

‘FUNDING YOUR FUTURE’

**CONSULTATION ON THE GOVERNMENT’S
REVIEW OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT
FOR 16-19 YEAR OLDS**

**Quantitative and qualitative research
into the views of young people**

National Council For Voluntary Youth Services

and

Article 12



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1. Executive summary

- 1.1 The Government is conducting a review of financial support for 16-19 year olds, with the aim of ensuring that all young people have the support and incentives they need to participate in education or training. The report of the review, *Supporting young people to achieve*¹, was published alongside Budget 2004, and launched a consultation on the Government's proposed reforms. As part of this consultation, HM Treasury contracted the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) and Article 12 to jointly research the views of young people.
- 1.2 The research addressed the seven long-term questions set out in the report and was based on an approach involving quantitative research via a questionnaire survey, and qualitative research via 10 focus groups delivered by local voluntary and community youth organisations and two centrally organised consultation events.
- 1.3 A total of almost 600 young people aged 14 to 21 from a broad and representative range of backgrounds were engaged through the research. We targeted an above average proportion of young people who are most likely to be in need of financial support. Just over 16% had been entitled to free school meals whilst still at school, just over 15% had experience of homelessness, and nearly 11% had been in care.
- 1.4 Our findings are organised around the three sections of the questionnaire and the focus groups/consultation events sessions:
 - Something for something – finding out what activities in addition to education and training should be eligible for financial support, which related to consultation questions 7 and 8;

¹ *Supporting young people to achieve: towards a new deal for skills*, HM Treasury, DfES and DWP, March 2004 – see www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/financialsupport.

- Independence – exploring the factors which young people think determine independence, which relates to consultation questions 3, 4, 5 and 6; and
 - Keeping it simple – discussing which streams of financial support should be integrated into a single system, which relates to consultation question 9.
- 1.5 Young people agreed that financial support should be available for those engaged in worthwhile alternative activities. Top of their list of suggestions for approved activities was voluntary work and community action. A significant number also felt that their engagement in life skills programmes and informal education should qualify (this may be significant in the light of recommendations of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform to encourage young people to engage in wider activities).
- 1.6 A surprising result was the high number of young people who wanted sporting activities, which aimed to develop learning and skills and potentially leading to a vocation, to be recognised. Similar views were also expressed by a small number of young people in relation to music and the arts, who felt that their interests were best pursued outside of formal education or training. Young people felt they should be eligible for financial support whilst having the freedom to pursue more personalised and flexible routes to future careers.
- 1.7 Young people suggested that qualifying activities should be individually negotiated where possible and approved by a key professional, such as a Connexions personal adviser, a youth worker or trainer.
- 1.8 Young people felt that their independence, which may qualify them for direct support from the Government, was an individual process and difficult to categorise. They wanted an element of control in deciding when they were to be regarded as independent of their parents.

- 1.9 The majority of young people felt that leaving home, being financially independent and being employed were key indicators of their independence. They believed that there were some other circumstances, in addition to cases where young people are estranged from their parents, when they should be recognised as independent. These included: young people who are studying away from home; those with their own families but who might still be living at home; and young people aged over 19 on a programme of learning which will become eligible for financial support when the age 19 cut off is reformed.
- 1.10 The majority of young people still believe that the fairest way for the Government to recognise de facto independence is to investigate the young person's circumstances before paying them any money. There was also significant support for the proposal that the Government should accept evidence from an independent professional who knows the individual.
- 1.11 The majority of young people thought that an income threshold would be a better measure of financial independence. They felt that this was less likely to distort young people's choice of learning routes than by looking at the number of hours worked. However, some young people noted that an hours threshold would create less administrative burden and this was particularly true of young people who had been in employment.
- 1.12 Most young people could see the benefits of a single system of financial support for 16-19 year olds if creating this would mean it was easier to know what financial support they were entitled to and made it easier to access. They said that a single system of support should be as simple as possible and avoid duplication, but should not change or introduce new conditions under which specialist streams of support are given for particular needs e.g. Disability Living Allowance.

2. Introduction

2.1 Research background

2.1.1 The Government's review of financial support for 16-19 years olds aims to ensure that all young people have the support and incentives to participate in education or training. The review's report, 'Supporting young people to achieve: towards a new deal for skills' published in March 2004, launched a consultation on the Government's long-term vision of a single, coherent system of support. To inform the development of these proposals HM Treasury commissioned NCVYS and Article 12 to research the views of young people on the consultation questions in the report.

2.1.2 The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) is the independent voice of the voluntary youth sector in England. A diverse network of over 150 national voluntary and community youth organisations and regional and local youth networks, NCVYS has been working since 1936 to support voluntary and community organisations that work with young people. Collectively, and with the help of about 500,000 volunteer workers, they reach about 5 million young people in England.

2.1.3 Article 12 was launched in 1994 and is the only England-wide organisation entirely run by and for children and young people under the age of eighteen. Article 12 works to actively promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Article 12 of the UNCRC which gives the right to children and young people to be listened to and have their opinions taken seriously in decision making processes.

2.2 Research objectives

This consultation aimed to provide young people from a diverse range of backgrounds with the opportunity to answer the long-term questions set out in *Supporting young people to achieve*:

- How could the Government recognise de facto independence without encouraging young people to leave the family home?
- Are there any other circumstances in which a young person should be recognised as independent?
- How should the threshold on a young person's income operate?
- Would an income threshold define full-time work, or would an hours rule be more appropriate?
- Which activities should be eligible for support in addition to education and training?
- Should there be any time limits for support for these other activities?
- Which streams of financial support be included in any single system of support specifically for 16 – 19 year olds and which should be left outside?

2.3 Methodology and sample

2.3.1 We used a four-strand approach in order to ensure that views were collected from a broad and representative range of young people from across the UK. This approach involved a total of 568 young people. The four strands were:

- Quantitative research via a questionnaire survey, distributed to young people through our own postal and email networks and those of our partners and available online on both organisations' websites and completed by 397 young people. The questionnaire was designed to be filled-in directly by young people, but this was sometimes facilitated on a one-to-one basis by a youth worker. The questionnaire used can be seen in appendix A and tables of the resulting data in appendix B.

- Qualitative research via focus group consultations in 10 local voluntary and community youth organisations, involving a total of 102 young people. The groups were drawn from the NCVYS and Article 12 networks or from those who had previously expressed an interest in the review to HM Treasury. Five groups working with a wide range of young people were selected, reflecting a broad geographic spread and including urban and rural areas:
 - 1 Kent and Medway VSU Youth in Action
 - 2 Rhyl Youth Action, Wales
 - 3 Milton Keynes Children's Rights Association
 - 4 Down and Connor Youth Council, Northern Ireland
 - 5 Youth 1st Fife, Scotland

Five issue-based groups were selected, including those working with the following specific groups of young people:

 - 6 Prince's Trust Sheffield – educational underachievers, young people who are in or have left care, young offenders/ex-offenders, the long-term unemployed,
 - 7 Prince's Trust Highlands and Islands, Scotland – educational underachievers, young people who are in or have left care, young offenders/ex-offenders, the long-term unemployed;
 - 8 Wigan Gateway Club, Mencap – young people with disabilities;
 - 9 Doncaster YWCA – young women, including young people who are in or have left care, young mothers and young offenders/ex-offenders;

10 Second Chance North East - educational underachievers, young offenders/ex-offenders.

Individual write-ups of the focus groups can be seen in appendix D.

- Two centrally organised consultation events were held in London and Newcastle, involving a total of 69 young people. This enabled young people who were not necessarily part of youth organisations to engage in the consultation. The Treasury Minister leading the review, Dawn Primarolo MP, took part in the event held in London to hear first-hand the views of the young people attending.
- Eight young people from the NCVYS Youth Forum and the Article 12 Steering Committee were trained and supported to act as peer researchers. They supported the other young people they knew and met to complete the questionnaires, enabling young people who may not usually fill-in questionnaires to be engaged. Three of the peer researchers also helped us to plan and deliver the central consultation events.

2.3.2 We developed a consultation pack including stimulus materials for use during the focus groups and central consultation events. This approach gave the groups flexibility to work in the most appropriate way for the young people, but ensured a common approach of delivery and method of data collection. This included a ninety-minute group work session that could be facilitated by either a youth worker or peer researcher, together with background information on HM Treasury, the review of financial support and how the information was to be used. The consultation pack used can be seen in appendix C.

2.3.3 It was agreed that the research should capture the views of a broad and representative sample of young people, and include some of the following specific groups:

- Vocational trainees (e.g. Entry to Employment participants);
- Long-term unemployed;
- Young people who have experienced homelessness;
- Young parents and other independent young people;
- Disabled young people;
- Young people who are in or have left care;
- Educational underachievers; and
- Young offenders/ex-offenders.

2.3.4 A variety of incentives were used to encourage the participation of individuals and groups and to recognise their contribution. These included travel expenses and £5 vouchers for those attending the central consultation events and £100 for each of the focus groups to assist with costs such as travel and room bookings or to provide thank you gifts for young people. This, coupled with the direct relevance of the consultation, ensured a good response rate.

2.4 Demographics

2.4.1 Young people who completed the questionnaires were asked: their age; their gender; their ethnicity; if they had a disability; where they lived; their main daily activity; their living arrangements; whether they have received free school meals; whether they have considered themselves homeless; and whether they have been in care. Monitoring forms asking the same questions were distributed during the focus groups and consultation events.

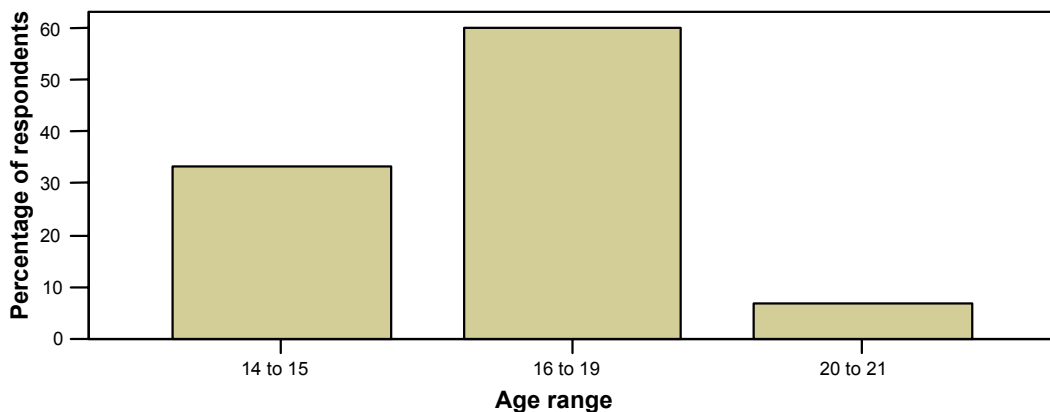
2.4.2 This section shows the combined demographical information for all young people involved in the research. Not all monitoring forms were completed and on those that were, not all questions were always answered. Where appropriate we have compared the data to national averages.

2.4.3 Age:

The main age group we targeted was that covered by the review, 16 – 19 years. However, to capture the view of young people who were about to make choices about what to do as they approached 16 and the experiences of young people who had recently completed that period of their lives, we accepted responses from young people over 13 and under 22.

Figure 2.1 shows the break down of the age groups. (For the full percentage figures see table 2.1 in appendix B.)

Figure 2.1: Age range of respondents



2.4.4 Gender:

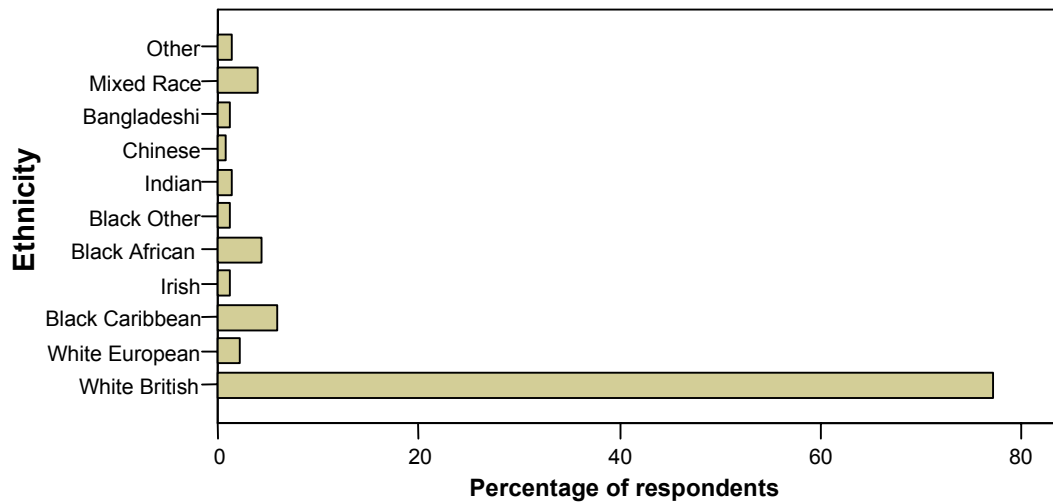
Of the young people involved in the research nearly 59 percent were female and 41 percent were male. (See table 2.2 in appendix B.)

2.4.5 Ethnicity:

Figure 2.2 shows the proportion of young people from each ethnic group. Nearly 78 percent of the young people described themselves as White British, followed by nearly six percent described themselves as Black Caribbean, just over four percent described themselves as Black African, and nearly four percent describe themselves as Mixed Race. All other ethnic groups were represented by one percent or less respondents.

This compares with the Census 2001 data, which shows that 84.5 percent of young people aged 16 to 19 describe themselves as White British.² (See table 2.3 in appendix B.)

Figure 2.2: Ethnicity of respondents



2.4.6 Disability:

Just over eight percent of the respondents described themselves as having a disability. (See table 2.4 in appendix B.)

2.4.7 Area of living:

Of the young people involved in the research nearly 86 percent said that they came from an urban (inner city/town) area and just over 14 percent said that they came from a rural (countryside/village) area. (See table 2.5 in appendix B.)

2.4.8 Main daily activity:

Figure 2.3 shows the main daily activity of respondents. Nearly 48 percent of young people described themselves as being solely in education either at

² Office for National Statistics (2003) Census 2001, National Report for England and Wales, TSO.

school or college. Over 21 percent were in a combination of work and education, nearly 17 percent in work based training and almost 9 percent were in employment. Over 5 percent were not in education, employment or training. (See table 2.6 in appendix B).

Figure 2.3: Main daily activity of respondents

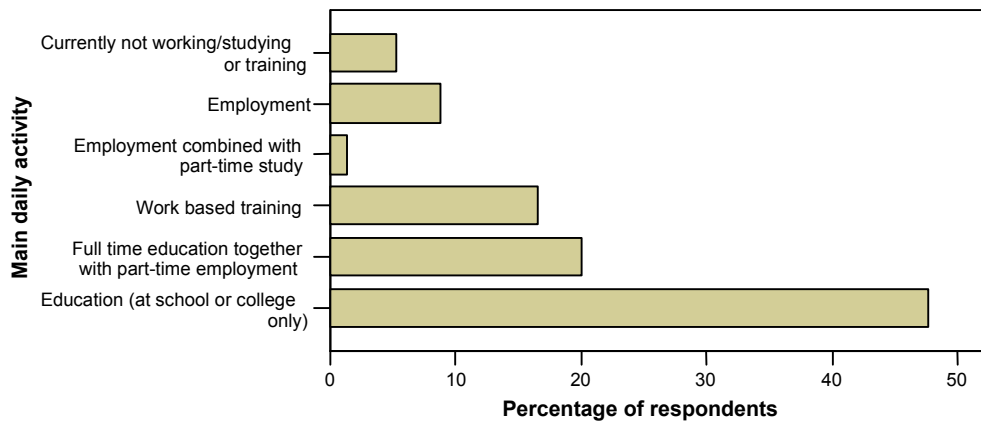
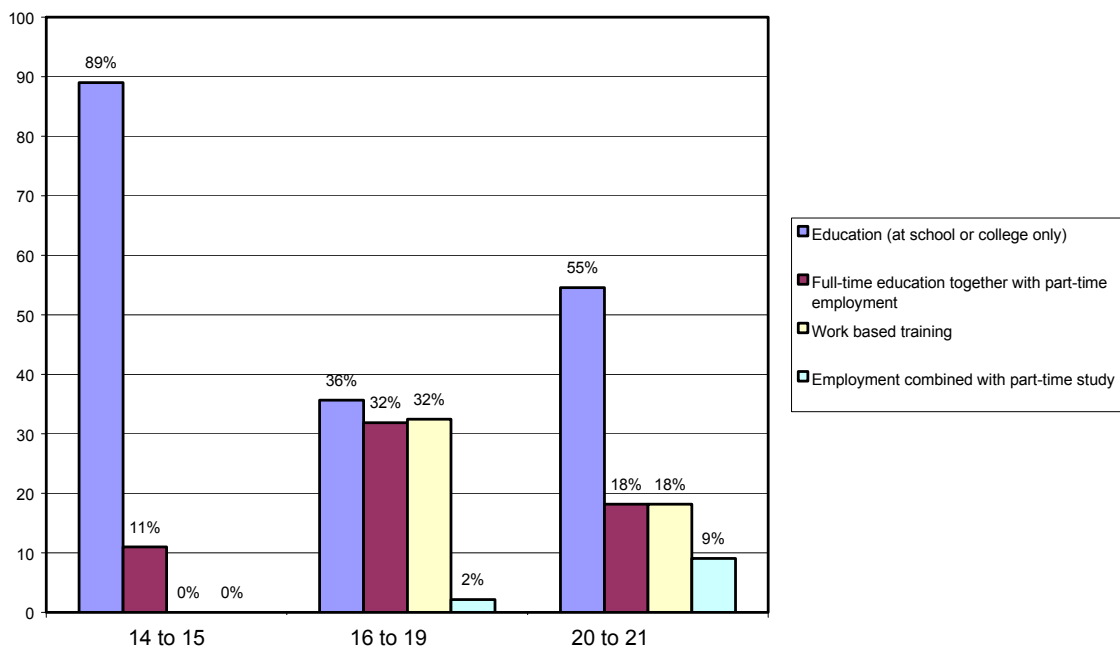


Figure 2.4 below shows the main daily activities of young people varied according to their age range:

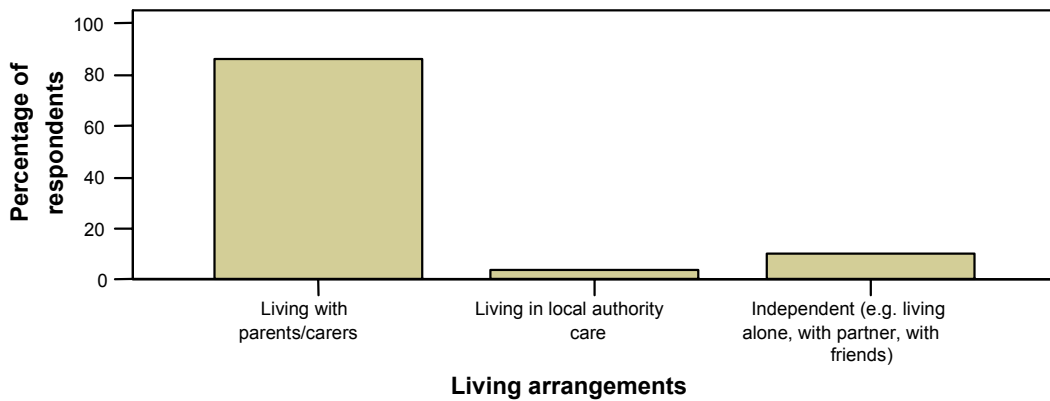
Figure 2.4: Main daily activity by age range of respondents



5.4.9 Living arrangements:

Figure 2.5 shows that the majority, nearly 86 percent, of young people involved in the research said that they lived with their parents or carers. Less than five percent lived in local authority care and eleven percent described themselves as being independent (i.e. living by themselves or with a friend/partner/own child). (See table 2.7 in appendix B.)

Figure 2.5: Living arrangements of respondents



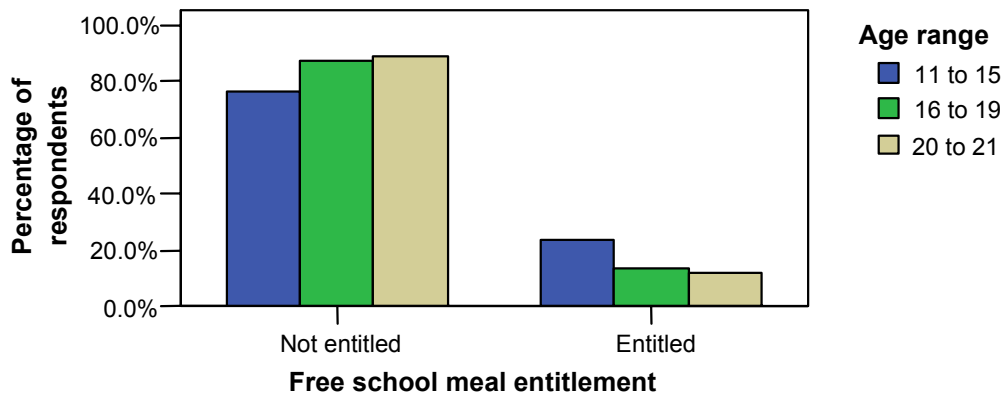
2.4.10 Free school meals:

16.3 percent of young people described themselves as being or having been entitled to free school meals. Figure 2.6 shows the age range of respondents who describe themselves as being or have been entitled to free school meals.

The greatest number of positive respondents (nearly 24 percent) were in the 14-15 age range where they would be currently eligible for free school meals. The percentage of young people who described themselves as being entitled to free school meals is relatively high when compared with the national education statistics which shows that 14.3 percent of secondary school pupils were eligible for free school meals in 2004³. (See table 2.8 in appendix B.)

³ Statistics of Education (2004), Schools in England, Number of secondary pupils known to be eligible for and uptake of free school meals by age and gender, TSO.

Figure 2.6: Entitlement to free school meals by age range of respondents



2.4.11 Homelessness:

Of the young people who were involved in the research, just over fifteen percent said they have considered themselves homeless now or in the past. (See table 2.9 in appendix B).

2.4.12 In care:

Nearly eleven percent of respondents described themselves as being or having been in care. (See table 2.10 in appendix B).

2.5 Analysing the data

2.5.1 The data from the consultation were inputted into a database using an SPSS coding frame. Whilst there was a good response rate for many questions, the rate for the more open questions, such as those asking for suggestions of alternative activities and definitions of independence, was sometimes low.

2.5.2 The report and consultation questions are complex and are not easy to understand by those who do not work in the field. Although every effort was made to abbreviate the report and to translate the consultation questions into an easy to understand format, we had some feedback that the

questionnaire and consultation pack were difficult to complete independently. This was particularly so for young people with low literacy, young people for whom English was a second language and young people with learning disabilities.

2.5.3 We were also told that the timing of the consultation was bad for young people, as many youth organisations, where they could have got further support, were closed over the summer period. Where possible this should be considered for future consultations involving young people.

2.5.4 The questionnaire and the focus groups and consultation events were divided into three sections:

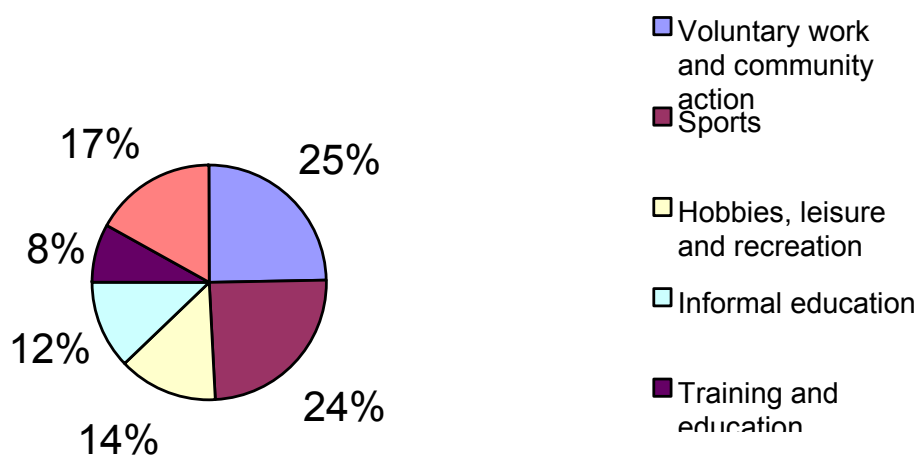
- Something for something – finding out which activities in addition to education and training young people think should be eligible for financial support which related to consultation questions 7 and 8;
- Independence – exploring the factors which young people think determine independence, which relates to consultation questions 3, 4, 5 and 6; and
- Keeping it simple – discussing which streams of financial support should be integrated into a single system, which relates to consultation question 9.

We report our findings under these same headings.

3. Something for something

- 3.1 We explained to participants through the questionnaire and the focus groups and consultation events that the Government will not usually give money to the parents of young people who are simply doing nothing and that at the moment, young people and their families can get money if they are in education or training or, in some cases, looking for work.
- 3.2 When asked during the focus groups and consultation events if they felt it was a good idea to offer support to young people for worthwhile activities other than formal study or training which may help a young person develop skills or tackle personal problems and challenges, most people agreed. Several had personal stories about why they were not in a position to go on to a full-time course or get an apprenticeship or where they wanted to pursue an alternative route to learning or gaining skills.
- 3.3 Respondents to the questionnaire were able to give up to three answers. We have clustered together all the respondents' ideas for alternative activities into six categories. These are illustrated in figure 3.1:

Figure 3.1 – Young peoples' ideas for approved activities, by percentage of total responses



- 3.4 The most popular alternative activity was volunteering and community action at over 25 percent of the total responses.

Many people described volunteering as a route to gaining skills:

“Some people do voluntary work because they need specific experience (work experience) to get a job in the future. They should get paid for that!”

Princes Trust Sheffield focus group

However, there were some concerns raised that if young people received financial support for volunteering, they were effectively being paid and that it may cease to be volunteering.

- 3.5 Some respondents felt that for both volunteering and other informal learning activities it would be important to have a clear goal to aim for and a few felt that this could be some form of qualification.
- 3.6 Sports was the second most popular category making up 25 percent of the responses. We were careful to only record within this category activities which aimed to develop learning and skills, recording sports which were solely leisure based under the ‘hobbies, leisure and recreation’ category.

Comments and suggestions under the sports heading included:

“Sport: encourage people to be more active.”

Doncaster Gateway Club focus group

“Life guarding courses.”

Rhyl Youth Action focus group

“Voluntary leisure clubs e.g. coaching children’s football teams.”

Milton Keynes Children’s Rights Association Club focus group

3.7 When questioned why the Government should support these types of activities, respondents felt that if you wanted to follow a sports related vocation then this was not always best pursued through formal educational or training. This view was similarly expressed by just under 2 percent of respondents in relation to music and arts.

3.8 The third most popular category was hobbies, leisure and recreation. It was not always clear how these might either develop learning or skills or remove barriers to working and learning:

“Cinema tickets.”

“Learning to drive.”

“Days out.”

3.9 This was explained by some young people who felt that whilst they were young they needed more leisure time and should not be driven into education, employment or other activities to secure financial support. One participant at the London consultation event commented:

“Exams are stressful and young people need time to recuperate and renew their social lives.”

London consultation event

However, other young people did not believe that this was a deserving use of taxpayers’ money:

“Young people do not want to be seen as ‘free loaders’ earning ‘something for nothing’.”

London consultation event

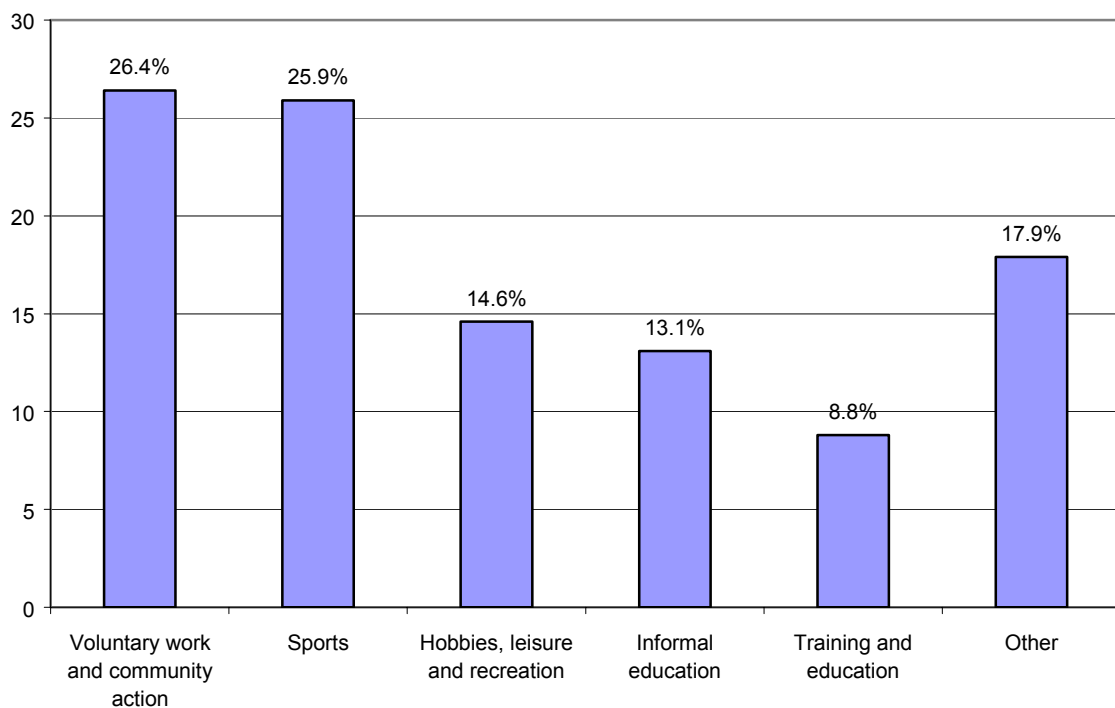
“I think that they shouldn’t give money to people who don’t work. If people train, learn and work then they can look after themselves in the future they would contribute to the country and economy”

Princes Trust Sheffield Focus Group

3.10 Answers in the other category included: caring for others (3.9 percent); counselling and advice (2.9 percent); funding gaps between education and supporting and employment (2.5 per cent); music and arts (1.8 percent); and setting up a new business (1.8 per cent).

3.11 As respondents could give more than one answer, an alternative way of viewing the responses is by the percentage of young people agreeing with each category, as in figure 3.2:

Figure 3.2 – Young peoples’ ideas for approved activities, by percentage of young people agreeing with each category



- 3.12 Almost 30 percent of those who completed questionnaires did not give any answers to the question, presumably because they were often not able to suggest alternative activities.

The questionnaire also threw up a number of answers that were unclear or that appeared to fall outside the scope of the review and which, unlike at the focus groups and consultation events, we were unable to clarify. These included requests for more facilities for young people, funding to carry out projects and answers relating to university funding.

Involvement in youth forums, youth parliaments and Connexions Local Management Committees were also highlighted a number of times. This indicates a belief that young people should be reimbursed more for these types of activity.

- 3.13 Similarly, participants in the focus groups and consultation events often struggled to suggest activities unaided. During these events we therefore prompted discussion with the following list of proposed approved activities:

Activities to develop learning and skills, for example:

- volunteering;
- informal learning;
- periods when the young person is waiting for a course to begin (e.g. if they have switched courses);
- combining part-time learning with other responsibilities, e.g. parenting, caring, employment.

Activities to help remove barriers to working and learning, for example:

- finding accommodation if homeless;
- sessions with a child psychologist to overcome personal problems;
- behavioural skills course for young offenders.

Most participants supported all of these suggestions, with volunteering and periods when the young person is waiting for a course to begin being the most popular overall. Several focus groups noted that there may be other groups who required extra education support to overcome barriers and that this should be supported:

“Additional support for young people who have extra/special needs.”

Newcastle consultation event

“[Those needing] basic numeracy and literacy classes.”

Doncaster YMCA focus group

“Not able to work full time due to disability etc.”

Wigan Gateway Club focus group

- 3.14 Another example of a period between learning that many young people felt warranted financial support was the time between finishing one course and going onto the next, including into higher education. A few young people were also concerned about not receiving any money in the time lapse between education and employment, before they become eligible for the Jobseeker’s Allowance.

“Young people should receive money for the period between a course ending and waiting for the next one to start.”

Newcastle consultation event

“EMA needs to be continued for a period after the course ends.”

London consultation event

- 3.15 Respondents also had other suggestions for how to financially support young learners and for incentives to encourage learning.

“Bonus for doing 100 hours of volunteering when not in education, employment or training.”

Kent and Medway VSU focus group

Other suggestions included cheaper transport and indirect benefits such as free leisure activities. Young people at both of the central consultation events also suggested a loans system similar to the higher education loans system:

“Loan system similar to student loans for young people.”

London consultation event

“There should be a loan system that is interest free.”

Newcastle consultation event

- 3.16 In some focus groups there was discussion about how an alternative activity could be approved.

Many people felt that it was a good idea to have a system where these activities are personally negotiated with the young person, taking account of their individual needs and circumstances. However, it was recognised that this may be too cumbersome a process for every person and that a list of commonly approved activities may be useful.

Suggestions for who could approve activities included Connexions workers, youth workers, trainers/instructors and activity supervisors.

- 3.17 Only some of the focus groups discussed whether there should be time limits to support for approved activities. Respondents were cautious of suggesting fixed time limits as the activities and the desired outcomes could vary greatly. However, the broad consensus was that it could be of a comparable length to that for a period of education and training.
- 3.18 It is notable that throughout the consultation young people expressed a strong sense of morality and responsibility. For example, the Rhyl Youth Action focus group linked independence with “being mature enough”, “treating people with respect” and being “able to deal with decisions in a well

mannered way". Other young people strongly supported the view that the Government will not usually give money to the parents of young people who are simply doing nothing:

"If a person wants to work but there are reasons why they can't e.g. homeless then they should be helped. If someone doesn't want to work they should not be supported."

"Young people shouldn't get money for nothing, some kids are stupid with money and might waste it, they could go on a training course or volunteering it could be seen as fun. Some people might just sit on their arses and they shouldn't get paid."

Prince's Trust Sheffield focus group

4. Independence

This section is split into three parts - 'independence', 'leaving home' and 'financial independence' - relating to sections of the questionnaire and consultation pack.

4.1 Independence

4.1.1 We explained to participants through the questionnaire and the focus groups and consultation events that when a young person becomes independent, the money to their parents stops and they are more likely to need to get money directly from the Government.

They were asked to describe what being independent meant to them and how the Government should decide that someone is independent.

4.1.2 Many respondents told us that independence could not easily be defined and that it was an individual process that is different for everyone.

"Independence can't be defined in a clear cut way"

London consultation event

"The Government tells us we are all the same, we are not!"

4.1.3 A number of respondents also felt that each individual case should be treated on its merits:

"You should never generalise, each case should be looked at independently to see what is best for them."

“Each case will have different circumstances. It would be wrong to simply fit people into certain categories. Every person should be treated individually.”

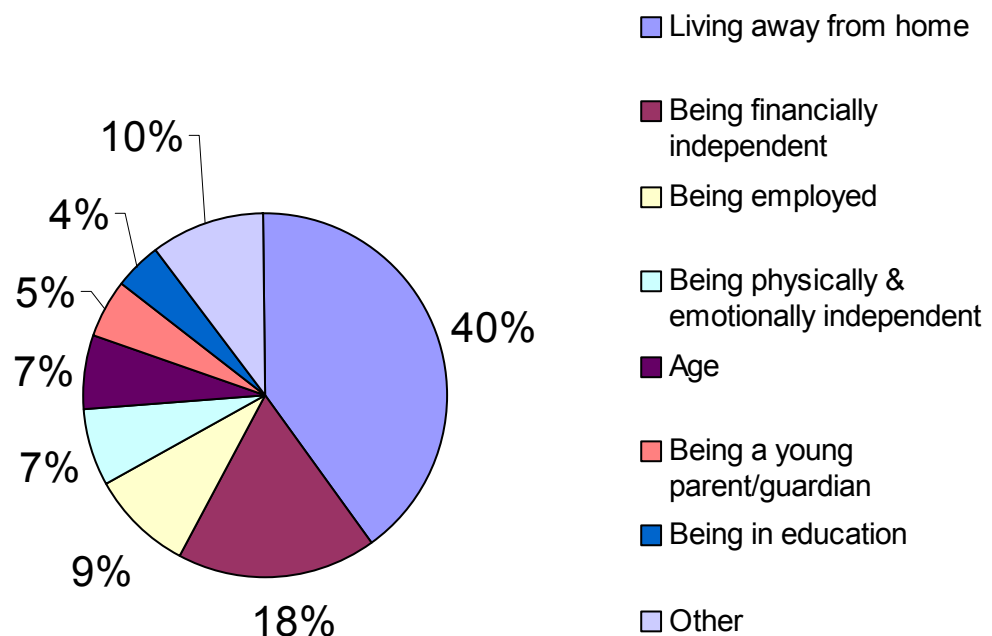
“Money and independence should be considered for each individual and their personal circumstances.”

Princes Trust Sheffield focus group

“Need to be treated as an individual and not make parents income count.”

4.1.4 Respondents to the questionnaire were able to give up to three answers. We were able to cluster together all the respondents’ answers into 13 categories. These are illustrated in figure 4.1:

Figure 4.1 – What being independent meant to young people, by percentage of total responses



4.1.5 The most popular response, making up over 40 percent of the total was living away from home. We separated this from answers where it was clear

that respondents meant that they were forced to leave home (which was 1 percent of the total), but it is difficult to judge in instances where it was not specified exactly how many meant moving out on their own free will.

During the focus groups and consultation events we explained that at present the Government does not automatically provide financial support to young people who choose to leave home, partly to avoid giving an incentive to young people to leave their family home unless it is really in their best interests. Some respondents did not agree that this was always right and felt that it should be the young person's choice. They gave as examples of when the financial support should be paid directly to young people: those studying away from home; those with their own families (i.e. those who are married or with long term partners or who are parents) but who might still be living with their parents; and young people aged over 19 on a programme of learning which will become eligible for financial support when the age 19 cut off is reformed.

One focus group talked about young people who may move out of the family home but remain close to parents and relatives and the support structure that comes with it, but knew that at the moment:

“This approach while being a logical stepping stone, would exclude them from being eligible for financial support.”

Princes Trust Highlands and Islands focus group

- 4.1.6 The second most popular response, making up almost 18 percent of the suggestions, was being financially independent, even if this still involved some degree of reliance on parents or carers for support.

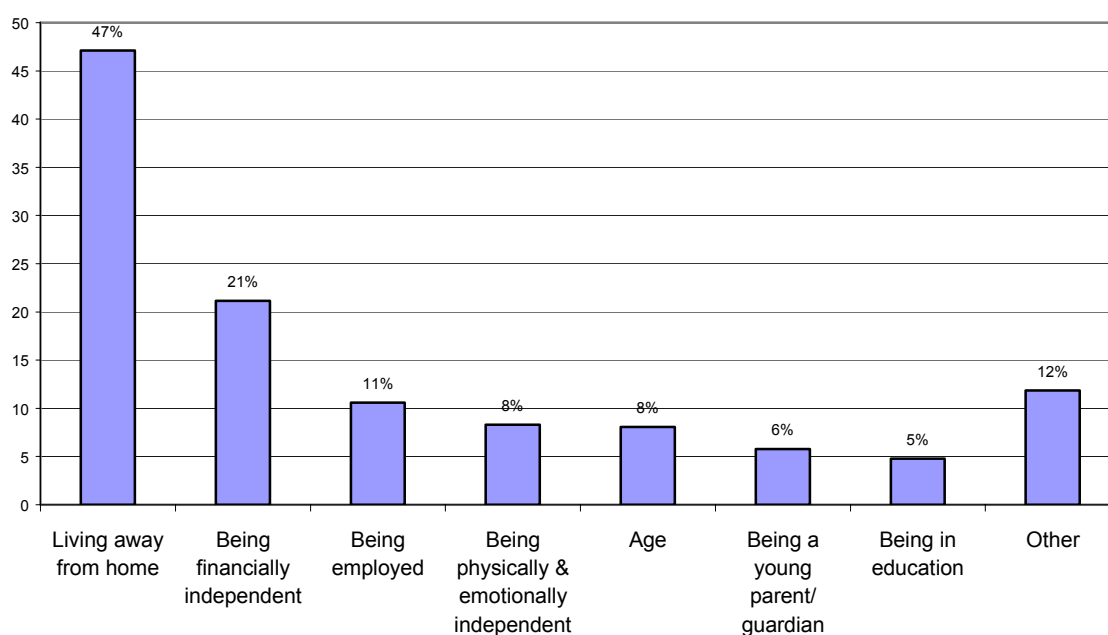
Some respondents felt that when they had their own source of income, say through part-time work, they had become independent and that they should be able to receive any financial support from the Government directly.

This affirms the view of the National Children’s Bureau report⁴ from earlier this year, which found that young people felt being financially independent included “having a full time job and enough income to support yourself” and “having your own income and not having to rely on parents or carers to support you”.

4.1.7 The other 11 categories varied widely and each made up between 9 percent and less than 1 percent.

4.1.8 As respondents could give more than one answer, an alternative way of viewing the responses is by the percentage of young people agreeing with each category, as in figure 4.2:

Figure 4.2 – What being independent meant to young people, by percentage of young people agreeing with each category



4.1.9 Figure 4.3 shows respondents’ views on independence according to age, and reveals that there is a slightly different picture for each age range.

⁴ Financial support and young people aged 16 to 19 (January 2004), National Children’s Bureau Research Department.

Whilst over 45 percent of young people aged 14 to 15 think that living away from home is a sign of independence, only around 15 percent of 20 to 21 year olds think the same. Similarly, unlike both the 14 to 15 year olds and the 16 to 19 year olds, no one in the 20 to 21 age range suggested that being financially independent was a sign of independence. 20 to 21 year olds more than other age ranges believe that employment, being homeless or being a young parent or guardian is an indication of being independent.

Given that those aged 20 to 21 only represent a relatively small part of our sample (7 percent), it may be reasonable to conjecture that these differences are because 20 to 21 year olds are more likely to have moved away from home or feel financially independent already.

4.1.10 Several people noted that there were additional factors affecting independence for young people growing up in rural areas:

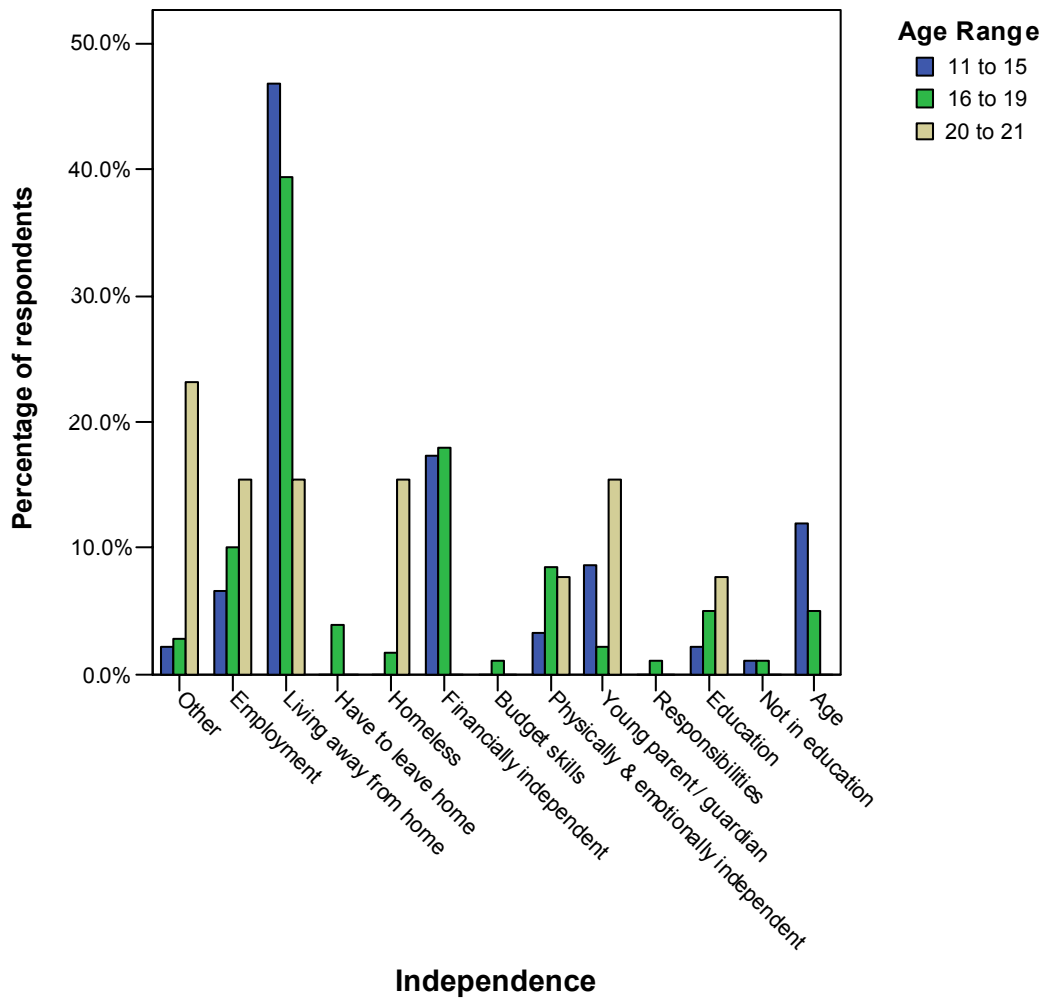
“A greater dependence on parents for transport to and from activities in rural areas is a further obstacle on the pathway to independence in rural areas”

Princes Trust Highlands and Islands focus group

“Young people in rural areas are severely deprived due to the lack of facilities and transport links.”

Second Chance North East focus group

Figure 4.3 – What being independent meant to young people, by age range



4.2 Leaving Home

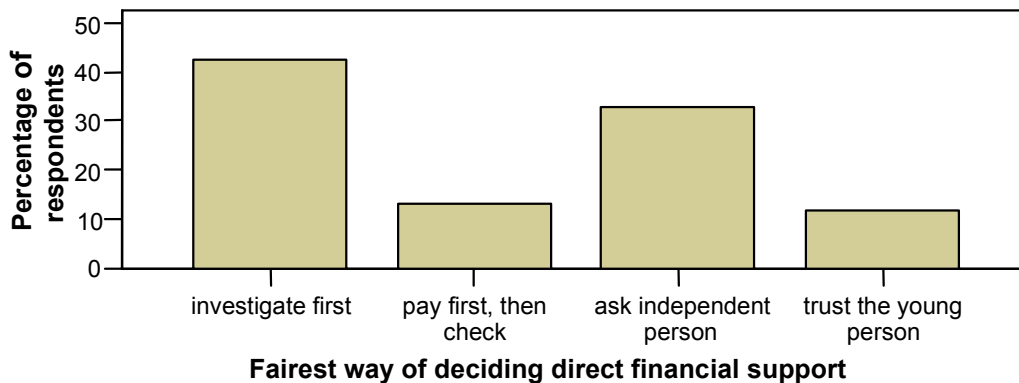
4.2.1 We explained to participants through the questionnaire and the focus groups and consultation events that if a young person aged 16 or 17 had to leave home because they are estranged from their parents or carers, the Government will stop paying their parents or carers and instead pay the young person directly, to help with essential things such as food and accommodation.

4.2.2 We put to young people four suggestions for the fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs direct financial support:

- The Government should investigate the young person’s circumstances before paying them any money;
- The Government should start paying the money straight away, and then check if the young person really needs it;
- The Government should ask the advice of an independent person who knows the individual (e.g. Connexions worker, youth worker, school/college); and
- The young person should be trusted to say if they need direct support.

Figure 4.4 shows young peoples’ responses. In the questionnaire we asked respondents to pick just one answer, but some ticked more than one and during the focus groups and consultation events many young people said the options were not mutually exclusive. So here the percentages are of the total responses rather than a percentage of the respondents.

Figure 4.4 – Young people’s views on the fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs financial support



4.2.3 Nearly 43 percent of young people think that the Government should investigate the young person’s circumstances before paying them any money, followed by nearly a third saying that the Government should ask the advice of an independent worker who knows the individual concerned.

Some felt that seeking the advice of an independent worker would have other benefits:

“In the case of answer 3, it would encourage young people to seek advice and support of youth workers etc.”

4.2.4 Respondents supporting the options to pay the money straight away, and then check if the young person really needs it or to trust the young person to say if they need direct support, noted that young people often find it difficult to get support quickly because of the requirements to provide evidence before the support can begin.

“When I first opened my claim, it took 3 weeks to clear, 3 weeks til I got my first JSA. During this time I had no money for rent or food.”

Many young people were concerned that these options were too open to abuse. However, one respondent noted:

“If they were telling the truth, they would receive the money they need but ... the Government could claim the money back if it was wrongly obtained.”

4.2.5 One focus group noted that when considering whether a young person needed direct financial support, it was important that the young person was involved in providing the information:

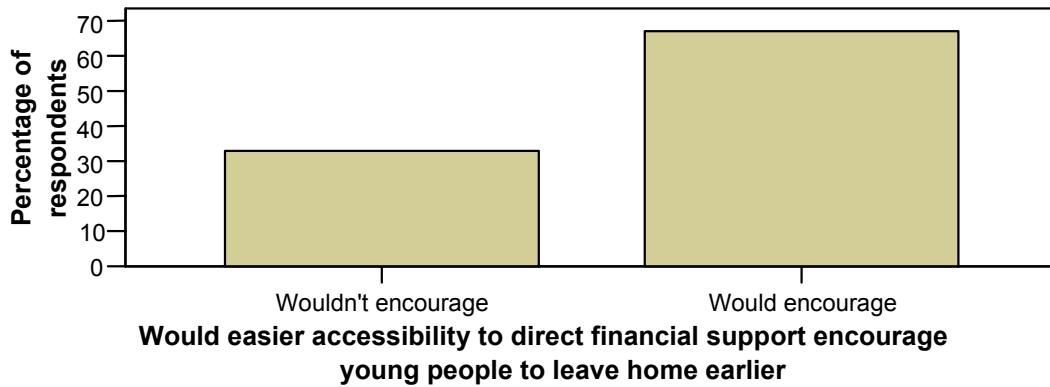
“Questionnaires requesting information should be given to the young people and not to any other person/parent or guardian.”

Princes Trust Highlands and Islands focus group

4.2.6 Young people were also asked if direct financial support from the Government was made easier to obtain, would it encourage young people to leave home earlier.

Figure 4.5 shows that just over two thirds of young people thought that it would. (See table 3.2 in appendix B.)

Figure 4.5 – Young people’s views on whether easier accessibility to direct financial support would encourage young people leave home earlier



4.2.7 Many respondents who felt that it was an encouraging factor commented that this would have a negative impact on young people:

“Some young people would be tempted to leave home early, without fully understanding the resources necessary to establish a home.”

By leaving home, you lose out on much more money and emotional support.”

However, others felt that it would not be an encouraging factor, often because it had not been in their experience:

“I knew about the financial support available but it did not make me want to leave home earlier.”

“I think that by offering money, it offers children with no financial or emotional support an escape route from a bad experience.”

4.2.8 A number of alternative and half-way options were put forward by participants of the focus groups and consultation events.

For example a member of the London consultation event proposed that:

“Money should be split between the carer and the young person to keep the incentive to look after them.”

The Kent and Medway VSU focus group suggested a swipe card system or coupons as a way for young people receiving direct financial support to only use it in accredited places.

A similar suggestion was:

“Payments should be made into a specific account then only be accessed under certain circumstances.”

4.3 *Financial Independence*

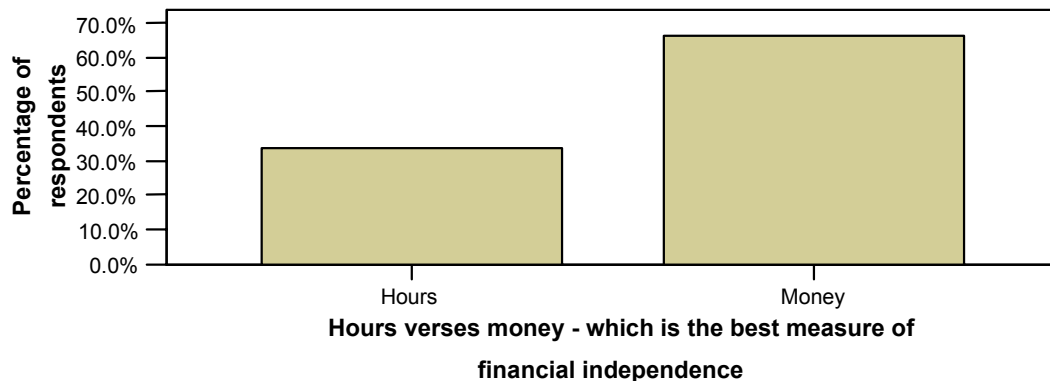
4.3.1 We explained to participants that when young people who have gone into full-time work or a waged apprenticeship earn enough money to pay their own way, they might no longer be dependent on financial support.

4.3.2 We put to young people two possible ways the Government could decide when a young person has become financially independent:

- By looking at the number of hours a young person works, as the current system works. For example anyone working over 25 hours a week would be treated as financially independent ; or
- By looking at the young person’s total weekly earnings. An income limit could be set, for example of £70 a week, and anyone earning over this amount would be treated as financially independent.

Figure 4.6 shows that just over two thirds of young people that an income limit would be a better measure of financial independence.

Figure 4.6 – Young people’s views about what makes financial independence



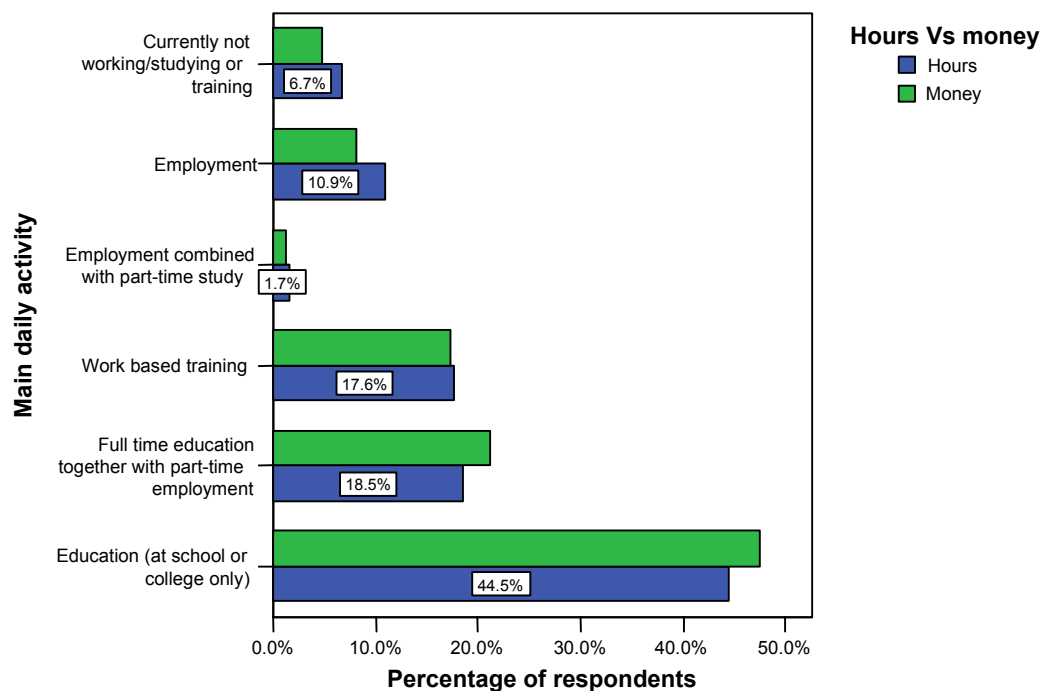
4.3.3 Many of the people who responded money, noted that as a minimum wage for the youngest people is only just being introduced, jobs paid very different hourly rates and that it was possible to work in excess of 25 hours yet earn relatively little:

“Some people work long hours and get paid less than others who earn more but work shorter hours”

“Because hours can be equal to £1 or £10”

4.3.4 However, as we can see in figure 4.7, when we look at how respondents views varied based on what their main daily activity, then different pictures begin to emerge.

Figure 4.7 – Young people’s views on what makes financial independence, by their main daily activity



4.3.5 Young people who are in employment, work based training, or employment with part time study, were more likely than their peers solely in education or full-time education together with part time employment to believe that the number of hours worked were the best measure. This may be because they have a greater awareness of the administrative difficulties of keeping track of weekly income.

Indeed, some of these respondents noted that hours can be easier to keep track of than money if they vary each week:

“Hours should be taken into account as part-time employment hours are often different week to week and for some training etc. you do not have to be paid the minimum wage.”

4.3.6 Several focus groups felt that the expenditure young people had to make should be taken into account, as this may vary across the country:

“It’s important to consider what out-going payments you have to make.”

Prince’s Trust Sheffield focus group

5. Keeping it Simple

5.1 We explained to participants through the questionnaire and the focus groups and consultation events that the Government wanted to end up with a system of financial support that is accessible and easy to use for young people in all kinds of situations.

5.2 We put to young people the question of whether it would make sense to integrate all the different sources of money – benefits, tax credits, money to cover specific things like childcare – into a single system of support.

Most young people could see the benefits of doing this if it meant it would be easier to know what financial support they were entitled to and easier to access:

“A system which makes young people more aware of what they are entitled to. User-friendly forms, which are available on the internet with explanatory information.”

“I think that many young people find benefits confusing and difficult to access. I think the process should be made straightforward and there should be more information available and easily accessible.”

5.3 Respondents understood that a single system of support may mean a longer and more complex form and had suggestions for how to manage this:

“It would be easier to have one pot but this could be made easier if separate sections were included, so that you only filled in the parts applicable to yourself.”

“Keep the forms user friendly, do not duplicate questions, keep jargon out of forms.”

“The questions should be more simple, straightforward, clear and concise. Maybe multiple choice tick boxes.”

YWCA Doncaster focus group

“[There should be a] single reference number for one person.”

Kent and Medway focus group

5.4 We asked participants to consider in turn whether each of the following types of financial support should be included in any single system of support:

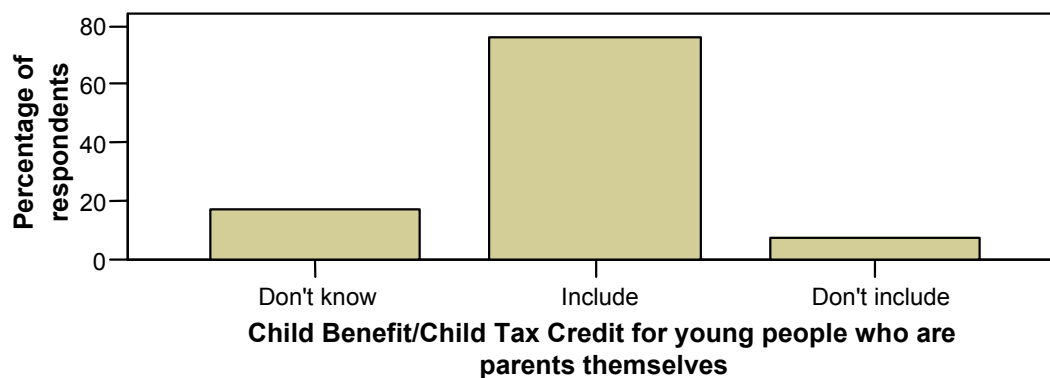
- Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit for young people who are parents themselves;
- Child care costs;
- Disability Living Allowance;
- Travel costs; and
- Housing Benefit.

Respondents were asked to say whether they thought each of the financial supports should be included, left out or if they didn't know. (See Table 5.1 in Appendix B.)

5.5 *Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit*

Just over three quarters of young people thought that Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit should be included in any single system of support (see figure 5.1).

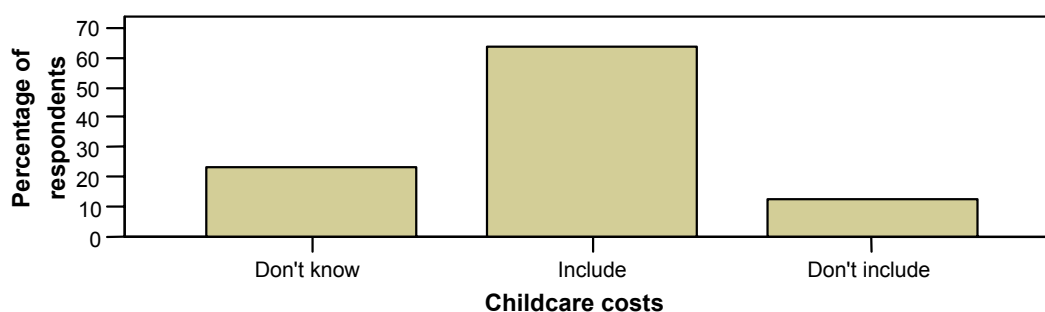
Figure 5.1 – Young people’s views on including Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit within a single system of financial support



5.6 *Childcare costs*

Just over 64 percent of young people thought that childcare costs should be included in any single system of support (see figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2 – Young people’s views on including Childcare Costs within a single system of financial support



5.7 If we look solely at young people who described themselves as independent, which included a number of young people who were young parents (but also others who were living away from home), then the percentage of those who believed that childcare costs should be included in any single system of support increased to 73 percent (see figure 5.3).

“There should be more encouragement for young women to take up trades and apprenticeships and support for childcare [would] enable young women to take advantage of these opportunities.”

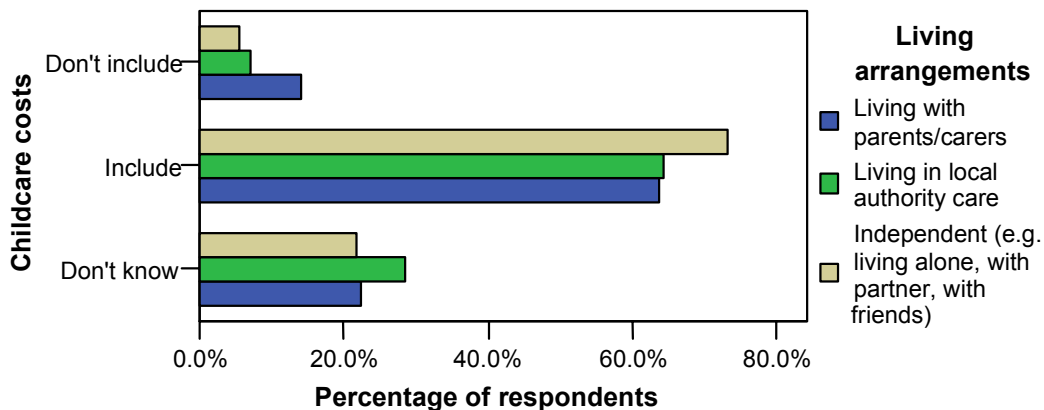
Prince’s Trust Highlands and Islands focus group

5.8 Many people identified a close link between Child Benefit/Child Tax Credits and thought that it would be beneficial to include both in the same system as many young parents may be claiming both types of support:

“I think all money to do with children should be kept together this could help young mothers to know what they're entitled to.”

“A young person would need the above options to be able to live on their own without worrying about occurring big financial problems. Especially teenaged mothers, as they would rely on childcare costs and tax credit/benefit.”

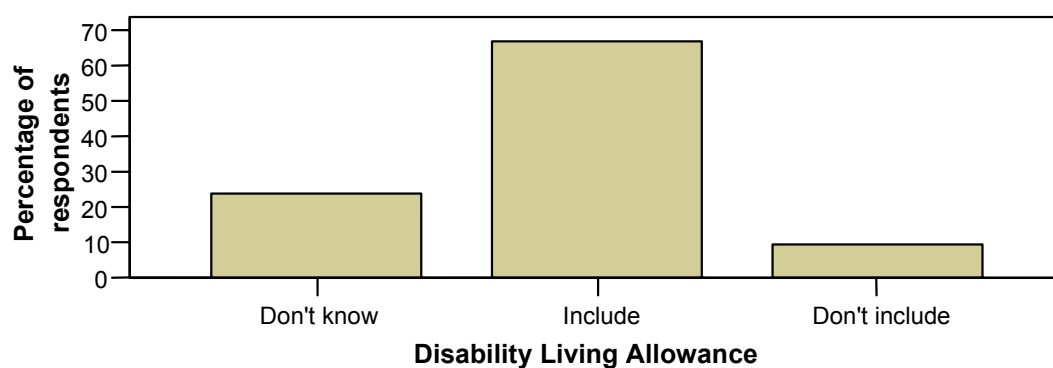
Figure 5.3 Young people’s views on including Childcare costs within a single system of financial support, by living arrangements



5.9 Disability Living Allowance

Just over two thirds of young people thought that Disability Living Allowance should be included in any single system of support (see figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 – Young people’s views on views on including Disability Living Allowance within a single system of financial support

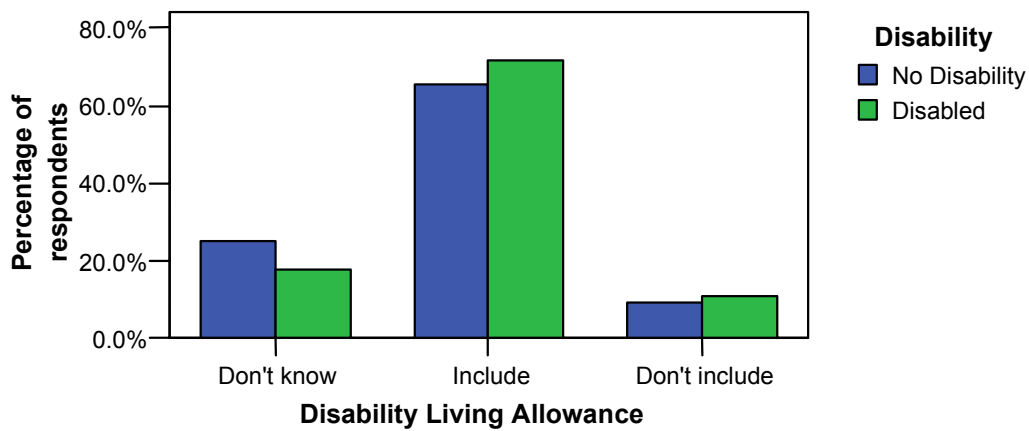


5.10 If we look solely at young people who described themselves as disabled, then the percentage of those who believed that Disability Living Allowance should be included in any single system of support increased to 71 percent (see figure 5.5).

For some young people with disabilities this was because they hoped it would make them more aware of what support they were entitled to and make it easier to obtain:

“I claim disability living allowance and incapacity benefit, but it was very difficult to obtain. I had to do a lot of research and was not told the facts straight off.”

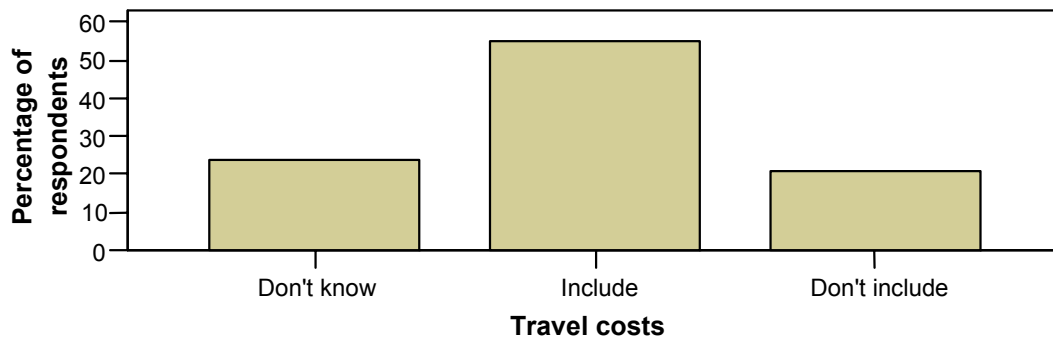
Figure 5.5 – Young people’s views on including Disability Living Allowance within a single system of financial support, by disabled status



5.11 Travel costs

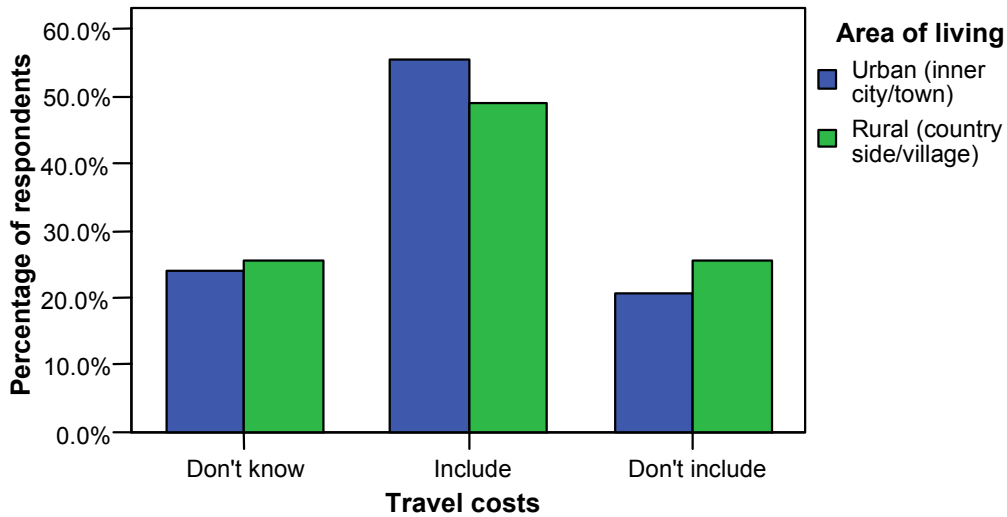
Just over half of young people thought that travel costs should be included in any single system of support (see figure 5.6).

Figure 5.6 – Young people’s views on including travel costs within a single system of financial support



5.12 Although comments had been made previously regarding the additional challenges of travel in rural areas (see 4.1.7), young people living in rural areas, at 48 percent, were slightly less likely to than young people in urban areas, 55 percent, to support the inclusion of travel costs (see figure 5.7).

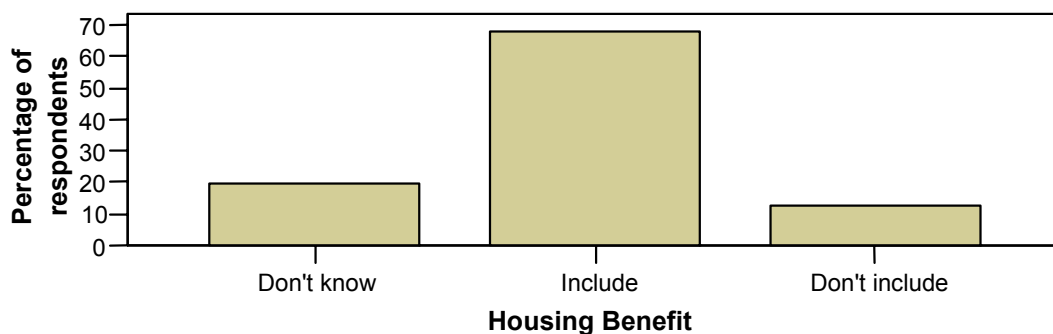
Figure 5.7 – Young people’s views on including travel costs within a single system of financial support, by area of living



5.13 Housing Benefit

Seventy percent of young people thought that Housing Benefit costs should be included in any single system of support (see figure 5.8).

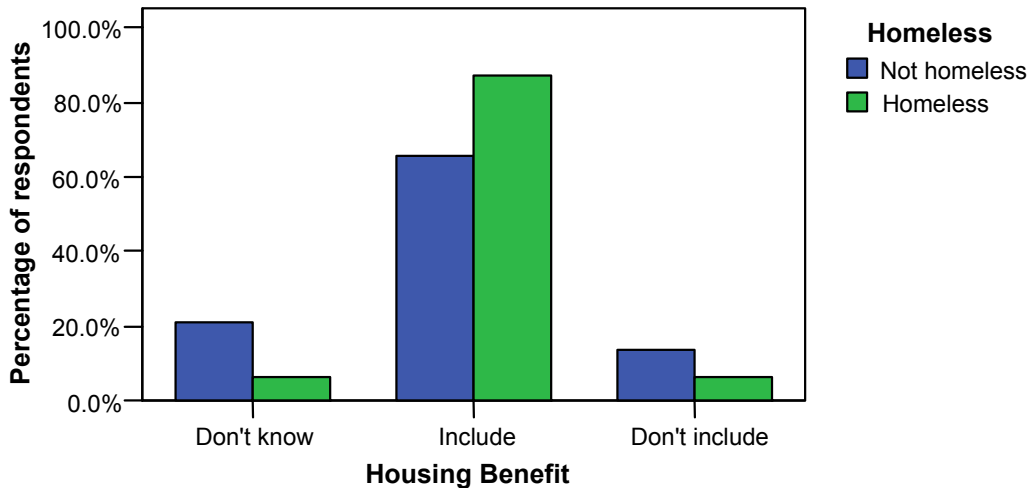
Figure 5.8 – Young people’s views on including Housing Benefit within a single system of financial support



5.14 If we look solely at young people who described themselves as homeless, as one group of young people who may be accessing Housing Benefit, then

the percentage of those who believed that it should be included in any single system of support increased to over 80 percent (see figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 – Young people’s views on including Housing Benefit within a single system of financial support, by Homelessness



5.15 It was not always clear why respondents wanted to include or not include specific types of financial support. During the central consultation events we observed that many young people’s answers were based upon their knowledge and sometimes personal experience of that form of support:

“Some things matter more than others”

Wigan Gateway Club focus group

“Housing Benefit also plays a key role by making their home a secure place to live in and to help themselves live a happy life.”

5.16 There were also concerns that a single system of financial support may mean changes to the conditions under which support may be given:

“If there was only a single system, I wouldn't receive anything because my parents both work full time and I have been told it would be means tested. I want to be financially independent of my parents.”

6. Other feedback from young people

6.1 In both the questionnaire and the focus groups and consultation events participants were given the opportunity to give any other feedback that might help the Government to build a better system of financial support. Although some of these are outside of the remit of the present consultation they may prove useful for future work.

6.2 The greatest number of comments related to the Educational Maintenance Allowance:

“I think that all students should be entitled to EMA no matter what their parents income is. A lot of people do not receive financial help because of this.”

“I think EMA is a great thing, but I have a problem. E.g. a 17 year old boy who needs the help can't get it because he wasn't born in the year 1988. I feel that anyone who attends college for the first time should be entitled and this should not be affected by which year they were born.”

“The EMA is not fair. I have a friend whose parents choose not to work and so is eligible for £20 EMA. My parents have to work because they aren't entitled to benefits therefore disqualifying myself from EMA. The allowance shouldn't be available to those who choose not to work.”

“The EMA system is unfair because the people entitled for the money don't always get any of it. Household expenditure should be assessed and more money paid to those who have high council tax, dietary needs, lots of children etc.”

6.3 Other common comments related to the levels of financial support:

“I believe training allowances should be raised. When doing things such as Modern Apprenticeships, parents stop receiving money. This can put a lot of pressure onto the young person to make ends meet.”

“Everyone should get money for staying at school even if it's only £10.”

6.4 And finally there were comments about the consultation process itself:

“On face value it appears that the Government is making a real effort here and I am happy to have helped.”

7. Conclusions

7.1 If we relate the findings from our research back to the research objectives and the original consultation questions, we can reach a number of conclusions.

7.2 *Question 3:*

The majority of young people still believe that the fairest way for the Government to recognise de facto independence and decide if a young person really needs direct financial support is to investigate the young person's circumstances before paying them any money. However, there was also significant support for the idea of the Government seeking the advice of an independent person who knows the individual, such as a Connexions worker, youth worker or school/college.

Many young people did believe that easier access to direct financial support would encourage young people to leave home earlier. They had concerns that young people may leave home before they fully understood the implications of starting your own home and may lose out on financial and emotional support.

However, there were some alternative scenarios proposed where young people may move out of the family home but remain close to parents and carers and the support structure they provide. Some options were proposed under which young people's access to the support could be moderated or which would involve parents or carers and young people sharing the money.

7.3 *Question 4:*

Young people felt that their move to independence was an individual process and difficult to categorise. They saw the three most important

factors defining their independence were living away from home, being financially independent and being employed.

They wanted to retain the present circumstances in which young people should be treated as independent, for example when they are in full-time employment or have had to leave home. Participants suggested that there were a number of other circumstances when young people should be recognised as independent, in addition to cases of estrangement from the family home. These included young people who are studying away from home, those with their own families and young people aged over 19 who would shortly begin to receive financial support for learning.

7.4 *Questions 5/6:*

As noted above finance was an important factor defining young people's independence. The majority of young people believed that an income threshold would be a better measure of financial independence than the number of hours worked. They believed that, because it was possible to work in excess of 25 hours yet earn very little, including through full-time training, an income threshold was less likely to distort young people's learning routes.

However, some respondents, particularly those who already had experience of employment, noted that for young people working part-time, both hours and money can vary each week and that hours can be easier to keep track of than money.

7.5 *Question 7/8:*

Young people identified a range of worthwhile activities that may help to develop skills or personal problems and challenges and, which in addition to education and training, should be eligible for support. The top two themes within the activities they suggested were volunteering and community action, and sports. A significant number also felt that their engagement in

leisure pursuits should qualify, as should life skills programmes and informal education. This may be significant in the light of recommendations of the Working Group on 14-19 Reform to encourage young people to engage in wider activities.

When prompted with ideas they also supported periods when young people are between periods of learning, combining part-time learning with other responsibilities such as parenting, caring or employment and activities to help remove barriers to learning and work.

Many young people felt that it was a good idea to have a system where these activities are personally negotiated with the young person, taking account of their individual needs and circumstances. However, it was recognised that this may be too cumbersome a process for every person and that a list of commonly approved activities may be useful. Young people suggested that their activities could be approved by a professional worker who knows them, such as Connexions workers, youth workers, trainers/instructors and activity supervisors.

Young people were cautious about suggesting fixed time limits for activities as, as they could vary greatly. However, the broad consensus was that it could be of a comparable length to that for a period of education and training.

7.6 Question 9:

Most young people could see the benefits of a single system of financial support for 16-19 year olds if doing this would mean it was easier to know what financial support they were entitled to and make it easier to access.

The majority of young people agreed with the inclusion of, in order of greatest support: Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit for young people who are parents themselves; Housing Benefit; Disability Living Allowance; childcare costs; travel costs.

Young people who had or were likely to benefit from a particular stream of financial support were particularly likely to support its inclusion in the single system.

Young people understood that a single system of support may be more complex and suggested that forms should be as simple as possible, avoid duplication and with sections that could be disregarded if not applicable. There were also concerns that a single system of financial support should not mean changes to the conditions under which streams of support are given.

Appendix A

‘FUNDING YOUR FUTURE’ FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM GOVERNMENT QUESTIONNAIRE FOR 16-19 YEAR OLDS

*Please can you read and complete this questionnaire - it will take about
10 minutes to complete.*

What is this questionnaire about?

Article 12 Young People’s Organisation and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services have been commissioned by the Government to consult young people across the UK on the money they and their families receive from the Government. The Government wants to ensure that all young people have the financial support and incentives they need to take part in education or training after they reach 16, so that they can gain the skills and qualifications they need to find good jobs in later life.

Funding your future

The money that young people and their parents get from the Government is a complicated business. In fact, some people would say it's a bit of a mess. There are too many different bits of money, given out by different people, according to different rules.

The Government knows there's a problem and is trying to put things right. Some things are being fixed right now. But it would also be good to build a new system that is easy to use and really helps young people, whatever is going on in their lives, to get on in life.

Where we are now

From September this year, if you are living at home and going to school or college, the Government will give you a new package of financial help. The money will come in two parts.

- The Government will give your parents some money to help them support you (Child Benefit, for example).
- And they will give some cash directly to you, as long as you turn up at college every week and the money coming into your house isn't already above a certain level. (This is called EMA - Education Maintenance Allowance. It can be worth up to £30 a week and is already available in one third of the country.)

Most people seem to agree that this looks like a good deal.

But not every young person is living at home and going to college.

If you are in that position, getting money to cover basic costs is much trickier.

And so is getting money to make staying on in education and training feel like a good option.

Over the page are two examples of how tricky and unfair the system can be.



GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES

If you have been forced to leave home and need to get state benefits to help you get by, first you have to register with Connexions/the careers service.

Lots of young people don't know about this rule, so you may go direct to the local Job Centre Plus office. You will probably be told to go to Connexions/the careers service.

Then you've got to go to back to Job Centre Plus and set up an appointment with them.

Next you've got to convince the Job Centre that you have left home for a good reason and are not just trying it on.

It can all take time and get very confusing with lots of people asking you for information, proof of what you are saying, and so on.

If you are in the middle of a crisis about where you are going to live and how you are going to cope, things can get really hard to manage.

A FAIR DEAL?

If you want to do work-based learning, you will spend most of your time learning on the job but also spend some time in college. You may not get wages but a training allowance instead. This allowance currently comes to about £40 a week, in most cases.

You will also be seen as "independent" in the eyes of the benefits system.

This means that, if you are living at home, your parents can no longer get Child Benefit, for instance. If you are living away from home, your training allowance will count against your Income Support, if you are getting that.

On the other hand, if you decide to do full time education at college, you will still be seen as depending on your parents, who will be able to carry on getting Child Benefit or Child Tax Credit and so on. If you are away from home and in full time education, you will be entitled to claim income support in your own right.

Keeping in mind that you may also have a right to get EMA if you are at college, the overall amount of money that comes with doing full time education is much bigger than the amount that comes with lots of work-based learning.

This doesn't seem fair. It could make people choose a course based on the money they can get rather than what really suits them.

How things are getting better

The Government is now trying to put some of these things right.

- They are working out new ways for Connexions/the careers service and Job Centre Plus to act together in the best interests of young people. Staff in Job Centre Plus will be getting new guidelines on how to respond better the situations young people can find themselves in.
- In the near future, young people doing work-based learning will have the same entitlements to Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Income Support as young people in full time education.

Where we need to think big

The Government is also trying to build a new system that is simpler and fairer all round. This is where you come in. There are some big questions that we need to find answers to and the Government would like to hear what you think.

Something for something

The Government will not usually give money to the parents of young people who are simply doing nothing. At the moment, young people and their families can get money if they are in education or training or, in some cases, looking for work. Some people in special circumstances also get money e.g. young parents and carers.

But some young people, for lots of reasons, might not be in a position to go on a full-time course or get an apprenticeship. The Government might be willing to provide money for other worthwhile activities which help a young person to develop skills or tackle personal problems and challenges. What other things that young people do to get on in life should the Government support with some money? What would you think of money going to young people who were volunteering, for instance? Do you have other ideas?

1) Please try to list at least three activities other than formal study or training which you think the Government should support with money

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Do you have any other comments or ideas?

Independence

When a young person becomes “independent”, the money to their parents stops and they are more likely to need to get money directly from the Government.

But what does being “independent” mean? Is it something to do with your age, who you live with, how much you earn, what you are studying, the things that have happened in your life? How should the Government decide that someone is actually independent?

2) Please list at least three circumstances in which you think a young person should be treated as independent.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Leaving home

If someone aged 16 or 17 has to leave their family home because they can no longer live with their parents or carers, the Government will stop paying money to the parents/carers and instead give it to the individual directly, to help with essential things such as food and accommodation. But these young people often have difficulty getting financial help quickly because they need to provide evidence to the Jobcentre that staying at home would cause them physical or emotional harm. The Government wants to find a way of providing support more quickly to young people who really need it. But it doesn't want to encourage young people to leave their family home unless it's really in their best interests. And it also doesn't want to make it easier for people to cheat the system and claim money when they can still rely on their parents for support.

3) Which do you think would be the fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs direct financial support? (Please tick one answer)

The Government should investigate the young person's circumstances before paying them any money

The Government should start paying the money straight away, and then check if the young person really needs it

The Government should ask the advice of an independent person who knows the individual (e.g. Connexions worker, youth worker, school/college)

The young person should be trusted to say if they need direct support

4) If direct financial support was made easier to obtain, do you think it would encourage young people to leave their family home earlier?

Yes

No

5) What are your reasons for both answers above?

Financial independence

Many young people who are still studying or training also earn some money, for example from EMA, a training allowance or by working part-time. But they will probably still rely on their parents to pay for most of their living costs, such as food and accommodation. Other young people who have gone into full-time work or a waged apprenticeship earn enough money to pay their own way, and are no longer dependent on their parents for financial support. The Government needs to find a way of deciding when a young person becomes financially independent, at which point it will no longer pay money to the parents.

There are two possible ways of deciding this. The first would be to look at the number of hours the young person works, for example anyone working over 25 hours a week would be treated as financially independent (this is how the current system works).

But different jobs and training programmes pay different hourly rates, so it might be fairer to decide by looking at the young person's total weekly earnings. An income limit could be set, for example of £70 a week, and anyone earning over this amount is treated as financially independent. But it might be more complicated to keep track of how much money you earn each week, rather than just the number of hours you work.

6) Do you think the Government should decide when a young person is financially independent by setting a limit of the number of hours worked, or the amount of money earned?

Hours

Money

7) What are your reasons for your answer? Any other ideas for how the Government should decide if a young person is financially independent?

Keeping it simple

The Government wants to end up with a system that's easy to use for young people in all kinds of situations. Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money – benefits, tax credits, money to cover specific things like childcare – in one pot? Your money would then come from a single source, but imagine the size of the form you and your parents would have to fill in and keep up to date!

Or would it make sense to have separate streams of money. This might mean simpler forms to keep track of - but maybe more of them and more difficult for you and your parents to know what you are entitled to.

If you have any ideas about what should and should not go into a simpler system, the Government would like to hear them.

8) Which of the following specialist types of financial support should be included in any single system of support?

	Include	Leave out	Don't know
Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit for young people who are parents themselves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Childcare costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability Living Allowance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Travel costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Housing Benefit	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

9) Why did you give the answers you did?

10) Are there any other types of financial support that you think should or shouldn't be included in a single system?

11) Can you think of a better way?

And finally

The Government has already found out a lot about the system really works for young people. But it can never know enough. If you have experience of getting money from the Government - good or bad - it could help in building a better system. So please let us know.

12) Is there anything else you would like to say that is not already covered in the previous questions?

About you...

To ensure that the Government receives feedback and the opinions of a wide and diverse group of people, we need to monitor some information about you. This information is kept confidential and you can choose not to complete it if you prefer.

13) What is your age? (Please tick)

14	<input type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	19	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	21	<input type="checkbox"/>

14) Are you? (Please tick)

Male Female

15) How would you describe your ethnicity? (Please tick)

White British	<input type="checkbox"/>	White European	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

16) Would you describe yourself as having a disability? (Please tick)

Yes No

17) Where do you live? (Please tick)

Urban (inner city/town) Rural (country side/village)

18) What would you describe as being your main activity? (Please tick one box which indicates your primary commitment or activity e.g. if you are on summer holidays but normally go to school/college, tick education)

Education (at school or college) only	<input type="checkbox"/>	Full time education (at school/college) together with part-time work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work based training (e.g. apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship scheme)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employment combined with part-time study	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Currently not working and not studying or training	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		

19) What are your living arrangements? (Please tick)

Living with parents/carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Living in local authority care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independent (for example living by yourself or with your own partner/child / friends.)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

20) Are you entitled to free school meals? (Please tick)

Yes No

21) Have you ever considered yourself as homeless?

Yes No

22) Have you ever been in care?

Yes No

So, what next?

This questionnaire is part of a wider Government consultation on financial support for young people. It is very important that the views of young people feed directly into the consultation and so we appreciate the time you have taken to complete this questionnaire you taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Your answers will be put together with the answers from other young people to come up with a report for the Government. They will use your responses to help them decide what to do next.

For a copy of the results from this questionnaire, please write your details below:

Name

Email or postal address

We will also be running two fun and interactive workshops for people who would like to explore the issues in the questionnaire in more depth. These are on:

1st September in Newcastle; and

9 September in London.

We will pay for your travel costs and give you a £5 voucher as a thank you for your time. If you would like to book a place contact Karen on 020 7253 1010 or karen@ncvys.org.uk

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire

Please return your completed questionnaire to Karen Dickson at:

**NCVYS, Second Floor, Solecast House, 13-27 Brunswick Place, London N1 6DX or
email karen@ncvys.org.uk**

by 6 September 2004

Appendix B

Tables of Questionnaire Data

2.4 Demographics

Table 2.1 – Age

<i>Age</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
14 or under	12.2
15	20.8
16	10.3
17	23.1
18	10.1
19	6.5
20	3.1
21	3.9

Table 2.2 – Gender

<i>Gender</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Male	41.2
Female	58.8

Table 2.3 – Ethnicity

<i>Ethnicity</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
White British	77.4
White European	2.1
Black Caribbean	5.8
Irish	1.1
Black African	4.2
Black Other	1.1
Indian	1.3
Chinese	0.8
Bangladeshi	1.1
Mixed Race	3.9
Other	1.3

Table 2.4 – Disability

<i>Disability</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	8.2
No	91.8

Table 2.5 – Area

<i>Area</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Urban (inner city/town)	85.4
Rural (countryside/village)	14.6

Table 2.6 – Main daily activity

<i>Main Daily Activity</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Education (at school or college) only	47.7
Full time education (at school or college) together with part-time work	20.1
Work based training (e.g. apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship scheme)	16.6
Employment combined with part-time study	1.3
Employment	8.8
Currently not working and not studying or training	5.4

Table 2.7 – Living arrangements

<i>Living arrangements</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Living with parents/carers	85.9
Living in local authority care	3.8
Independent (living by yourself or with your own partner/child/friend)	10.3

Table 2.8 – Free school meals

<i>Free school meals</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	16.3
No	83.7

Table 2.9 – Homeless

<i>Homeless</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	13.3
No	85.7

Table 2.10 – Been in care

<i>Been in care</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Yes	10.1
No	89.9

3 Something for something

Table 3.1

<i>Activities other than formal study or training which you think the Government should support with money?</i>	Percentage
Hobbies, leisure & recreation – including fitness	13.6
Life skills & informal education – including programmes for young parents, crime prevention, health education, sex education, peer mentoring, Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Outward Bound courses.	12.2
Music & arts	1.8
Sports – including providing training for others related activities	24.4
Volunteer work – including international service and projects, formal volunteering for a charity e.g. Groundwork or BTVC, Millennium Volunteers	20.8
Community action – including local community projects, local events, setting up/sitting on youth forums	3.9
Counselling & advice – including pre education and employment advice	2.9
Carers – such as looking after family members	3.9
Setting up new businesses	1.8
Funding between education and employment – including job searching, allowances to help disabled people into education or employment	2.5
Training & education – including internships and apprenticeships	8.2
Others	3.9

4 Independence

Table 4.1 – Independence

<i>Circumstances in which you think a young person should be treated as independent?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Employment	9.2
Living away from home	40.1
Have to leave home – estranged from family	2.4
Becoming homeless	1.7
Financially independent – not relying on parents/carers for support	17.5
Budget skills	1
Physically & emotionally independent	6.8
Becoming a young parent/guardian	5.1
Having responsibilities	0.7
Education	4.1
Not in/leaving education	1
Age	6.8
Others – including leaving care	3.4

Table 4.2 – Leaving home

<i>Which do you think would be the fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs direct financial support?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
The Government should investigate the young person's circumstances before paying them any money	42.5
The Government should start paying the money straight away, and then check if the young person needs it	12.9
The Government should ask the advice of an independent person who knows the individual (e.g. Connexions worker, youth worker, school/college)	32.7
The young person should be trusted to say if they need direct support	11.9

Table 4.3 – Financial support

<i>If direct financial support was made easier to obtain, do you think it would encourage young people to leave their family home earlier?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Would encourage	67.4
Wouldn't encourage	32.6

Table 4.4 – Financial independence

<i>Do you think the Government should decide when a young person is financially independent by setting a limit on the number of hours worked, or amount of money earned?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Hours	33.8
Money	66.2

5 Keeping it simple

Table 5.1

<i>Which of the following specialist types of financial support should be included in any single system of support?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>		
	<i>Include</i>	<i>Don't include</i>	<i>Don't know</i>
Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit for young people who are parents	75.8	7.3	16.8
Childcare costs	63.8	12.8	23.4
Disability Living Allowance	66.9	9.2	23.4
Travel costs	55	21	24
Housing Benefit	68.2	12.5	19.3

'FUNDING YOUR FUTURE'

Supporting young people to achieve: towards a new deal for skills

Consultation pack for facilitators of the focus groups

Introduction:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in our consultation with young people regarding the financial help young people aged 16-19 get from the Government. HM Treasury, the government department responsible for making decisions about the country's economy and its finances, has asked the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) and Article 12 to carry out this consultation.

Suggested method:

We would like you to conduct a 90 minute consultation workshop with about 10 young people from your organisation between the ages of 16-19. However, anyone aged 14-21 who wants to can take part.

We have included a tool kit that contains detailed information and materials on how to conduct the session, which can be conducted by you, a youth worker, or by a couple of young people.

The consultation workshop should include the following:

- A brief introduction about why you are conducting the workshop
- Exercises around a series of questions which will seek to find out what the young people think about:
 - What things that young people do to get on in life should the Government support with some money?
 - When does a young person become "independent"?
 - Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money that young people can receive– benefits, tax credits, money to cover specific things like childcare - in one pot?
- An evaluation of the workshop.

Resources:

- 1-2 Facilitator (a youth worker or a couple of young people).
- Tool Kit
- Agenda
- Badges
- Pens, index-cards/post-it notes/paper/exercise materials
- £100 to spend on venue hire, refreshments and rewards for the young people

Suggested timings:

- Welcome and Introduction 5 mins
- Session one: Icebreaker 10 mins
- Session two: Something for something 15 mins
- Session three: Independence 15 mins
- BREAK 5 mins
- Session four: Keeping it simple 15 mins
- Close and Evaluation 10 mins

Suggested logistics:

- The consultation workshop should be held somewhere familiar to the young people
- Room configuration – the participants could sit in a semi-circle
- A flipchart should be placed at the head with the facilitator sitting/standing to the side
- Refreshments – drinks and snacks can be placed on a table, in the semi-circle, so that people do not need to disturb the group discussion, by leaving the circle
- Name badges should be distributed to participants, as part of the icebreaker/ introduction session
- 1-2 Facilitators, leading the discussion, supporting, taking notes, and ensuring that the logistics run smoothly.

Recording information:

The young people through the use of post-it notes and flipcharts will record many of the exercise discussions. But the facilitator will also need to make notes throughout the workshop – this information can then be sent back to NCVYS/Article 12 in the envelope provided.

There will also be a monitoring form to record the demographics of the young people in the workshop – please ensure that the young people complete these and as above please return these to NCVY/Article 12 in the envelope provided.

Additional support:

A member of NCVYS/Article 12 staff will call you to talk through this guidance to ensure that you are confident about how to conduct the consultation workshop. We will need to have all the responses in by the **6 September**. If you have questions or queries please do not hesitate to call **Kevin Munday on 020 7253 1010** or email **kevin@ncvys.org.uk**

Purpose: Welcome/thank everyone for coming to the workshop and to introduce what the consultation workshop is all about. Give out copies of the 'Funding your Future' handout.

Lead facilitator instructions:

Go through the PowerPoint or OHP presentation using the notes provided.

Show posters 1 showing the current system and poster 2 showing the proposed model. Ask participants if they recognise their own experience in the current system and what that is like. Record any personal stories.

The following background information may also be useful to give:

- ***What is this consultation workshop about?***

The Government is committed to ensuring that all young people reach the age of 19 ready for higher education or skilled employment. Her Majesty's Treasury, the part of Government responsible for achieving a better quality of life with money and jobs for all people, has written a report called 'Supporting young people to achieve'. The report describes short and long-term steps the Government is taking to ensure opportunities for all young people.

The Treasury is seeking to find out what young people think about:

- When does a young person become "independent"?
- What things that young people do to get on in life should the Government support with some money?
- Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money that young people can receive— benefits, tax credits, money to cover specific things like childcare - in one pot?

Explain that the next 90 minutes will be spent discussing these questions a series of questions:

- Invite them to ask questions as you go along
- Encourage the group to discuss the questions amongst themselves – to talk to and listen to each other
- All answers given by the group will be recorded
- Once all the questions have been asked the facilitator will conclude by giving a summary of the major points in the discussion and ask the group for feedback, to ensure they are happy with the recorded notes.

- ***Why are we asking you?***

The National Council for Voluntary Youth Services/Article 12 have asked us to run this workshop and they will feedback your views to the Treasury and tell them what you think. The Treasury is also carrying out consultation events with other people and organisations working with young people.

- ***What are my comments going to be used for?***

Your answers will be put together with the answers from other people, to help the Treasury decide how they are going to run this funding system for young people.

Handout 1

FUNDING YOUR FUTURE

The money that young people and their parents get from the Government is a complicated business. In fact, some people would say it's a bit of a mess. There are too many different bits of money, given out by different people, according to different rules.

The Government knows there's a problem and is trying to put things right. Some things are being fixed right now. But it would also be good to build a new system that is easy to use and really helps young people, whatever is going on in their lives, to get on in life.

Where we are now

From September this year, if you are living at home and going to school or college, the Government will give you a new package of financial help. The money will come in two parts.

- The Government will give your parents some money to help them support you (Child Benefit, for example).
- And they will give some cash directly to you, as long as you turn up at school or college every week and the money coming into your house isn't already above a certain level. (This is called EMA - Education Maintenance Allowance. It can be worth up to £30 a week and is already available in one third of the country.)

Most people seem to agree that this looks like a good deal.

But not every young person is living at home and going to school or college.

If you are in that position, getting money to cover basic costs is much trickier.

And so is getting money to make staying on in education and training feel like a good option.

Here are two examples of how tricky and unfair the system can be.

GOING AROUND IN CIRCLES

If you have been forced to leave home and need to get state benefits to help you get by, first you have to register with Connexions/the careers service.

Lots of young people don't know about this rule, so you may go direct to the local Job Centre Plus office. You will probably be told to go to Connexions/the careers service.

Then you've got to go to back to Job Centre Plus and set up an appointment with them.

Next you've got to convince the Job Centre that you have left home for a good reason and are not just trying it on.

It can all take time and get very confusing with lots of people asking you for information, proof of what you are saying, and so on.

If you are in the middle of a crisis about where you are going to live and how you are going to cope, things can get really hard to manage.

A FAIR DEAL?

If you want to do work-based learning, you will spend most of your time learning on the job but also spend some time in college. You may not get wages but a training allowance instead. This allowance currently comes to about £40 a week, in most cases.

You will also be seen as "independent" in the eyes of the benefits system.

This means that, if you are living at home, your parents can no longer get Child Benefit, for instance. If you are living away from home, your training allowance will count against your Income Support, if you are getting that.

On the other hand, if you decide to do full time education at school or college, you will still be seen as depending on your parents, who will be able to carry on getting Child Benefit or Child Tax Credit and so on. If you are away from home and in full time education, you will be entitled to claim income support in your own right.

Keeping in mind that you may also have a right to get EMA, the overall amount of money that comes with doing full time education is much bigger than the amount that comes with lots of work-based learning.

This doesn't seem fair. It could make people choose a course based on the money they can get rather than what really suits them.

How things are getting better

The Government is now trying to put some of these things right.

- They are working out new ways for Connexions/the careers service and Job Centre Plus to act together in the best interests of young people. Staff in Job Centre Plus will be getting new guidelines on how to respond better the situations young people can find themselves in.
- In the near future, young people doing work-based learning will have the same entitlements to Child Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Income Support as young people in full time education.

Where we need to think big

The Government is also trying to build a new system that is simpler and fairer all round. This is where you come in. There are some big questions that we need to find answers to and the Government would like to hear what you think.

Session One: Ice breaker

Purpose: To start with something fun and get everyone moving and talking.

Lead Facilitator Instructions: Explain the aims of the ice breaker:

- To help everyone to get to know each other
- Helps everyone relax and get into chatting mode

Activity	Time
Introductions – names, where we're from etc	5 minutes
Divide into groups of two or three; these will be working groups for the next activity. Game in small groups Example: <i>or use your own</i> Each person tells the others three things about themselves two things are true and one is false, the others in the group have to guess what the one false thing is.	5 minutes

Materials

Name badges

Session Two: Something for something

Purpose: To find out what things that young people do to get on in life should the Government support with some money.

Lead facilitator notes:

SOMETHING FOR SOMETHING

The Government will not usually give money to the parents of young people who are simply doing nothing. At the moment, young people and their families can get money if they are in education or training or, in some cases, looking for work. Some people in special circumstances also get money e.g. young parents and carers.

But some young people, for lots of different reasons, might not be in a position to go on a full-time course or get an apprenticeship. What other things that young people do to get on in life should the Government support with some money? What would you think of money going to young people who were volunteering, for instance? Do you have other ideas?

Discussion guide:

Activity	Time
Read out or paraphrase the facilitator's notes above.	2 minutes
Opinions and experiences Ask participants what think about the idea of offering support to young people for activities other than education and training? Is this an issue they have come across themselves, where support for other activities might have been useful for them? Record any personal stories.	3 minutes
Ideas Brainstorm Exercise Split the group into two. Give the young people some post-it notes. In their groups, ask the young people to think about what types of activities other than formal study or training, which they think the Government should support with money and to write each idea onto a post-it note. If participants struggle to come up with any ideas, show them handout 2. Please note that this only contains a few suggestions. Once they have done this bring them back into the main group and read out their ideas for activities one-by-one.	5 minutes

For each activity ask the whole group:

1. Why they think the Government should support it;
2. Whether there are any conditions that should be imposed? (E.g. time limit, Any particular age range or groups of young people).

Questions

The facilitator should explain that the Government is thinking of a system whereby young people not in mainstream learning pathways or activities are negotiated with the young person, because young people vary so much in their interests and abilities.

Is it a good idea to have a system where these activities are personally negotiated with the young person, taking account of their individual needs and circumstances?

Is it better to focus on meeting specific individual goals and learning outcomes, rather than working from a prescriptive list of approved activities?

How should an activity agreement be drawn up between the Government and the young person?

5 minutes

Method of Recording

The facilitator should note down next to each post in note on the flipchart paper - the young peoples answers to the three additional questions.

Materials

Post-it notes
Flipchart paper
Marker pens

Session Three: Independence

Purpose: To find out when young people think that they become “independent”.

Lead Facilitator instructions:

This session has 3 separate discussions around the issue of independence.

1 INDEPENDENCE

When a young person becomes “independent”, the money to their parents stops and they are more likely to need to get money directly from the Government.

But what does being “independent” mean? Is it something to do with your age, who you live with, how much you earn, what you are studying, the things that have happened in your life? How should the Government decide that someone is actually independent?

2 LEAVING HOME

If someone aged 16 or 17 has to leave their family home because they can no longer live with their parents or carers, the Government will stop paying money to the parents/carers and instead give it to the individual directly, to help with essential things such as food and accommodation. But these young people often have difficulty getting financial help quickly because they need to provide evidence to the Jobcentre that staying at home would cause them physical or emotional harm. The Government wants to find a way of providing support more quickly to young people who really need it. But it doesn't want to encourage young people to leave their family home unless it's really in their best interests. And it also doesn't want to make it easier for people to cheat the system and claim money when they can still rely on their parents for support.

3 FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE

Many young people who are still studying or training also earn some money, for example from EMA, a training allowance or by working part-time. But they will probably still rely on their parents to pay for most of their living costs, such as food and accommodation. Other young people who have gone into full-time work or a waged apprenticeship earn enough money to pay their own way, and are no longer dependent on their parents for financial support. The Government needs to find a way of deciding when a young person becomes financially independent, at which point it will no longer pay money to the parents.

There are two possible ways of deciding this. The first would be to look at the number of hours the young person works, for example anyone working over 25 hours a week would be treated as financially independent (this is how the current system works).

But different jobs and training programmes pay different hourly rates, so it might be fairer to decide by looking at the young person's total weekly earnings. An income limit could be set, for example of £70 a week, and anyone earning over this amount is treated as financially independent. But it might be more complicated to keep track of how much money you earn each week, rather than just the number of hours you work.

Discussion Guide

Activity	Time
<p>INDEPENDENCE</p> <p>Read out or paraphrase the text above under 'independence'.</p> <p>Ask young people to write on post-it notes circumstances in which think a young person should be treated as independent. If they find it easier encourage them to discuss this in pairs.</p> <p>If participants struggle to come up with any ideas, show them handout 3. Please note that this only contains a few suggestions.</p> <p>Once they have written up their ideas, ask them to stick them onto a pick of flip chart paper or onto the wall.</p> <p>One of the facilitators should read out the ideas one at a time cluster together any repeated ones.</p> <p>Ask participants to think about which of the circumstances they agree mean independence. Hand out sticky dots and ask participants to stick one next to each of the circumstances they agree with.</p> <p>Encourage discussion amongst the group about why. Record the key points from the discussion.</p>	5 minutes
<p>LEAVING HOME</p> <p>Read out or paraphrase the information above under leaving home.</p> <p>Discuss with the young people what they think would be the fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs direct financial support.</p> <p>If participants struggle to come up with any ideas, show the handout 4.</p> <p>Record answers and why.</p> <p>Discuss if direct financial support was made easier to obtain, if they think it would encourage young people to leave their family home earlier.</p> <p>Again record answers and why.</p>	5 minutes
<p>FINANCIAL INDEPENDENCE</p> <p>Read out or paraphrase the text above under 'financial independence'.</p>	5 minutes

Discuss if participants think the Government should decide when a young person is financially independent by setting a limit of the number of hours worked, or the amount of money earned.	
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Record the reasons for their answers.

Ask if there are any other ideas for how the Government should decide if a young person is financially independent.

Method of Recording

The young people will record their answers on the post-it notes and the facilitator should also take notes of the discussion.

Materials

Post-it notes

Pens or felt markers

Flip chart paper

BREAK FOR 5 MINUTES

Session Four: Keeping it simple

Purpose: To find out if the young people think that it makes sense to put all the different sources of money – benefits, tax credits, money to cover specific things like childcare - in one pot?

Lead facilitator instructions:

KEEPING IT SIMPLE

The Government wants to end up with a system that's easy to use for young people in all kinds of situations.

Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money – benefits, tax credits, money to cover specific things like childcare - in one pot? Your money would then come from a single source, but imagine the size of the form you and your parents would have to fill in and keep up to date!

Or would it make sense to have separate streams of money. This might mean simpler forms to keep track of - but maybe more of them and more difficult for you and your parents to know what your are entitled to.

If you have any ideas about what should and should not go into a simpler system, the Government would like to hear them.

Discussion Guide

Activities	Time
Read out or paraphrase the text above	2 minutes
Ideas Avalanche Exercise	
Each of the types of financial support on Handout 5 should be written on flipchart paper and stuck on the wall.	5 minutes
Split the group into pairs. Each pair should have some post-it notes for this exercise	
Ask each pair to discuss under each of the types of support if they think it should be included in any single system of support and why.	
Explain that this isn't about whether these activities should be supported as they will all continue. The choice is where it would make life easier if all support was paid from the same source, following the same criteria or if it would be better to keep some payments separate.	
If they think it should they should be included they should write why on a green post-it note. If they think no they should write	

why on a red post-it note. If they don't know they should write why on a yellow post-it note.

Ask the young people to write down their answers on the post-it notes and stick them on the board.

5 minutes

Ask the group to come back together and discuss as a group what is written on the post-it notes.

Record any additional discussion.

3 minutes

Ask if there are there any other types of financial support that you think should or shouldn't be included in a single system.

Ask if they can think of any different or better ways?

Method of Recording

The young people will record their answers on the post-it notes and the facilitator should also take notes of the discussion.

Materials

Post-it notes

Pens or felt markers

Flip chart paper

Close of the workshop

5 minutes

If there is time left, the facilitator should ask the young people if there are any questions that were not asked, but think should have been asked.

What do participants make of the information they have seen? What has struck them as the most important issues? Which of the suggested changes to the system do they think will make the most difference?

With everyone in a circle, the facilitators should do a brief sum up of the workshop and thanking the young people for attending.

Evaluation: Paper Balls

5 minutes

Purpose: Sharing thoughts on how the workshop went.

Participants write down one observation of the day on a piece of paper, scrunch it into a ball and throw it into a circle to be read out.

PLEASE REMIND THE YOUNG PEOPLE TO COMPLETE THE MONITORING FORM AND HAND IT BACK IN BEFORE THEY LEAVE.

'FUNDING YOUR FUTURE'

Supporting young people to achieve: towards a new deal for skills

Monitoring Form

To ensure that the Government receives feedback and the opinions of a wide and diverse group of people, we need to monitor some information about you. This information is kept confidential and you can choose not to complete it if you prefer.

Please tick the boxes that best describe you:

13) What is your age? *(Please tick)*

14	<input type="checkbox"/>	18	<input type="checkbox"/>
15	<input type="checkbox"/>	19	<input type="checkbox"/>
16	<input type="checkbox"/>	20	<input type="checkbox"/>
17	<input type="checkbox"/>	21	<input type="checkbox"/>

14) Are you? *(Please tick)*

Male Female

15) How would you describe your ethnicity? *(Please tick)*

White British	<input type="checkbox"/>	White European	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black Caribbean	<input type="checkbox"/>	Irish	<input type="checkbox"/>
Black African	<input type="checkbox"/>	Black Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mixed Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

16) Would you describe yourself as having a disability? *(Please tick)*

Yes No

17) Where do you live? (Please tick)

Urban (inner city/town) Rural (country side/village)

18) What would you describe as being your main activity? (Please tick one box which indicates your primary commitment or activity e.g. if you are on summer holidays but normally go to school/college, tick education)

Education (at school or college) only	<input type="checkbox"/>	Full time education (at school/college) together with part-time work	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work based training (e.g. apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship scheme)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Employment combined with part-time study	<input type="checkbox"/>
Employment	<input type="checkbox"/>	Currently not working and not studying or training	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>		

19) What are your living arrangements? (Please tick)

Living with parents/carers	<input type="checkbox"/>	Living in local authority care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Independent (for example living by yourself or with your own partner/child / friends.)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

20) Are you entitled to free school meals? (Please tick)

Yes No

21) Have you ever considered yourself as homeless?

Yes No

22) Have you ever been in care?

Yes No

Suggestion of approved activities

Activities to develop learning and skills, for example:

- volunteering
- informal learning
- periods when the young person is waiting for a course to begin (e.g. if they have switched courses)
- combining part-time learning with other responsibilities, e.g. parenting, caring, employment

Activities to help remove barriers to working and learning, for example:

- finding accommodation if homeless
- sessions with a child psychologist to overcome personal problems
- Behavioural skills course for young offenders

In what circumstances do you think a young person should be treated as independent?

Young people who are parents (though still living at home)

Young people who are married (though still living at home)

Young people who are living at home or with a relative, but do not receive any financial support.

Young people who have to live away from home because their course of study is located elsewhere.

HANDOUT 4

Which do you think would be the fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs direct financial support?

The Government should investigate the young person's circumstances before paying them any money

The Government should start paying the money straight away, and then check if the young person really needs it

The Government should ask the advice of an independent person who knows the individual (e.g. Connexions worker, youth worker, school/college)

The young person should be trusted to say if they need direct support

Which of the following specialist types of financial support should be included in any single system of support?

Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit for young people who are parents themselves

Childcare costs e.g. Care to Learn

Disability Living Allowance

Other costs of learning e.g. travel costs, books, equipment, exam fees, visits

Housing Benefit

Appendix D

Focus Groups write-ups

1 Kent and Medway VSU Youth in Action Focus Group

Demographics

Although ten young people participated in the focus group only eight were recorded on monitoring form. The young people were aged between 16 and 21, three 16 year olds, three 17 year olds, one 18 year old and one 21 year old. Three were male and five were female. Seven young people classed themselves as White British and one did not answer. Five young people defined themselves as coming from an inner city area, two from a rural area and one was unsure. Five young people described their main activity as Education (at school or college) only; one young person each described their main activity as Full time education (at school/college) together with part-time work, Work based training (e.g. apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship scheme) and Currently not working and not studying or training respectively.

None of the young people described themselves as having a disability. All of the young people described their living arrangements as living with parents/carers. None of the young people describe themselves as being entitled to free school meals, considered themselves as homeless or having been in care.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Bonus for doing 100 hours of volunteering when not in education, employment or training
- Too easy option
- Travelling expenses to job or school can cost a lot of money and help would have been useful
- Helping in the community
- Help homeless find accommodation
- Travel costs for training/education
- Vouchers for young parents

Is it a good idea to have a system where these activities are personally negotiated with the young people taking account of their needs and circumstances?

- Yes a good thing as long as it is confidential.

Is it better to focus on meeting specific individual goals and learning outcomes, rather than working from a prospective list of approved activities?

- Yes all agreed.

How should the activity agreement be drawn up between the Government and the young person?

- Attendance based.
- Confidential.
- Through careers Personal Advisors, Connexions, youth centres, leaflets, newspapers and shopping centres,
- More information on what the Connexions Service is and how it can help you.

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

- Independence is not to do with age
- Could sign something to say you are financially independent.
- If you are in full time education or training and still living at home.
- Parents could stop paying for the person if they go to University.
- Should give money to student or worker not parent.
- Different situations.
- Cost of living.
- Type of area you live in.
- Sit down with the person and talk about their financial situation.
- Individual situation.

Circumstances that make a young person independent

Young people who are parents (though still living at home)

- Yes treated as an adult.

Young people who are married (though still living at home)

- Yes independent.

Young people who are living at home or with a relative, but do not receive any financial support

- Depends on what they are doing.

Young people who live away from home because their course is located elsewhere

- Yes receive money when away but not at home.

Leaving home - Fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs direct financial support

The Government should investigate the young person's circumstances before paying them any money

- Not really

The Government should start paying the money straight away, and then check if the young person really needs it.

- Not cash – coupons or swipe card system only to be used in accredited places

The Government should ask the advice of an independent person who knows the individual (e.g. Connexions worker, youth worker, school/college)

- (Police Officer) Yes, however not all young people will tell others their home problems

The young person should be trusted to say if they need direct support

- Initially for 1 week while the situation is checked out.

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

- Sit down and discuss it and then have help to fill in the right forms
- Single reference number for one person
- Doesn't really matter if one large form or single but as long as there is someone there to help you.

Other feedback

What participants made of the information they had seen:

- More time to do consultation
- Too rushed
- Handout 'funding for future' – confusing, difficult to read
- Difficult to concentrate for too long and switched off
- Heavy subject
- Not user friendly
- Needs to be clearer
- Smaller groups
- Too broad a subject
- Feedback to the group for the comments they made

What had struck participants as most important issues:

- Need to be treated as an individual and not make parents income count
- Too black and white at the moment, needs to be more grey
- More individual through equal opportunities
- More publication of benefits

Which of the changes will make the most difference

- Assessing everyone individually by Personal Advisor

2 Rhyl Youth Action Focus Group

Demographics

Twelve young people participated in the focus group and all completed monitoring forms. The young people were aged between 14 and 22, two 14 year olds, one 15 year old, two 16 year olds, three 17 year olds, one 18 year old, two 19 year olds and one 21 year old. Five were male and seven were female. Nine young people classed themselves as White British, two as Other and one did not answer. All twelve defined themselves as coming from a rural area. Eight young people described their main activity as Education (at school or college) only; two young people described their main activity as Work based training (e.g. apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship scheme); and one young person described their main activity as employment.

One of the young people described themselves as having a disability. Eleven of the young people described their living arrangements as Living with parents/carers and one as living independently. 4 of the young people described themselves as being or having been entitled to free school meals. None of the young people described themselves as homeless or having been in care.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Sports activities in communities to keep people healthy.
- Volunteering e.g. for community organisations.
- Travel.
- Health and safety.
- Local youth services.
- Help groups for the disabled.
- Leisure and sport.
- International projects.
- Youth work.
- Young people aged 16 to 17 living with guardian looking for college/training.
- When you have kids.
- Musical instrument lessons.
- Crime prevention. Learning the penalties of crime, meet convicts. Learn about prison.
- Transport to and from surrounding towns and villages.
- Youth sports development
- Life guarding courses
- Travel abroad for work
- Young parents/ carers
- Helping the community
- When you go into a placement
- Vocational skills e.g. building, hairdressing

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

- Living away from home
- Not living with parents
- No longer receiving help from parents
- Living with a partner
- No support from family
- Having an income
- Be able to budget
- When you are employed
- When you have a secure job
- In full time work after education
- When you can support yourselves
- Cook for yourself
- If you are mature enough
- When you treat people with respect
- Able to deal with different situations in a well mannered way
- Making decisions

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

- Forms that relate to education should be together.
- These should be separate sections for each benefit.
- Good idea for people who need a lot of different benefits.
- May not be applying for all at the same time.

3 Milton Keynes Children's Rights Association Focus Group

Demographics

Eleven young people participated in the focus group and all completed monitoring forms. The young people were aged between 14 and 19, one 14 year old, one 15 year old, three 16 year olds, three 17 year olds, two 18 year olds and one 19 year old. Four were male and seven were female. Six young people classed themselves as White British, two were Pakistani, one was Indian and two were Other. Eight defined themselves as coming from an urban area and three as coming from a rural area. Eight young people described their main activity as Education (at school or college) only; two young people described their main activity as full-time education together with part-time work; and one young person described themselves as currently not working and not studying or training.

None of the young people described themselves as having a disability. All of the young people described their living arrangements as Living with parents. Two of the young people described themselves as being or having been entitled to free school meals. None of the young people described themselves as homeless or having been in care.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Parenting/sex education.
- The disabled.
- Youngsters wanting to get involved with sports.
- Leisure.
- Voluntary services.
- Volunteering.
- Learning useful skills e.g. sign language.
- Informal study and training.
- When you live with your grandparents.
- When having children.
- School leavers starting work. Receiving support with finding accommodation.
- Payments for volunteers.
- Character building things e.g. gap year placements working in foreign country.
- Learning to drive.
- Work experience for people trying to get a job while they are waiting.
- Army cadets, forces cadets or similar.
- Team exercises e.g. football.
- Voluntary leisure clubs e.g. coaching children's football teams.
- Dance and arts.

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

- When you've left home
- Living away from home for most of the year
- Parents refuse to have the child at home & child is ineligible to be taken into care
- Being able to look after themselves
- Having dependents themselves
- Over 18 years
- When going to college
- Studying away from home
- Eligible for income support
- Having responsibilities
- Earning their own income
- Supporting themselves by work
- Go on holiday with friends
- When they are stable e.g. job, home

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit

- Yes, include.
- Should be on the same form as childcare costs.

Childcare costs

- Yes, include.

Disability Living Allowance

- Yes, include.

Travel costs

- Yes, if this relates to travel for education or other activities.

Housing Benefit

- Yes, if their need for housing benefits relates to their education or other activities.

4 Down and Conner Youth Council Focus Group

Demographics

Ten young people participated in the focus group, of which 8 completed monitoring forms. The young people were aged between 16 and 20, two 16 year olds, two 17 year olds, 1 18 year old, two 19 year olds and one 20 year old. Four were male and four were female. Three young people classed themselves as White British, two were Irish and three were Other. All eight defined themselves as coming from an urban area. Six young people described their main activity as Education (at school or college) only; and two young people described their main activity as full-time education together with part-time work.

None of the young people described themselves as having a disability. Seven of the young people described their living arrangements as Living with parents and one young person as living independently. None of the young people described themselves being entitled to free school meals, as homeless or having been in care.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Single parents.
- Helping those who left for gap year back into education.
- Tackle personal problems.
- Helping out in the community.
- Helping people, painting places.
- Sports team and/or club members.
- Drama and music.
- Volunteering to gain experience.
- UK Youth Parliament and youth forums.
- Peer mentoring.
- Sports activities.
- Counseling.
- Businesses.
- Dance classes.

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

- Senior school attendance
- In education at college or uni
- Living by yourself
- Living away from their parents where they are responsible for the utility bill
- If they have to leave home due to violence etc.
- Homeless
- Own own home
- Living in semi-independent housing
- When working
- Don't receive financial support from parents
- Steady income (not support)
- Age 21 and are not full time student
- Mature enough to make real decisions about what they want to do
- Self reliant

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

- Keep the forms user friendly, do not duplicate questions, keep jargon out of forms.
- This could help people to know what they're entitled to.
- Only a few people need all of the different money so one form would be a waste of pages.

5 Youth 1st Fife Focus Group

Demographics

Twelve young people participated in the focus group. The young people were aged between 14 and 19 year olds. Seven were male and five were female. All twelve young people classed themselves as White British. None of the young people described themselves as having a disability.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

Number of participants who supported each suggested activity:

- Volunteering 8
- Informal learning 7
- Periods when the young person is waiting for a course to begin (e.g. if they have switched courses) 4
- Combining part-time learning with other responsibilities, e.g. parenting, caring, employment 4
- Finding accommodation if homeless 7
- Sessions with a child psychologist to overcome personal problems 2
- Behavioural skills course for young offenders 3

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

Number of participants who supported each of the following circumstances in which a young person could be treated as independent:

- Young people who are parents (though still living at home) 10
- Young people who are married (though still living at home) 8
- Young people who are living at home or with a relative, but do not receive any financial support. 11
- Young people who have to live away from home because their course of study is located elsewhere. 7

Number of participants who supported the following as the fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs direct financial support:

- The Government should investigate the young person's circumstances before paying them any money 5
- The Government should start paying the money straight away, and then check if the young person really needs it 1
- The Government should ask the advice of an independent person who knows the individual (e.g. Connexions worker, youth worker) 4
- The young person should be trusted to say if they need direct support 2

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

Number of young people who supported the following specialist types of financial support being included in any single system of support:

- Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit for young people who are parents themselves 9
- Childcare costs e.g. Care to Learn 10
- Disability Living Allowance 5
- Other costs of learning e.g. travel costs, equipment, exam fees 8
- Housing Benefit 6

Demographics

The Focus group was delivered to a team of young people in Sheffield who are currently attending a Prince's Trust Team Programme.

The group consisted of thirteen young men and women between the age ranges of 16 – 21, and were a diverse mix from the Trust's four target areas - those who've struggled at school, been in care, been in trouble with the law, or are long-term unemployed.

Due to the basic skills needs of the young people, support was given for a basic skills tutor. All quotes, suggestions and discussions were from the young people themselves.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Some people choose to do voluntary work because they want to & its fun.
- Some people do voluntary work because they need specific experience (work experience) to get a job in the future. They shouldn't get paid for that!
- If a person wants to work, but there are reasons why they can't e.g. homeless then they should be helped. If someone doesn't want to work they should not be supported.
- Money should be given to people regardless of whether they want to do anything or not because it keeps the crime figures down.

General comments:

- You should get money regardless.
- Young people shouldn't get money for nothing, some kids are stupid with money and might waste it, they could go on a training course or volunteering it could be seen as fun. Some people might just sit on their arses and they should get paid.
- They Government shouldn't give money to people who do not do anything. It comes from the taxpayer. There are opportunities to work or do training that they could or should get paid for. Its good for the economy.
- People's backgrounds should be looked at.
- Government shouldn't give money regardless to everyone. I live on my own. I don't have enough money. I get some money and have to pay my rent, bills, travel and food, its not enough. Some people get the same money and have nothing to pay out! It's not fair!
- I think they shouldn't give money to people who don't work. If people train, learn and work they can look after themselves in the future, they would contribute to the country and the economy.
- If people have nothing that prevents them working e.g. a disability, they should train and work.
- Physically fit, strong people who only want to go out and cause crime should be made to work. Then they wouldn't have the time or need to commit crime.
- People should be supported to train for work however long that takes, and definitely towards their first job. They should pay tax to the future economy. And should stay in the UK to pay back the money invested in them for an agreed period of time

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

The independence discussion caused a mixed response as some of the group felt that being independent was still living at home without any financial support.

The majority felt that a young person who, was at college or elsewhere, had a place of their own living away from home and having their own money was a better indication of independence.

Leaving home - Fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs direct financial support

The group felt that, some 16/17 year olds did have to leave home for personal reasons and that any money should be given directly to them. Regardless of whether the parents need it.

The group also discussed if financial support was made easier, did they think that more young people would leave home earlier? The majority of the group felt this would not necessarily be the case.

Most of the group felt that the fairest way of deciding should be through a person who knows the individual, and they should be trusted to say if they needed direct support. A minority of the group expressed that there should be no specific rules to govern this and it should be considered on the individual's situation.

Financial independence – How should the Government decide when a young person is financially independent?

The majority felt it should be based on how much you earned. However, a proportion of the group felt it should be based on the number of hours you worked.

They also felt it was important to consider what out-going payments you had to make.

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

The consensus of the group was strongly that the system needed to be made easier to understand:

- Any forms that need to be completed need to be simplified
- There should be someone who can give you all the forms
- All child related forms together
- One-stop shops, whether it is based in a connexions or job centre or housing benefit agency, to cover everything, and one to one advice for whatever the subject.

Other feedback

What had struck participants as most important issues:

- The government tells us we are all the same 'we are not!'
- Money and independence should be considered for each individual and their personal circumstances.

Which of the changes will make the most difference:

- One stop shop, with all relevant forms and advice. Where you can discuss and agree individual's needs.

Demographics

A focus group took place at Ross County football ground 4th September 2004. The focus group participants were 5 females, 3 aged 16 years and 2 aged 15 years of age.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Sport
- Community work
- Music making
- Peer education
- Youth projects
- Work experience
- Caring
- Voluntary work
- Youth exchanges
- Religious education

“Most learning is by doing and informal pathways to education should be supported as well as the more traditional routes.”

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

As there was only a small group, a discussion around independence ensued. As all of the young women lived at home they considered a good step to be moving out but living close to parents and relatives and the support structure this would supply – this approach, while being a logical stepping stone, may mean they were not eligible for financial support.

Independence for these young women meant making their way in the world. Financial independence is one part of the equation. A greater dependence on parents for transport to and from activities in rural areas is a further obstacle on the pathway to independence in rural areas.

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

Keep it simple was the message from the young women:

- Assistance should go straight to the young person and the young people also felt strongly that any means testing should directly involve them.
- Questionnaires requesting information should be given to the young people and not to any other person/parent or guardian.

Other feedback

- Make education more interesting so that I can stay on at school.
- Qualifications are not useful.
- Education should be fun.
- It's difficult to get an apprentice opportunity.
- Lack of opportunities.
- There should be more encouragement for young women to take up trades and apprenticeships and support for childcare to enable young women to take advantage of these opportunities.

This group also discussed whether more or less financial incentives would make them more influence their choice to continue their education. 2 young women said they were planning to stay on in education and 3 young women said they were planning to seek employment. They all said more or less financial incentives would not change their choices or that there were other factors that influenced their choices.

Demographics

Seven young people participated in the focus group, of which 7 completed monitoring forms. The young people were aged between 18 and 21, two 18 year olds, three 19 year olds, one 20 year old, and one 21 year old. Four were male and three were female. All seven young people classed themselves as White British and as coming from an urban area. Four young people described their main activity as Education (at school or college) only; and four young people described their main activity as education combined with part-time work.

All seven young people had learning disabilities and three had physical disabilities. Five of the young people described their living arrangements as living with parents, one young person as living in local authority care and one young person as living independently.

Support was given by a Mencap worker. All suggestions and quotes were from the young people themselves.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Working on projects.
- Wordpower.
- Work experience for people not able to work full time due to disability etc.
- Small courses e.g. Save the Children.
- Sport. Encourage people to be more active.
- Numeracy and literacy.
- Apprenticeships.

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

- Starting college
- When speaking to older people
- Earning own money
- From 18+
- Treated the same as adults
- Nice
- Respectful

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

- Some things matter more than others.
- People's circumstances are different.
- Disability Allowance should be included.
- Some benefits are not well known.

Demographics

Although ten young people participated in the focus group only seven were recorded on monitoring form. The young people were aged between 18 and 21, three 18 year olds, three 19 year olds and one 21 year old. All were young women. Five young people classed themselves as White British and two as Black Caribbean. Five young people defined themselves as coming from an urban area and two from a rural area. Five young people described their main activity as Education (at school or college) only; one young person each described their main activity as Full time education (at school/college) together with part-time work and Work based training (e.g. apprenticeship or pre-apprenticeship scheme).

None of the young people described themselves as having a disability. Five of the young people described their living arrangements as living with parents/carers, two as living independently and one as living in local authority care. One young person considered themselves as having been homeless and one as having been in care.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Coaching.
- Motor sports.
- Youth clubs.
- Attending careers services.
- Sports / hobbies which would otherwise be unaffordable.
- Participating in community service.
- Music classes.
- Art and design.
- Charity shop work.
- Volunteer work and community service.
- Therapy.
- Military entrance for those under 18 or 21.
- Night school.
- Health activities.
- Person working as a volunteer. The money should go to the organisation.
- Work based learning.
- Outward Bound courses.
- Being on committees e.g. Connexions Local Management Committees.

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

- When they leave home.
- Living alone.
- When they finish school.
- Confidently able to travel without assistance.
- If committed a crime at any age.
- Looking for work/training.
- If they have a full time job.
- Earning over a certain amount per month.
- Have plans for their life (what they want to specialise in).
- Guardian of younger sibling.

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

- Include all of the benefits available for young people.
- The questions should be more simple, straightforward, clear and concise. Maybe multiple-choice tick boxes.
- Provide support from advisors.

Demographics

Twelve young people participated in the focus group. The young people were aged between 16 and 19 years old. Four were male and eight were female. All twelve young people classed themselves as White British. Six young people described themselves as coming from an urban area and six as coming from a rural area. Two young people described their main activity as Education (at school or college) only; two young people described their main activity as full-time education together with part-time work; five young people described their main activity as work based training; and two young person described themselves as currently not working and not studying or training.

Two of the young people described themselves as having a disability. Ten of the young people described their living arrangements as Living with parents and two as living independently.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

Number of participants who supported each suggested activity:

- Volunteering 6
- Informal learning 11
- Periods when the young person is waiting for a course to begin (e.g. if they have switched courses) 9
- Combining part-time learning with other responsibilities, e.g. parenting, caring, employment 7
- Finding accommodation if homeless 6
- Sessions with a child psychologist to overcome personal problems 4
- Behavioural skills course for young offenders 6

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

Number of participants who supported each of the following circumstances in which a young person could be treated as independent:

- Young people who are parents (though still living at home) 8
- Young people who are married (though still living at home) 6
- Young people who are living at home or with a relative, but do not receive any financial support. 12
- Young people who have to live away from home because their course of study is located elsewhere. 5

Number of participants who supported the following as the fairest way of deciding if a young person really needs direct financial support:

- The Government should investigate the young person's circumstances before paying them any money 6
- The Government should start paying the money straight away, and then check if the young person really needs it 0
- The Government should ask the advice of an independent person who knows the individual (e.g. Connexions worker, youth worker) 3
- The young person should be trusted to say if they need direct support 3

Government investigation and asking advice of independent person could be combined.

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

Number of young people who supported the following specialist types of financial support being included in any single system of support:

- Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit for young people who are parents themselves 8
- Childcare costs e.g. Care to Learn 8
- Disability Living Allowance 7
- Other costs of learning e.g. travel costs, equipment, exam fees 11
- Housing Benefit 9

Travel costs are important - young people in rural areas are severely deprived due to the lack of facilities and transport links.

London Consultation Event

The London Consultation Event was made up of two focus groups. Fourteen young people attended the morning session and twelve young people attended the afternoon session. Both sessions were conducted in the exactly the same way and the findings have been combined within this summary.

Demographics

Of the total of attendees to the Focus Groups in London 22 monitoring forms were completed. The young people were aged between 16 and 21 years; eight 16 year olds, three 17 year olds, three 18 year olds, four 19 year olds, one 20 year old and three 21 year olds. There were nine males and twelve females and one who did not answer. Sixteen classed themselves as White British, one Black African, two Black Other, one Mixed Race and two Other, one of which classed themselves as Welsh and one who did not classify themselves and said they did not discriminate. Three young people described themselves as disabled one wrote that they was Dyslexic. Three young people stated that they lived in a Rural area. Seven young people said they were in Education only, six were in Full-time education with part-time jobs, one included that they were doing volunteer work as well, five young people were in employment only and three were not in employment, education or training. Eighteen young people said they live with parents/carers and four lived independently. One young person was entitled to free school meal and two young people described themselves being or have been homeless.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Support causes like life guarding courses, mentoring
- Rewards for youth councils
- Sporting activities
- If volunteers are paid, they are no longer volunteers. Some may be doing it just for the money
- Introduce loans for courses (interest free)
- Give extra funding for youth clubs to encourage the number attending. Then these young people could be given training in the future
- Paid for period between courses (paid monthly)
- Youth forums, Youth Members of Parliament
- Make sure the facilities are what they young people want. Can be difficult for volunteers to work in deprived areas
- Educational payments should not be given for absence
- Loan system similar to Student Loans for young people
- Training courses e.g. training or life guarding for people serious to take a career in this
- EMA needs to be continued for a period after the course ends
- For people in part time education who can work means testing should be in place
- Choir/drama activities which stand out on C.V.s
- Help to find hobbies whilst the person is young aimed at keeping it up in older life
- Part time education with other responsibilities
- Young parents
- Dyslexic students
- Secondary school
- University
- Volunteer work is by nature unpaid. If there is a final goal e.g. perhaps a qualification, the a payment is justified
- Transport money to do projects
- Young people do not want to be seen as “free loaders” earning “something for nothing”, could forms of enrichment courses be introduced

- Young people need time to socialise and should not be forced into work/volunteering for financial reasons. Exams are stressful and young people need time to recuperate and renew their social lives
- Volunteers groups: Reimbursing travel costs, stationary, food etc. for young people working in certain groups where a lot of travelling is do in requirement e.g. UK Youth Parliament YMP's
- Volunteering, Millennium volunteers, Member of the Youth Parliament
- Structured Volunteering
- Again Youth Forums, the amount of things we do, AFTER school or college & we don't get paid
- Volunteering – When does it cease to be “volunteering” and become a job (zero cost)
- Creative industry, Performing Arts, Acting, Young Equity
- Waiting for a course. They have a gap in between the courses & most don't have money. The state pays your parents to look after you, young people should get paid
- Educational gaps
- Switching courses
- Indirect Benefit: In the period of wait between education, local councils could run schemes to make leisure cheaper, e.g. free bus service, cheaper facilities

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

- Can't be defined in a clear cut way
- Bills in your own name
- Leave home
- Go to University
- Money should be split between carer and Young Person to keep the incentive to look after them
- Kicked out by parents
- Payments should be made into a specific account then only be accessed under certain circumstances
- Parents not always supporting the children, give money to young people
- Give money to parents because they are providing the care/food etc.
- Limited parental support
- Earning above £40 for example
- Different for everyone
- Young People choose
- Have to leave home

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

- Everything in one pot makes financial planning easier.
- Reduce paper work.
- Everything in one pot.
- All in one: with easy to read contents page.
- Single form: connected to education.
- People will become fed up with filling in a big form and become careless. I also think that a single form would be unnecessary because people don't need all the benefits.
- Even though a single form would be bigger, it would save time from not having to fill in your personal details several times. You can always miss out sections, which are not applicable to you. If people are serious about their claim for benefits, they won't mind filling out the form.
- There should be a helpline which helps you understand how to fill in the form/

Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit

- Childcare, housing benefit and child tax credits on the same form.
- It is better because it has similarity option.
- Should be combined with childcare costs.
- No because not all young people have children.
- Commonly applied for.
- Why differentiate between age group.

Childcare costs

- Should be combined with Child benefit.
- Child benefit, housing benefit and child care on the same form.
- Single form because parents with children need to learn.
- Yeah.
- Long term.
- Commonly applied for.

Disability Living Allowance

- Agree.
- Most people won't be applying for it.
- It will need to have evidence.
- All circumstances are different.
- This should be on its own, as it doesn't affect education. These people have to live with this problem for life.
- Fewer people may need this part.
- This should be in a separate form from the others.

Travel costs

- One off payments, maybe from government through place of learning.
- All amount will be different and one off.
- Better for students.
- This relates to education.
- Should be done case by case.
- All circumstances are different.

Housing Benefit

- Childcare, housing benefit and child tax credits on the same form.
- Housing should be on one form and not affected by childcare.
- No, not everyone needs housing benefit.
- All circumstances are different.

Newcastle Consultation Event

The Newcastle Consultation Event was made up of two focus groups. Twenty-one young people attended the morning session and twenty-two young people attended the afternoon session. Both sessions were conducted in the exactly the same way and the findings have been combined within this summary.

Demographics

Morning Session: 12 Monitoring forms were completed for the morning session; there were 6 males and 6 females, one aged 14, five aged 16, five aged 17 and one aged 18. Eleven described themselves as White British and one described themselves as Mixed Race. Seven young people were in Education only, two were in Full time education together with part time work, two were in Work Based training and one described themselves as not being in education, employment or training. Nine described themselves as living at home with parents/carers and three as Independent. Three young people described themselves as being entitled to Free School Meals, three also gave no answer to this question, one young person described themselves as having considered themselves Homeless and no young people had been in care.

Afternoon Session: 13 Monitoring forms were completed for the afternoon session: There were 11 females and two males, one was 16, ten were 17 and two were 18. All 13 described themselves as being White British; two described themselves as having a disability. Four were from a rural area, twelve were said they were on work based training and one did not give an answer. Twelve young people said they lived at home with parents/carers and one lived independently. One said they were entitled to Free School Meals, one had considered themselves as homeless and no young people had been in care.

Responses to **Session two: Something for something** - activities young people do to get on in life other than formal study or training which the Government should support with some money

- Informal learning.
- Volunteering.
- Taking part in events like today.
- Support so people can study and do training at the same time.
- Cover travel and 'out of pocket' expenses for volunteering.
- Young people should receive money for the period between a course ending and waiting for the next one to start.
- There should be a loan system that is interest free.
- Support youth participation and pay young people for involvement in youth councils / forums.
- Young parents.
- Young carers.
- Young people who have extra / special educational needs.
- Recognise that not all young people will want to do the same things.
- Should receive money for books and other things you need for school.
- Transport money to do projects.
- Educational gaps.
- Switching courses.

Responses to **Session three: Independence** – when young people think that they become independent

- Will be different for everyone.
- You become independent when you leave home.
- When you can drive.
- Leave home to go to university.
- When you have your own family / partner.
- You can't ever become fully independent because you always rely on other people for some things.
- When you start earning money.
- When you start working over a certain number of hours a week.
- If you have to leave home but it's not your choice.
- You can choose to be independent.

Responses to **Session four: Keeping it simple** – Would it make sense to put all the different sources of money in one pot?

- If it makes it simpler to claim.
- Include those which are most used by young people 16-19 or in education.
- Better for people who get all benefits.
- Few people need every benefit.
- Better to have a long form than miss out.
- Give better advice on how to complete.
- Would be hard to understand how much you would get.
- Getting one benefit should not affect how much you get on another.

	Include	Leave out	Don't know
Child Benefit/Child Tax Credit for young people who are parents themselves	18	4	3
Childcare costs	14	6	3
Disability Living Allowance	10	9	5
Travel costs	16	4	2
Housing Benefit	12	7	6