emphasis on developing their key skills – those most frequently mentioned were communication and IT skills, although some young people also identified the need to develop their team-working skills.

3.2.6 Social aspect

A few interviewees said that they had joined E2E hoping '*to meet new people*' or '*make new friends*'. Learners that had previously not being doing anything (see Section 2.1.4) said that they had felt very lonely and that E2E was a way of '*mixing with other people – just not being on your own all day*'. This mirrors the findings of previous research (see, for example, Sims *et al.,* (2001),[9] which found that the social aspects of such programmes are instrumental in initially engaging young people and encouraging them to join.

3.3 Young People's Expectations of E2E

This section explores what young people expected of E2E before they joined.

Generally, most of those interviewed said that, based on negative previous experiences of education and training (see Chapter 2), they had very low expectations of E2E before joining. Some explained that they thought it would be boring – '*a lot like school really, just sitting around in classrooms being told what to do*' – or that they would get very little out of it – '*just a waste of time really*'. Others said that they were nervous of joining, some because they thought '*it was going to be hard – like college – and I'd fail again*', while others because they feared to move into a new social environment and meeting new people. In the words of one female participant:

> *After I had my interview and stuff like that and they said I was in, I was actually quite nervous because I thought I am going to be the only one from* [town A] *here and everybody else is going to be from like* [town B] *and* [town C] *and I would be like all on my own.*

One young man was initially intimidated by the learning environment. The provider was located in a large office building in the centre of a town, with a reception area and many other organisations on different floors. He said that

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9   SIMS, D., NELSON, J., GOLDEN S. and SPIELHOFER, T. (2001). *Young People's Experiences of the Learning Gateway* (DfES Research Report 277). London: DfES.

he '*thought it was going to be really posh, because downstairs are proper offices and that*' and that he had found it rather intimidating.

However, most of those interviewed said that E2E had turned out to be much better than what they had expected it to be like. Many contrasted it with previous experiences of learning in school or college. In particular, interviewees' comments suggested that they:

♦ were offered **more choice and freedom** than expected

♦ received **more support for their learning** than previously

♦ found **staff more personal** than in school or college

♦ were **treated more like adults**

♦ found the **learning styles more accessible** than at school or college

♦ appreciated the **friendly learning environment**

♦ had **achieved much more** than they had expected to.

Further details are provided below.

One respondent, for example, said that while he had expected it to be like school, it was a lot better:

> *I thought you would have to just come in and sit down, do your work, go home, but it's not. It's, go in, have a laugh, do work, have a break, have a laugh, do your work, go home. It's better than school, because you've got more freedom. No 'Can I leave the room, can I do this or that', which is better.*

Another learner also contrasted her experience with school, emphasising the way E2E gave them a real choice about what they wanted to learn rather than imposing a curriculum on them:

> *Well I thought it would be just like a classroom like at school where you have a teacher and she would be just teaching us literacy and numeracy and that, but it's all about us and what we want to.*

Another respondent said that he had expected E2E to be like the life skills provision he had been on previously, but that E2E had turned out to be a lot better. In particular, he highlighted the positive relationships he had established with provider staff: '[provider staff member] *actually gets to know the person and talks about their family, so it's a lot better*'. One interviewee also emphasised the additional support he received for his learning: '*I thought boring work again, but it's not. It's better in every way, because if I can't do something there's someone to help me*'.

Young people did not comment directly on the **learning styles** adopted by E2E provider staff. However, the way in which they contrasted E2E with their

previous experiences of school and college indicated that they particularly appreciated:

♦ being taught in small groups

♦ being given one-to-one support

♦ learning through doing

♦ team working

♦ learning in a relaxed, non-formal setting.

This suggests that participants tended to prefer **experiential learning in groups**, within an **informal environment** that provided **opportunities for individual support**.

Only two interviewees said that E2E had not matched their expectations. One female interviewee had expected it '*to be more work, but they don't really do much*'. As a result, she had found herself getting bored. Another interviewee said that she had thought '*it was going to be like a proper college course, like for computers, but you just come here and look for a job. So it's not as good as I thought it would be*'. Both learners had left E2E by the time of the second interview.

The following section explores young people's experiences when they first joined E2E, including initial assessment and induction.

3.4   Initial Assessment and Induction

3.4.1   Initial assessment

Almost all the young people interviewed said that they had some form of assessment when they joined E2E. As one young man described it, the assessment involved '*little test things to see how good your English was and your maths and stuff like that*'. Others were more specific about the tests – '*just circle the word that's not spelt right and things like that and draw a bar graph*' or '*how to spell 'cat' and how much is two plus two*'. Some learners also reported '*filling in questionnaires, stuff about ourselves and things like that*'.

Interviewees provided different explanations of the rationale behind doing these assessments, which may suggest that providers had not always made it fully clear to them why they were doing the tests. Many learners saw the tests as a way of '*identifying gaps in what we know*' or '*find out what level I'm on so I get put in the right group*'. Others, however, suggested other reasons, including:

♦ **judging suitability for course**: '*I think they check you and then said I'm alright to do the course. It was to find out whether you could do the course – if I was clever enough*'

♦ **for the provider's own records**: '*Yes I did a maths and English and something else to see where I was at. It wasn't bad actually, I can understand why they have to do it for their own records. It was OK doing it*'.

Despite some of the learners' confusion over the actual purpose of the tests, very few made negative comments, **accepting the need for them**. In fact, some E2E learners were very positive about them. As one female interviewee explained:

> *The second day I had loads of assessments to do, personal skills and just basic questionnaires. Kath said it would probably be a bit boring, but I found it quite interesting because I learnt a lot more about myself.*

Critical comments made only by one or two interviewees related to not getting the results of the tests, that they were '*too easy*' and that they did them '*early in the morning, which to be honest, I am not good at*'. One girl said that she had done the tests twice with two different providers. But as she put it:

> *I didn't mind doing it. It's alright doing it and everything, because it really taxes your mind and it makes you think about what works really and things like that.*

Even though these comments were only made by one respondent, it points to a need for E2E providers to ensure that learners are not 'over-assessed'. Furthermore, this section has shown that even though most young people recognised the need for initial assessment and some even recognised the value of it, others were confused about its true purpose. This indicates the need for providers to offer clear **information** to learners **on the purpose of the initial assessment tests**, to ensure that **the assessment is fit for purpose** and to provide **feedback on the results**.

3.4.2 Induction

E2E participants' experiences of joining E2E, including induction, appeared to depend on how providers organised the in-take of new learners – whether they were taken on as a group at certain intervals or whether they provided a more flexible 'roll-on roll-off' system. As a result, young people's accounts of the induction varied from the formal to the more informal.

Some participants recounted having had induction periods lasting between one day and three weeks. This period was generally said to be used to plan the work ahead, carry out initial assessments or complete certificates needed to go on to a work placement – health and safety, manual handling, food hygiene and first aid certificates were the most commonly mentioned ones. Many of those joining as a group said that the first week or more was spent '*getting to know each other*', including various group activities both on-site and off-site. As discussed in Chapter 4, most learners enjoyed these activities and regarded them as useful. One young man explained that the first two weeks of

induction helped him settle down and feel more comfortable with the other learners.

> *It was useful, because if I'd gone straight into the course I wouldn't have got to know the group. But in those two weeks we got to chat and know each other better.*

Another female interviewed explained that the induction week had helped overcome her initial low expectations when joining E2E and made her more enthusiastic about the rest of the programme. She described the induction in the following way:

> *Well, we all – there was a big group of us and they like split us up into little groups, so we got to know other people. And then we did like, we had like a big induction week, we got to know the staff, we played games – it was brilliant, it was amazing, it really was. If I could do it again, I would do it again now I really would. You have a brilliant time.*

However, one young person found that even though the induction period was useful, '*two weeks is too long for an induction. They could have shortened it by a couple of days*'.

Learners who joined providers that recruited young people on an on-going basis and not as a group tended to recount less formal experiences of induction. As one female interviewee said: '*I just got shown around a few rooms and told what happens in E2E, then I did some tests, and that was it*'. Some complained that '*I didn't know anyone and felt left out at first*'.

These young people's comments point to the importance of providing **a clearly structured and enjoyable induction** to those joining projects to set the tone for the rest of the programme.

3.5 Summary of Findings

- Young people became aware of, and involved in, E2E most commonly via Connexions or their Careers Service. Other common routes onto E2E included being told by about it by a friend or relative or being referred by school or a school careers teacher.

- The main reason for joining E2E for just under half of young people was to find employment as a result of it. Other common reasons included personal development, gaining access to further education or training, financial benefit and basic or key skills development. Some young people said they had joined to meet new people and overcome feelings of loneliness.

- As a result of negative previous experiences of learning, many young people had very low expectations of E2E before joining. However, most of those interviewed said that E2E had turned out much better than anticipated.

- Almost all E2E learners had some form of initial assessment when joining E2E. Very few young people made critical comments about the experience, while others said that they had found it quite interesting.

- A formal induction period when joining E2E was found to be a good way of helping young people mix and set the tone for the rest of the programme. Young people, who were often apprehensive about going to a new place and meeting new people, appreciated formal induction periods, especially if they involved group work and team-building exercises.

Key messages for managing the delivery of E2E

- Given the key role played by Connexions in referring young people onto E2E, it is vital that their front-line staff can provide clear information on the range of activities and learning styles of local E2E providers. Young people need to be reassured that E2E will be tailored in response to their learning needs and will, in many ways, be different from school and college.

- Young people's expectations need to be carefully managed by referral agencies and provider staff as regards the possible outcomes of their involvement in E2E. It is important to ensure that they do not expect that E2E can, in all cases, provide a direct route into employment, but that for some young people other experience, learning or support will be needed before they can find work.

- E2E providers need to ensure that learners are clearly informed about the purpose of initial assessment tests and that steps are taken to avoid young people doing the same tests more than once.

- In order to gain and maintain participants' engagement, E2E providers need to offer a varied learning diet which is responsive to young people's interests, backgrounds and learning preferences. This should include opportunities for experiential learning in groups within an informal environment, while also offering individual support.

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4. EXPERIENCE OF ENTRY TO EMPLOYMENT

This chapter considers young people's experiences of E2E and presents findings relating to:

♦   E2E provision, specifically views on learning activities

♦   preparation for the work environment

♦   reviewing progress - especially use of the Individual Learning Plan

♦   E2E staff, delivery and learning environment.

4.1. Views on E2E Learning Activities`

The E2E curriculum was found to encompass a wide range and diverse group of activities at each of the providers visited. Although the structure of each individual learner's programme varied, it included elements of initial and ongoing assessment, core learning components (basic/key skills), vocational learning, life skills and personal development. More specifically, E2E learners reported taking part in the following types of activities as part of their programmes:

♦   recreational activities, such as rock climbing, go-karting or paint-balling

♦   confidence-building or team-building exercises

♦   developing life skills, including budgeting, shopping or cooking

♦   values or citizenship education, including sex education and drugs awareness

♦   basic skills support in numeracy and literacy

♦   behavioural support/counselling relating to personal problems, including violence or mental health issues

♦   vocational tasters

♦   pre-apprenticeship training

♦   job-search skills, including CV writing, applications and interview skills

♦   work placements.

It should be noted that young people commented on a range of delivery methods used to provide these learning activities. These included formal

classroom instruction, working in groups, one-to-one working, training in workshop settings, talks by external experts to address specific issues and learning in the workplace.

The NFER participant study asked young people to identify the aspects of E2E that they had enjoyed most and least.

4.1.1 Aspects of E2E most enjoyed

The aspects of E2E most appreciated by young people were found to depend to a large extent on the individual aims, expectations and previous experiences of learners. For example, while the majority did not identify basic skills training as one of the best aspects of E2E, others saw this as a particularly beneficial aspect of the programme, which had helped them to move on and overcome barriers to learning.

However, of greatest importance to many of the young people was the question of whether programmes had been tailored to suit their needs, abilities and interests. One young woman who had been given the opportunity to pursue her Duke of Edinburgh Award through mountaineering valued the way the programme had been designed in response to her interests. Another young man spoke about the choice he had on E2E, commenting that:

> *They asked us what we wanted to do next. And we told them, you know, like more IT sessions and a little bit of literacy and something that would help when we are on our placement.*

As indicated in Section 3.3, one of the main reasons why young people felt that formal education had not met their needs was that it was seen as imposing a curriculum on them and not having the flexibility to respond to their interests or preferred learning styles. It is, therefore, not surprising that those E2E programmes which were seen to be responsive to the needs and interests of learners were particularly appreciated.

Otherwise, the main aspects of E2E most appreciated by young people were as follows:

+ IT/computer courses

+ outward bound/recreational activities

+ team building exercises

+ practical support with finding work and job-search skills.

Opportunities to develop IT skills were welcomed by many young people. Invited to identify what he had enjoyed most about the E2E programme so far, a young learner felt it was the computer course that he was on, because:

I am learning new things. I used to think computers were boring but now that I have learnt how to produce things like web-sites, working on the computer is definitely more interesting.

Outward bound activities were enjoyed by most of the young people who had taken part in them. Their responses suggested that the outcomes tended to have been significant in terms of personal development, and it was noticeable that young people spoke about participation in these activities with enthusiasm. For example, a 16-year-old remarked that:

I like going on the trips. We've got one coming up next Monday, and we're going to town for a big barbecue.

Equally, activities which focused upon teamwork, group discussions and confidence building received a positive response from most young people. One young woman had found the experience of confidence building to be extremely rewarding, recognising that her self-esteem and ability to communicate with others had increased greatly. The enthusiasm with which she described the activity in which she had been involved was testament to this:

We had to split up into two groups, choose a topic, which was the war. Well, it's not started yet, but basically we had two teams, one was for and one was against and we had to put our argument across.

Others welcomed the peer-support which teamwork offered. This was reflected in the following comment of a participant who explained that:

Working in groups is easier; you get more information about what you're talking about from others in the group, because if you're on your own and you don't know the answers, there's nobody that can help you apart from the teachers.

Illustrating the benefit that group discussions offered young people in respect to raising confidence, another interviewee spoke about the part that these played in '*building up your confidence and encouraging people to get out of their shell a bit.*'

4.1.2 Aspects of E2E least enjoyed

Aspects of the E2E programme least appreciated by many interviewees included those activities which were either repetitive or which were not tailored to meet the needs of individual learners. As one interviewee explained:

The training sessions are so boring, health and safety, letter writing. I did that so many times, but it's going back over it again and again.

Other learners drew attention to finding sessions which were below their level as rather difficult to engage in. For example, one learner recalled her experience of an IT session:

> *There is a quite a few of us who don't like the IT thing, because it's like for a five-year-old or something, where you have to put a dot on faces then put on different face expressions, like for a little kid.*

Another complained about having to do basic skills work in literacy even though she had managed to get a GCSE in English. These comments suggest the need for E2E providers to ensure that they provide all young people with an opportunity to develop their key or basic skills **at a level appropriate to their needs**, as recommended by the E2E framework. This relies on **the effective use of initial assessment** to ensure that learners' levels of key and basic skills are identified.

Even though some learners appreciated the **basic skills teaching** received, many others found this a negative aspect of E2E. In particular, many young people reported that the learning styles adopted did not suit them. In the words of one respondent,

> *I did the basic skills, but it was just like sitting in a classroom, whereas I like to be more active – I don't like sitting around for too long.*

Others said that they found it hard to concentrate for long periods of time and did not like working on their own.

It is important for providers to adopt basic skills teaching methods which are not entirely classroom-based and allow learners to work together with others. Some providers said that they had already responded to this need by using a project-based approach. Learners were set a task, such as planning a trip or cooking a meal, which required them to work together as a team but also helped them to develop their basic and key skills.

4.2   Work Experience

Provision that offered young people help with finding work and developing job-search skills was appreciated by the majority of young people interviewed. Most felt they had received enough advice on what to expect whilst on work placement.

Most learners reported having positive experiences on work placement and at work tasters. Some had negative expectations, however these were usually not borne out in practice:

> *I thought these people would be all rude and think I am lower class person but when I got down there, it was quite different. I used to get a lift off them at the end of the day.*

Another young man spoke about the way he was increasingly being treated more as a proper employee in the responsibility he had acquired at his placement saying that:

> *As my confidence has been building up through the months they have been giving me more responsibility. I have learnt about office work and how to do it, like faxes, talking to people and meetings.*

Staggering work placements over the course of several weeks, whereby the young person started on placement with one day of the week, and then increased that to two days, and three, eventually reaching five days was seen by E2E learners as a useful way of gradually introducing young people into the workplace. This was reflected in the experience of one interviewee who recalled that: '*I used to be on two days a week, now I'm doing three days and next week I will be doing four days a week, which is almost full-time.*'

There were a few learners who reported negative experiences. As one learner explained, he felt he was treated like a student instead of a proper employee:

> *When you go into the office, everyone goes in suits and ties and everything, and I'm coming in like in some black trainers, black jeans and a black top on. I sit on a chair lower than everyone else here and I can see people looking at me wondering what I'm doing there.*

4.3 Use of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs)

Although the majority of young people were often not familiar with the term 'Individual Learning Plan', probing revealed that most if not all had been through the process of completing one with their E2E project worker. Their experiences of this, and the value they attributed to it, were varied.

For some young people, the ILP was a document, which was revisited and used to support their development on E2E. The majority of young people stated that they found the ILP useful. Of those who found it useful, typical were comments made by one interviewee who observed:

> *It helps me understand exactly what my targets are, it brings realisation you some of your ambitions and goals. You know I have to set myself up for that so that I can start preparing. It can get quite confusing but when you've got it laid out and you know what you are doing you have got it all set out and you know what you're doing then.*

Another learner felt the ILP was a good way to keep on track, saying:

> *If you're in two days out of the week, they will say look attendance has dropped, try and get it back up, try and move them up to four days a week and then we will get it up to five days a week.*

Some learners felt they were spending far too much time on learning plans while others felt they were not spending enough time on them. For example, a 17-year-old learner felt it was rather too much: 'You have to fill them out to often, every two weeks, and then in between, you've got one of those other sheets.' In contrast, another learner explained:

> I think it would be useful if I actually looked at it more often because there is such a long gap in between when I set the first one, I don't actually remember what they were and what I'm trying to reach.

There was also a great variation in the extent to which young people felt they had ownership of the ILP. One learner found it really useful completing the plan, because:

> We set our targets, for ourselves and then every two weeks after when we done our next review they see if we have matched our targets. We really like doing things that we have set ourselves to do.

Another interviewee supported this by saying:

> You put down what you want to do here, what you want to learn. I put down English, maths and IT. I have being doing that over the first month and I am going to do that for another month. Then the person from the careers centre will come over and have a meeting to discus what else I think I need to do.

However, other young people indicated that they had not found the process of completing an ILP useful and that its completion was more for the benefit of the learning provider than the individual.

The research identified connections between involvement in planning and reviewing progress and levels of satisfaction with progress made. Those with the most involvement tended to be the most satisfied with their progress. The majority of the learners interviewed were closely involved in planning their learning, that is, in the process of working with an E2E tutor to identify their current skills, knowledge, interests, aims and aspirations, agreeing learning goals and negotiating a learning programme to take them forward. There was a greater awareness of progress and satisfaction with achievement when individuals had worked with a tutor to produce an ILP which was actively used as a tool to plan, monitor progress and record learning throughout the E2E programme. These learners felt positive about negotiating their personal plans because learning was focused on their needs and because their involvement made them feel their opinions were valid and valued.

4.4 Views on E2E Staff, Delivery and the Learning Environment

Many of the young people were particularly appreciative of the E2E learning environment. There were numerous references to the importance of being treated as adults, and to the fact that most E2E providers were different from the school environment – more relaxed and less formal. As one learner remarked:

> *I thought it would be a bit like school again but it's not. At school you get bossed about, here you can walk around, if we are doing work in this room I can go to another room and do it on own. It is a free environment, you can talk to everyone, you can sit next to your mates, do your work and talk to your mates, and not get done for it.*

Another learner compared her experience on the E2E programme with her previous experience on the Life Skills programme, responding that:

> *Nobody wanted to do work, basically everyone went to the classes and did what they wanted, put music on, screamed and shouted, threw things across the classroom, but in the* [E2E] *group, everyone seems to want to do the work. Everyone wants to get something out of it, which is a good thing.*

The attitudes and dispositions of staff appeared to be central to this perception. Young people all reported having positive and supportive relationships with E2E staff, and all noted how important this support was in facilitating their learning and moving onto other things. While at least half of the young people interviewed did not have an 'official' programme worker assigned to them as such, the majority were able to identify someone who they met with on a regular basis and felt they were able to approach if they needed support. One learner emphasized that this support was:

> *Essential,* [because] *you need someone who can help you reach those targets and realise exactly what you want to do. Most of the mentors here have put in more than their duties work, simply because they want you to get somewhere, and I do think it is essential that you have a mentor that understands you.*

E2E staff who not only had the ability to work patiently with young people but were able to bring real-life examples to traditional subject areas were greatly appreciated. As one learner pointed out:

> *I never used to like maths, but when I came here and had Debbie, she put a whole new prospective on maths. She doesn't just sit there going blah, blah, she explains it to you. If you don't understand, she will sit there and explain it again. In school, it's not like that, they tell you once only so it's a lot different, it's not like they're your tutors, they're your friends, you can talk to them.*

As explored in Section 4.2, most of the young people interviewed valued their work placements and regarded them as valuable learning experiences.

4.5   Summary of Findings

♦   Learners most appreciated E2E programmes that had been individually tailored to suit their needs and which included outward bound activities, team building exercises, IT/computer work, and programmes that led to certification, and help in job searching.

♦   Aspects of E2E least enjoyed included basic skills training in literacy and numeracy, especially where it was taught to a large class without any effort to target different levels of ability or need.

♦   Learners welcomed the opportunity to contribute to shaping their own E2E programme. A far greater degree of satisfaction and progress was experienced by young people where they were consulted about their learning provision on a regular basis.

♦   The extent to which the ILP was regarded as useful by young people was dependent on the way in which it was introduced and used, and the degree to which they felt any ownership of the plan.

♦   Most young people reported having a positive experience on work placement. Increasing the days on work placement gradually to fill a full week was appreciated. A few learners did not feel they had been treated like proper employees and consequently, their experience of work was less positive.

♦   On the whole, most learners were very positive about the personal support and practical help they had received from key provider staff. Above all, young people valued developing a relationship of trust with one person whom they could turn to and who provided practical solutions to problems they experienced.

Key messages for managing the delivery of E2E

♦   The development of appropriate learning styles for E2E needs to consider that many of the young people were demotivated by anything that reminded them of school and that their preference was for small group work and practical, non classroom-based activities.

♦   The process of initial assessment needs to be used effectively by providers, in order to ensure that the provision of key and basic skills training is aimed at a level appropriate to young people's learning needs.

♦   Basic skills need to be taught in an accessible way which is responsive to the preferred learning styles of young people. E2E providers should consider alternative approaches that are not classroom-based, such as project work, which allows learners to

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work in groups and develop their skills by completing realistic tasks or challenges.

♦ E2E providers need to consider ways in which young people can be made to feel ownership of their Individual Learning Plans, including actively involving them in planning their activities and reviewing their progress with direct reference to their plans.

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5. IMPACT AND OUTCOMES

This chapter presents the outcomes of E2E in relation to young people's:

♦ personal development

♦ development of basic and key skills

♦ preparation for employment

♦ achievement of certificates or qualifications

♦ progression onto education, training or employment.

The outcomes of E2E have to be considered in the context of young people's previous experiences and background characteristics presented in Chapter 2. In particular, it is worth noting that many of those interviewed had negative experiences of school, college and employment. Furthermore, many faced serious barriers, including low self-confidence, special needs and personal issues such as drug abuse, alcoholism, homelessness and severe behavioural problems. As a result, many learners felt it difficult to re-engage with society, learning and the workplace.

As outlined in Section 1.1, the E2E curriculum comprises **three interdependent core strands:**

♦ personal and social development

♦ basic and key skills

♦ vocational skills and development.

The following three sections examine young people's perceived outcomes relating to each of these three interdependent core strands of E2E.

5.1 Personal Development

Many of the young people on E2E revealed that their exposure to, and experience of the programme, had enhanced their personal development in a number of ways. The benefits identified were in the following areas:

♦ re-engagement

♦ attitudinal change

♦ changes in behaviour

◆ improved confidence.

The findings related to each of these areas are presented below.

5.1.1 Re-engagement

As indicated in Section 2.1.4, just under a quarter of those interviewed reported that for various reasons they had spent considerable amounts of time before coming onto E2E not participating in any form of education, training or employment. In the words of one provider, E2E presented many of these young people with an opportunity for '*removing obstacles*, *re-building their self-esteem*, *and showing them that there is a point to engage with society*, [and] *engage with their own learning'*.

This was reflected in some of the young people's comments. One young man, who had spent the last two years of his life '*in and out of jobs, often doing nothing*' reported that E2E had got him '*back into a routine, that's what I needed in my life. It gives you something to do during the day, because sleeping all day does me no good'*.

5.1.2 Attitudinal change

Some young people interviewed said that their outlook on life had changed as a result of being on E2E. They explained that the experience had helped them to reflect on their lives, what they had done and where they were going. Their comments indicated that they were far more positive in their attitude and more determined to change. This was encapsulated in the words of one young man:

> *It's started to actually make me think about the future and what I'm going to do with myself. I used to wake up in the morning go down to the beach have a smoke and never thought about getting a job. Now, I'm actually getting my head around things and sorting my life out. I've realised I can't go around everyday smoking pot and going on the beach, that's not a life.*

Other E2E participants found that it had helped them think about actively taking steps to plan their future careers. As one learned stated:

> *I understand what my goals are and I am able to push forward independently instead of relying on other people to do it for me. It's helped me come into my own and help me understand what I want to do with my life, instead of expecting life to unfold in front of me.*

5.1.3 Changes in behaviour

Several E2E learners reported that their behaviour had changed, and attributed this to their participation in E2E and, especially, the help and support they received from E2E staff. A young woman, who had been attending anger-management classes once a week, spoke about how the one-to-one tutoring had supported her in changing her behaviour:

People in the building have noticed that my attitude has changed I don't think I could have done that without being here. You see, I used to have a bad attitude, before if someone I didn't know looked at me, I'd be saying what are you looking at, be real funny and jump at them, but now I can count to ten in my mind and walk straight past them.

It emerged from the research that, in some cases, the E2E programme had enabled young people to gain access to a new circle of friends, which had helped them break out of old patterns of behaviour, as one interviewee explained:

Before I started doing all this I was quite a violent, nasty person. I was doing a lot of silly things. I was with a lot of silly people and I was out of control…I thought I wanted to thieve, be a complete nuisance, but I realise that I have a lot more to offer than that.

5.1.4 Improved confidence

Increased confidence was an outcome mentioned by several of the interviewees. Indeed, as indicated by Table 1 below, all except three of the 53 young people interviewed in the second round of visits indicated that E2E had made at least some difference to their confidence. The following comments made by one young man, who felt he had changed considerably, were typical of many interviewees' remarks:

Before I came here I couldn't really speak to people very easily, I used to get really nervous about meeting new people. Since I been here I find it a lot easier. Before when I used to work in a group I tried to be quite and not talk to people but now when I work in a group I am the first to get involved and start talking.

Some E2E participants recognised the way in which an improvement in their confidence was something that would not only assist them in respect to finding employment but would be useful in 'real-life' situations. As a 17-year-old participant explained:

I used to be quite shy like that, and now I'm not. I can go up to someone in the street and ask them something and not be nervous about it.

Interviewees explained how the support received from provider staff, encouraging them to try out different activities, had been instrumental in building their confidence. In the words of one learner, E2E had effected this change by giving her the chance to do '*new things I never did before, that I never thought I could do, but* [staff member] *showed me that I could do that, she showed me things that I thought I couldn't do*'. Such an improvement in self-confidence had helped many young people to take more of an interest in what was offered to them, as one young woman pointed out:

> *I am different now. I just used to sit in a corner and let the world pass me by, but now it's made me want to get involved with everything that is out there.*

As part of the second round of interviews, young people were asked to identify on a four-point scale ranging from 'not at all' up to 'lots' what difference E2E had made to them in terms of their confidence. Three-quarters of those interviewed (40 out of 53 learners) reported that it had improved their confidence either 'quite a lot' or 'lots', while only three learners said that it had made no difference at all.

5.2   Basic and Key Skills Development

In the second round of interviews, young people were asked to identify what difference E2E had made to them in terms of improving their basic skills (literacy and numeracy) and key skills (team working, communication and IT skills).

Table 1: Effect of E2E on young people's basic skills

What difference has being on E2E made to you in terms of:	Not at all	A bit	Quite a lot	Lots
	n	n	n	N
Improving your maths	7	21	18	7
Improving your literacy	7	23	14	9
N = 53				

Source: NFER E2E Participant Study, 2003

This table shows that less than half reported that being on E2E had made 'quite a lot' or 'lots' of a difference to their numeracy (25 learners) and literacy skills (23 learners). This finding is probably not surprising given the level of resistance by many learners to basic skills learning activities documented in Chapter 4. It should be noted however, that those learners who reported that E2E had made no or only a little difference, may well have indicated this because they had already acquired a level of achievement in these areas prior to starting on E2E.

Table 2: Effect of E2E on young people's key skills

What difference has being on E2E made to you in terms of:	Not at all	A bit	Quite a lot	Lots
	n	n	n	n
Being able to communicate with other people	6	6	19	22
Being able to use computers	9	9	16	19
Being able to work as part of a team	4	11	23	15
N = 53				

Source: NFER E2E Participant Study, 2003

In contrast, Table 2 shows that larger proportions of young people reported gains in their key skills of communication, IT and team working. This reflects comments reported in Chapter 4, that young people particularly enjoyed IT-based and group activities.

Young people's comments on the development of basic and key skills are presented in more detail below.

5.2.1 Improving basic skills

Even though many learners were not able to identify much of an impact on their basic skills, for some young people participating in E2E had done so. For example, asked whether E2E had made any difference to her basic skills, a 16-year-old-learner pointed out:

> *I think where the maths and literacy is concerned; basically I never finished school, left in the third year so I never did exams. E2E has offered me a second chance to get these.*

Some participants said that their ability in basic skills was pretty good anyhow, but that they had benefited from improving this further. As one young man explained: '*My maths were not that bad, but I need three C's for a college course so I am doing the key skills Maths which should get me the C'*. Some participants recognised the part basic skills could play in having '*a better chance of getting a job'*.

5.2.2 Development of key skills

As indicated by Table 2, most E2E learners felt they had developed their **IT skills** quite a lot or lots. Typical of their comments was that made by a 17-year-old who felt his IT skills had '*improved a lot, I didn't really know anything about computers before I came here, now I'm pretty much used to them*'. Other E2E participants found that exposure to IT and computers had done a lot to break down their fears and pre-conceptions about working with computers. Illustrative of this were comments made by one learner:

> *I used to think computers were boring but now that I have learnt how to produce things like web-sites, working on the computer is more interesting now.*

Other participants, who felt they were already very good at using computers before joining E2E, reported that it had allowed them to develop and build upon existing computer skills. As one E2E participant on a work placement in an IT firm explained:

> *I have learnt to build computers on my four-week work placement. I was really properly into it, like they were showing me how to build them straight from scratch, so that in the beginning it took me about an hour and a half to build them and then in the end it took me about twenty-five minutes for each one. They were selling them on the shop floor for a grand.*

Several interviewees said that being on E2E had helped them develop their **communication skills**, by giving them opportunities for interacting with other people. For example, one E2E participant, who said that he never spoke to anyone when he first started on E2E, remarked that: '*It's helped me communicate more when I'm going into job interviews or talking to other people*'.

The group work and **team working** exercises were the first time many learners were able to explore and compare and analyse their experiences and feelings with peers. As a result, many reported that they now felt more able to work as part a team. In the words of one learner:

> *Learning to be part of a team is one thing it does teach you to do here. Even if you don't like someone here, you have to be in the same room with them for five months, so you got to shut up and get on with it, otherwise it would be arguments all the time and you wouldn't get anything done.*

5.3   Vocational Skills and Development

As indicated in Chapter 2, one of the main motivations for young people joining E2E was to get a job. Table 3 presents young people's assessment of the effect E2E had on their chances of finding work, getting a better idea of what work is like, developing useful work-related skills, and clarifying their future career choices. It shows that very few learners were not able to identify any such effects and that large proportions reported it had made either quite a lot or lots of a difference. Particularly noticeable is the fact that more than three-quarters of those asked (41 learners) suggested that they were now 'quite a lot' or 'lots' more likely to get a job.

Table 3: Effect of E2E on young people's preparation for employment

What difference has being on E2E made to you in terms of:	Not at all	A bit	Quite a lot	Lots
	n	n	n	n
Being more likely to get a job	1	11	17	24
Getting a better idea of what work is like	2	13	24	14
Developing useful work-related skills	3	13	26	11
Getting a better idea of what you want to do next	2	16	18	17

N = 53

Source: NFER E2E Participant Study, 2003

Young people's comments are explored in greater detail below.

5.3.1 Job search skills

Some interviewees said that they had developed valuable career-related skills such as job search strategies, how to prepare a CV and interview techniques. A young man pointed out that one of the key benefits of E2E from his perspective related to the help he got with looking for work '*because that's what I'm looking for, learning how to fill out application forms and things like that*'.

Several interviewees indicated that their E2E tutor had shown them how to identify a range of jobs that fitted their interests and needs. As one learner pointed out:

> *He's helped me look for jobs on the internet – before I came here I wouldn't have known to start, I'd never really worked on a computer before. So we've gone through lots and lots of things and I've sent off for a few application forms and we're taking it from there.*

The interviews also revealed that several E2E learners had received some kind of coaching in how to approach and perform in job interviews. One E2E participant said that his tutor had prepared him for an interview, by telling him that it was important not to '*show off*' and '*think about the possible questions that would be asked at the interview*' beforehand. He found that the '*pretend interviews*' had really helped.

5.3.2 Learning about work

As shown in Table 3, the majority of learners felt that the E2E programme had provided them with an opportunity to develop work-related skills and get a better idea of what work was like. One E2E participant stated that the programme had made '*quite a bit of difference* [because] *you get to experience*

different jobs.' This was supported by another learner, who expressed it in the following way:

> *A lot of employers are looking for people who are very experienced and being a year out of school you are not going to be very experienced. Here you have got people who can get you the experience you are wanting.*

Other participants drew attention to the opportunity that being on a work placement had provided in giving them a better idea of what work was like.

Some young people felt they had acquired a new set of skills and a better idea of work as a result of being on work placement. A young man, who wanted to work with young people, spoke about what he had gained from his placement. Referring to the level of patience needed when working with children, he said:

> *I think I already knew that anyway, but to see it and see how much patience you need with kids, you have to be there to experience it. Sometimes it can be quite frustrating if you've got eight kids all trying to talk to you, you need to have the patience.*

Most of the young people felt they had a better chance of getting a job. One participant spoke about how the work placement had enabled him to '*get a foot in the door with warehousing, because that's what I want to do. I already had a fork lift licence but didn't have the experience*'.

An important aspect of preparing for employment is **the achievement of relevant work-related qualifications**. The extent to which young people had benefited from E2E in this respect is explored in the following section.

5.4 Obtaining Qualifications

As reported in Section 3.2.2, many young people highlighted the importance of achieving certificates or qualifications which would be useful to them in the future. The importance of such achievements was, for example, emphasised by one young woman: '*because when I leave here for any reason, when I am older I will be able to get job because I have got all my certificates for that work*'.

Qualifications and certificates achieved by interviewees ranged from those that were awarded by providers themselves as a way of recognised the achievement of a milestone or some other personal goal, to certificates needed for many work placements, including health and safety, first aid, manual handling and food hygiene. Young people were also working towards, or had achieved, several nationally recognised awards, including:

♦ the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)

♦ NVQs or NVQ units

- CLAIT
- ASDAN awards
- National Youth Achievement award.

5.5 Progression

As can be seen in Table 3, the majority of learners (51 out of 53) interviewed in the second round of visits thought they now had at least a little bit of a better idea of what to do next as a result of being on E2E. Of those that were planning to leave in the near future, most said they intended to go into some form of employment. Otherwise, about one-third said that they hoped to continue or move onto a training programme, including work-based training. A smaller proportion pointed out that they had decided to go back into mainstream education to either retake GCSEs or undertake GNVQs or A levels.

It is worth noting, though, that for many of these young people, who had a history of dropping out of learning or employment, their intentions may not be realised or they may fail to sustain their involvement in the chosen outcomes. Indeed, some of those interviewed said that they had moved onto a course or some form of employment which they had not liked and had returned to the E2E provider to seek further guidance and support. This was confirmed by interviews with the provider staff, as illustrated by the following statement:

> *People do come back, they go out, they leave* [and say:] '*I am not here anymore, I am off and I am going to get myself a job. And then, like we had last week, someone rang up I have realised now that I do need my English and Maths, can I come back?*'

Further details of the intended and achieved outcomes of E2E from the young people's perspective are provided below.

5.5.1 Moving onto employment

Many participants were either planning or had already moved on to some sort of employment, although for many young people this tended to be casual or temporary work. Many of the E2E learners said that their experience on E2E had helped them to secure their current job or worked-based training. As one young woman who was on a placement in a nursery explained while working on a level 1 qualification in childcare explained: '*They've offered me to go onto a FMA in childcare next year if I complete the course*'. Others acknowledged the experience gained from doing work placements, coaching in interview techniques, and the support given in identifying suitable training or employment.

5.5.2 Moving onto work based training

Some participants were planning to move onto, or had moved onto, some form of training, including work-based training. The transition was particularly smooth when young people were able to stay with the same E2E provider, while working for a placement organisation. One learner, who was currently undertaking her NVQ Level 1 in IT as part of E2E, said that she was hoping '*to stay on to do my level 2 and following from that my level 3, and 4.'* Another E2E participant wanted to work in the retail sector and was currently completing an NVQ Level 1 in Retail, which included three days a week at his work placement.   He pointed out:

> *I'm going to give it another couple of months at* [retail chain]*, but at the end of the day, I am going to stay at this place until I get an NVQ.*

The value of having an NVQ as well as work experience was also recognised by another participant:

> *I've done NVQ Level 1 and now I'm at NVQ Level 2, you can't really work in painting and decorating without those, otherwise you can't work in a proper firm and stuff because they ask you for your qualifications.*

5.5.3 Moving into mainstream education

Progression to other programmes of study, often as a stage on the way to employment, was another aim for some learners. As one E2E participant stated: '*I want to go to college to get my GCSE's because I haven't got any, and hopefully, go into childcare*'. Another E2E participant spoke about going back to sixth-form college to do A levels.

5.5.4 Not moving on

A small proportion of those interviewed still had no idea of what they wanted to do. Providers indicated that some learners were reluctant to move on, either because they lacked confidence or because they were afraid to leave '*the comfort-zone of E2E*'. One interviewee pointed out that E2E providers needed to make sure that learners moved on when they were ready to do so, as she explained:

> *Sometimes they lose sight of what they are here for and we are looking at how we are going to do this when it rolls out – helping them to manage their own learning so they are focussed on their outcome and achievements. It's always difficult getting that balance right between trying to make it youth clubby so they like coming and making it clear to them that they are here for learning and to move on.*

This indicates the danger of E2E becoming a 'holding area' for some young people rather than provision that helps them move onto suitable progression opportunities.

5.5.5 Dropping out of E2E

As indicated in Section 1.3, a significant proportion (ten learners) of those interviewed in the first round had dropped out of E2E by the time of the second round. Reasons given by providers included young people leaving the area or having left due to various personal circumstances. For a small minority of young people interviewed in the first round, their destination was said to be unknown.

5.6 Summary of Findings

- The majority of young people indicated that being on E2E had made a significant difference in terms of their personal development. In particular, three-quarters of those interviewed said that it had improved their self-confidence 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.

- A smaller proportion of learners – less than half – identified a similar effect on their basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In contrast, two-third of those interviewed found that their IT skills had improved quite a lot or lots.

- More than three-quarters of young people felt they were either 'a lot' or 'quite a lot' more likely to get a job as a result of participating in E2E. To this end, participants appreciated the opportunity for work placements and felt that they had developed many valuable job search skills, including how to prepare a CV and interview techniques.

- Young people had achieved, or were working towards, a variety of qualifications, certificates or awards, which were seen as important tools for finding employment.

- The majority of young people interviewed felt they had a better idea of what they wanted to do next as a result of being on E2E. Many intended to find employment, while others were hoping to go onto a training programme. A smaller proportion intended to go back into mainstream education to retake GCSE or undertake GNVQs or A levels.

Key messages for managing the delivery of E2E

- It is important that E2E providers gain feedback from participants regarding the suitability and appropriateness of basic and key skills tuition in order to ensure that it is fully engaging them and meeting their changing needs.

- E2E providers need to ensure that all young people are helped to move on to appropriate destinations, through the use of regular progress reviews which involve planning suitable progression routes. It is worth considering how the use of ILPs can support this progress by encouraging young people to get involved in deciding how best to achieve their chosen objectives.

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6. CONCLUSION, KEY LEARNING POINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This participant study has revealed that most of the young people interviewed had found the experience of E2E generally positive and that they had gained from their involvement in the programme. This chapter draws out the key learning points from the research relating to young people's experience of E2E and makes recommendations which need to be considered in relation to the national establishment of E2E.

6.1   Individually-tailored Provision

Even though it is an entitlement for E2E learners to have a programme that is tailored to their individual interests and needs, there was evidence in this study that this had not always been fully achieved. Evidence from our visits to providers and interviews with learners suggested that:

♦   some young people felt they had been consulted about what they were interested in and were given a lot of choice about what activities they could do

♦   others felt they had been given at least some choice within programmes

♦   while others said that they simply followed a programme in a group with other learners.

The extent to which young people were able to have an individualised programme appeared to depend on a variety of factors, including:

♦   the size of providers

♦   the extent to which learners were tied to a particular provider or were encouraged to sample provision from different providers

♦   the extent to which providers had established links with other services or providers.

These factors all appeared to be linked with the extent to which young people were offered individualised programmes. However, the absence of one factor could be compensated by one or two of the other factors. Thus, while large providers with a range of on-site courses and large numbers of staff appeared to be able to offer more flexible provision, small providers could compensate by buying in specialised services or referring learners onto other providers. Some pathfinders had established a system of allowing learners to move between small, but specialised, providers.

Recommendation:

E2E needs to ensure that the individual needs and interests of learners are effectively identified at entry and on an ongoing basis and that these are addressed either by on-site provision or by linking up with other providers or services that can meet their requirements more adequately.

6.2 Effective E2E Learning Styles

Given the variety of needs and characteristics of those involved in E2E, it is difficult to find a 'one-size-fits-all' style of delivery for the E2E curriculum. Thus, the needs of level 1 learners who see E2E as a clear stepping-stone towards a Modern Apprenticeship will require a different approach from disengaged learners facing multiple barriers to progression. While this research did not specifically explore the learning styles most favoured by young people involved in E2E, it was able to identify particular approaches which were appreciated by large numbers of those interviewed. These included a preference for being taught in small groups, project-based activities, group work and practical, non classroom-based activities.

Recommendation:

The LSDA might wish to consider commissioning further research specifically focusing on this question in order to discover the learning styles most favoured by the different types of young people involved in E2E in relation to the three interdependent core strands of the E2E curriculum. As an alternative, it may be worth organising regional workshops to identify and share practice on what delivery methods work best in helping E2E participants to achieve their learning objectives.

6.3 Basic Skills Provision

This research study suggests that many E2E learners were not attracted by more 'traditional' classroom-based approaches used to teach basic skills. Correspondingly, a much lower proportion of interviewees reported that they had made major improvements in their literacy and numeracy, in contrast with much greater reported changes for other skills.

Recommendation:

E2E providers need to explore more innovative approaches to teaching basic skills, which are more likely to appeal to the E2E learners. Such a review could include consultation with the Basic Skills Agency to draw on its experience and expertise in promoting basic skills, and in advising on design of learning activities and styles of delivery.

6.4   Learning in the Workplace

Many learners had work placements and most were very positive about their experiences. However, interviews with young people suggested that the potential for learning from these experiences and from other casual work while on E2E had not been fully utilised by providers. Indeed, even though almost half of those interviewed said that they had experienced some type of paid work while on E2E, almost none said that they had discussed their experiences with provider staff.

Recent research suggests that learners need a lot of support before, during and after placements to help transfer their formal learning and fit in with the workplace culture.[10] It is argued that young people do '*not only have to develop the capacity to participate within workplace activities and cultures; they must also learn how to draw upon their formal learning and use it to interrogate workplace practices*'. The evidence suggests that work-based mentors can facilitate this process.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that support is provided to E2E learners:

♦   **before each work placement** – to ensure that learners know what is expected of them, establish clear learning goals and learning objectives and match students with employers and workplace mentors. Previous research by the NFER[11] has suggested that a well structured preparatory process, including, for example, organising a meeting before the start of the placement and drawing up a contract of mutual responsibilities, can set the foundation for a successful relationship between mentors and mentees.

♦   **during the placement** – to ensure that learners' progress and relationship with their mentors is monitored throughout the placement and that systems are in place to identify and respond to any issues as they arise.

♦   **after the placement** – to ensure that students are given structured opportunities to reflect on and evaluate their experiences in the light of the learning goals set at the start of the project in order to help integrate their learning with their experiences in the workplace.

Furthermore, E2E providers need to engage young people in reflecting on their experiences of other employment opportunities while on E2E.

6.5   Planning and Reviewing Progress

This participant study has suggested that the use of ILPs to plan activities and review individual progress can increase E2E learners' satisfaction and

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10   GUILE, D and GRIFFITHS, T. (2001). 'New Approaches to Work Experience', Career Research and Development, **4**, 3-7.

11   SPIELHOFER, T. (2000). Evaluation of BG CRED: Additional Strand. Evaluating the ESF Mentoring Skills Project. Unpublished report.

progress. However, not all young people interviewed saw the plan as a valuable document, which was revisited and used to support their development on E2E. Furthermore, there was evidence that some young people were not moving on to appropriate destinations remaining on E2E with no clear idea of their progression.

Recommendation:

It is important that E2E providers support learners by using their ILPs effectively and on a regular basis to set targets, review progress and work towards suitable destinations. Young people need to feel ownership of their plans by being actively involved from the start in shaping and defining their goals.

There is a strong case for identifying good practice in the way that ILPs have been used in the pathfinders. This should be based on the perspectives of participants and providers. Disseminating advice on what works, in terms of using ILPs as an active and developmental resource, would assist their deployment and ownership by both young people and providers.