

# Young people's challenges in transitioning to employment: temporal and spatial perspectives

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- **Young people in the labour market in historical perspective**
- **The changing context for young people transitioning into employment**
- **Spatial differences in unemployment and opportunity structures**
- **Statistical categorisation of the unemployed (young people)**
- **Policy implications – addressing youth unemployment and enhancing transitions to employment for ‘hidden NEETs’**

# Historical perspective (Whiteside, 2017)

- **19<sup>th</sup> century social reformers:** regular work as the foundation for household financial security, good workmanship and improved economic performance
- **Early 20<sup>th</sup> century:** concern about ‘dead end’ jobs and irregular work – casualised (flexible) labour markets as unreliable, expensive and inefficient ... linked to poverty
- **1930s, 1980s and latest ‘Great Recession’:** concerns about lack of employment
- **Present day:** ‘flexibility’ as a key component of employability – but also concerns about ‘modern employment practices’ (Taylor Review)

# Young people in the labour market (1)

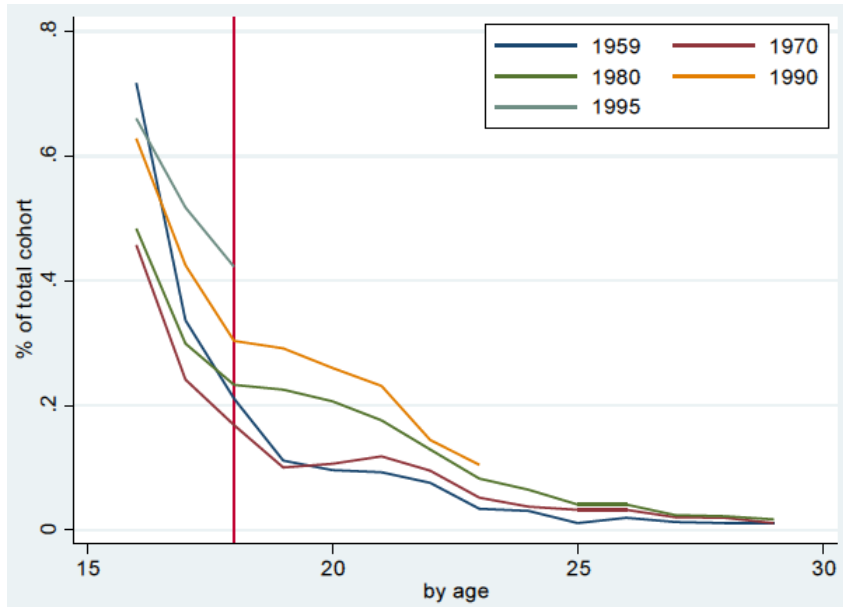
- ***Raising of school leaving age and participation in education*** in England:
  - school leaving age raised: 14 to 15 in 1947; 15 to 16 in 1972
  - educational participation until 17 in 2013; 18 in 2015
- ***Expansion of FE and HE:*** more opportunities for post-compulsory education; increasing scope for credentialism
- ***Extension of notion of youth:*** from 14 to 16 at lower end, and from 19 to 24 at upper end – i.e. 16-24
- ***Young people in work:*** 75% in 1976; 40% in 2009

## Young people in the labour market (2)

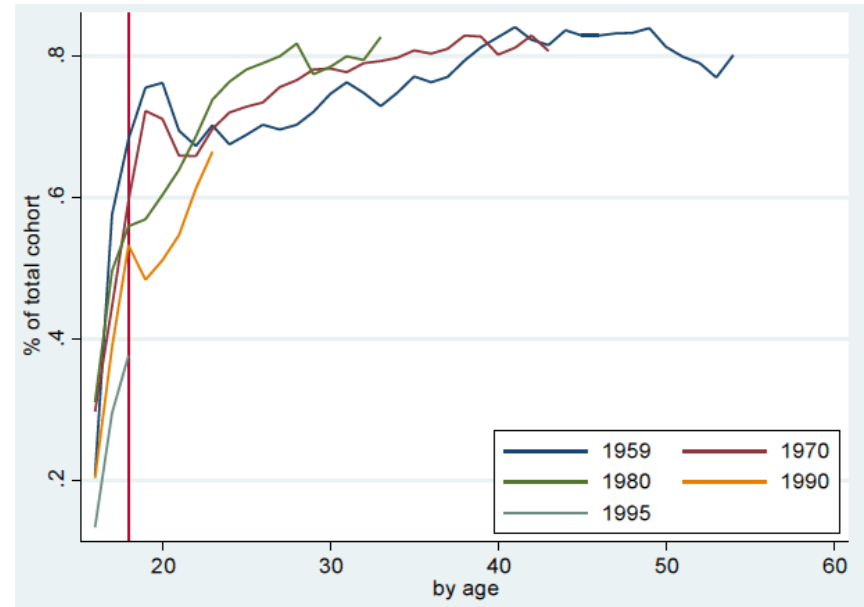
- ***Demise of the youth labour market:*** post 1980s recession no return to the norm of moving from school to a job
- *“Today the journey from adolescence to adulthood is far more daunting. It takes much longer, and the roadway is filled with far more potholes, one-way streets and dead ends”* (Symonds et al., 2011: 11)
- Suggests importance of information, advice and guidance for navigation
- Role of networks
- Unwaged work, temporary work, involuntary part-time work, internships

# Different birth cohorts experiences of education and employment (Speckesser et al., 2015)

## Education participation rate

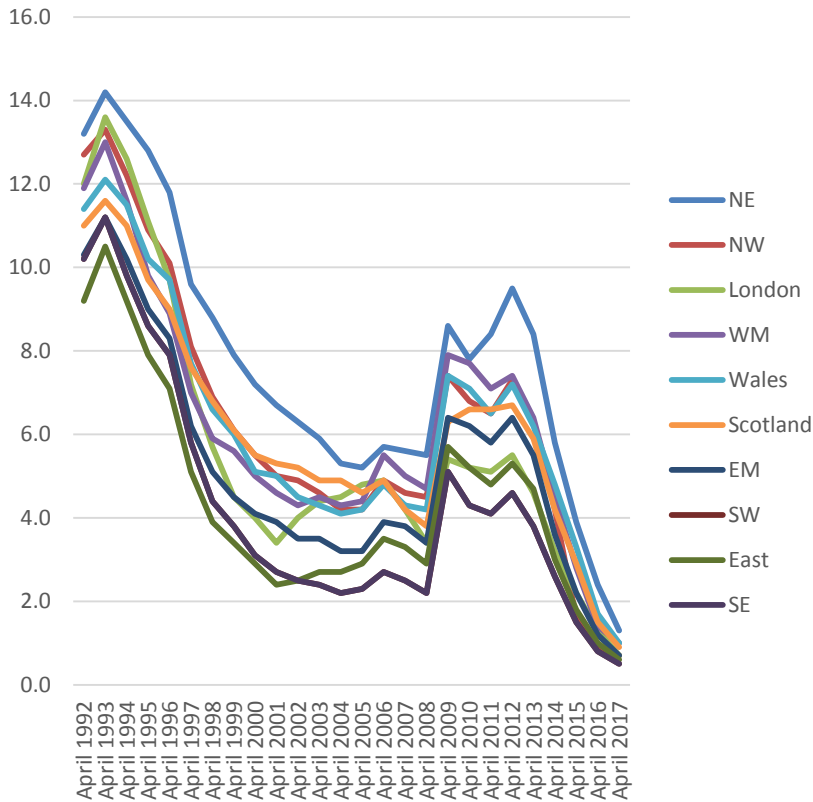


## Employment rate

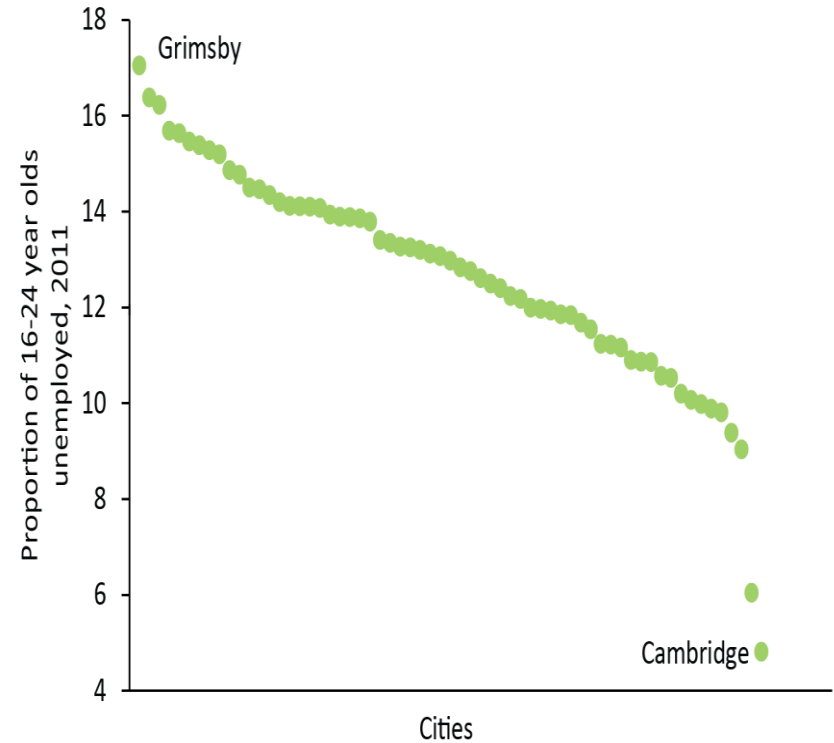


# Geography of youth unemployment

## Proportion of 16-24 year olds on JSA, 1992-2017



## Youth unemployment variations by city, 2011 (Census)



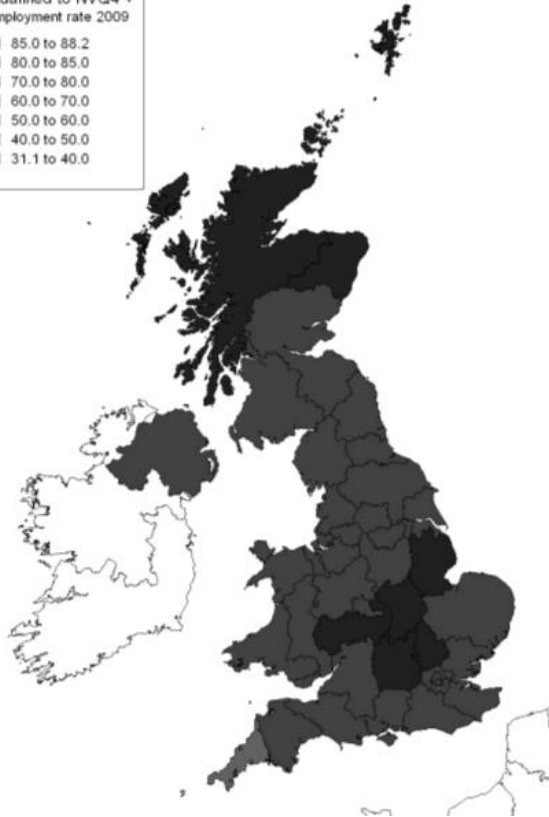
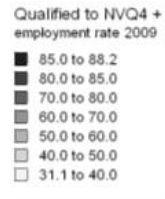
# Opportunity structures

- Variations in opportunity structures facing young people in different local areas
- Ashton et al. (1982: 62) – interviews with employers in 1978-9 in revealed “*tremendous regional disparities in opportunities for young people and channels of recruitment*” between Sunderland, Leicester and St Albans
- Highlights the importance of looking at the ***demand-side of the labour market*** when looking at transitions of young people into work

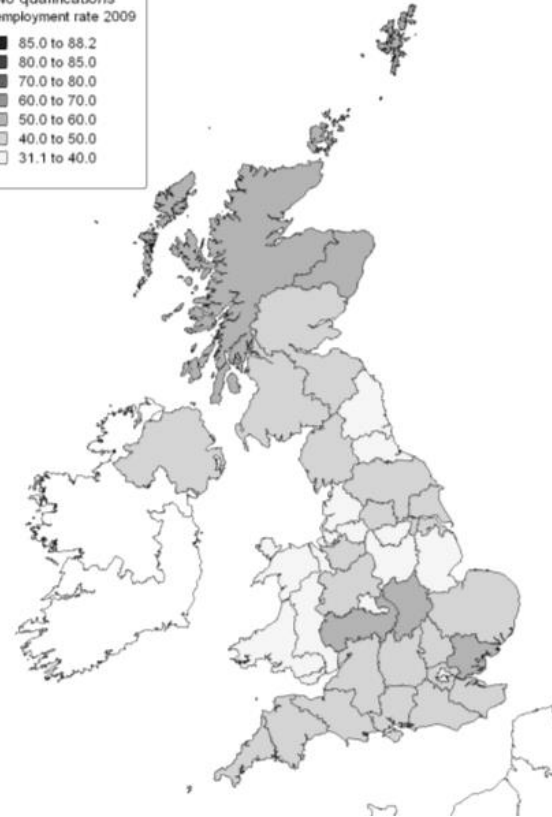
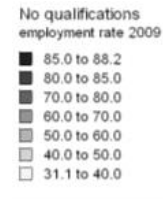


# Local opportunities matter most for the least qualified (Green, 2011)

Employment rate for people with  
degree level qualifications, 2009



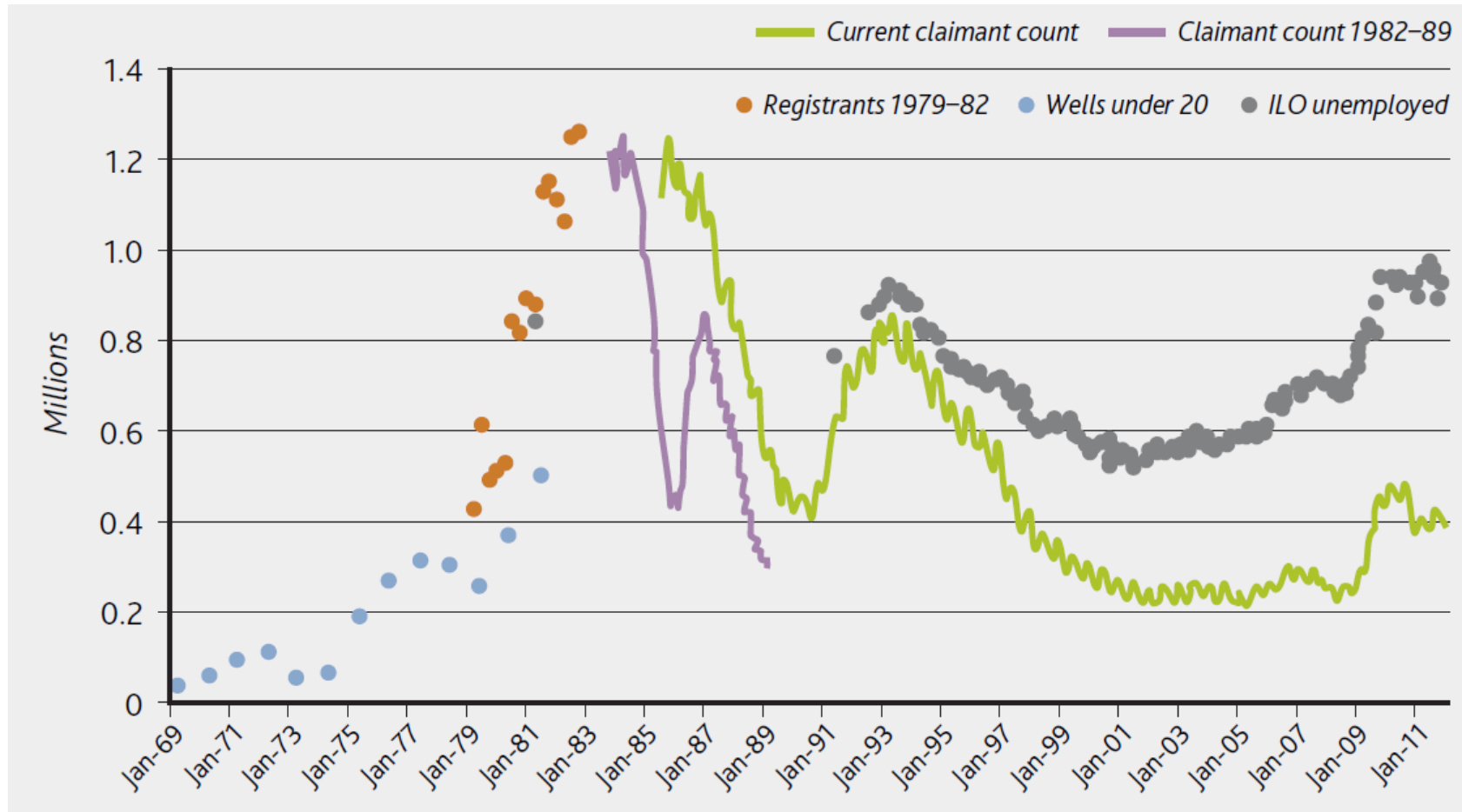
Employment rate for people with no  
qualifications, 2009



# Categorisation in official statistics

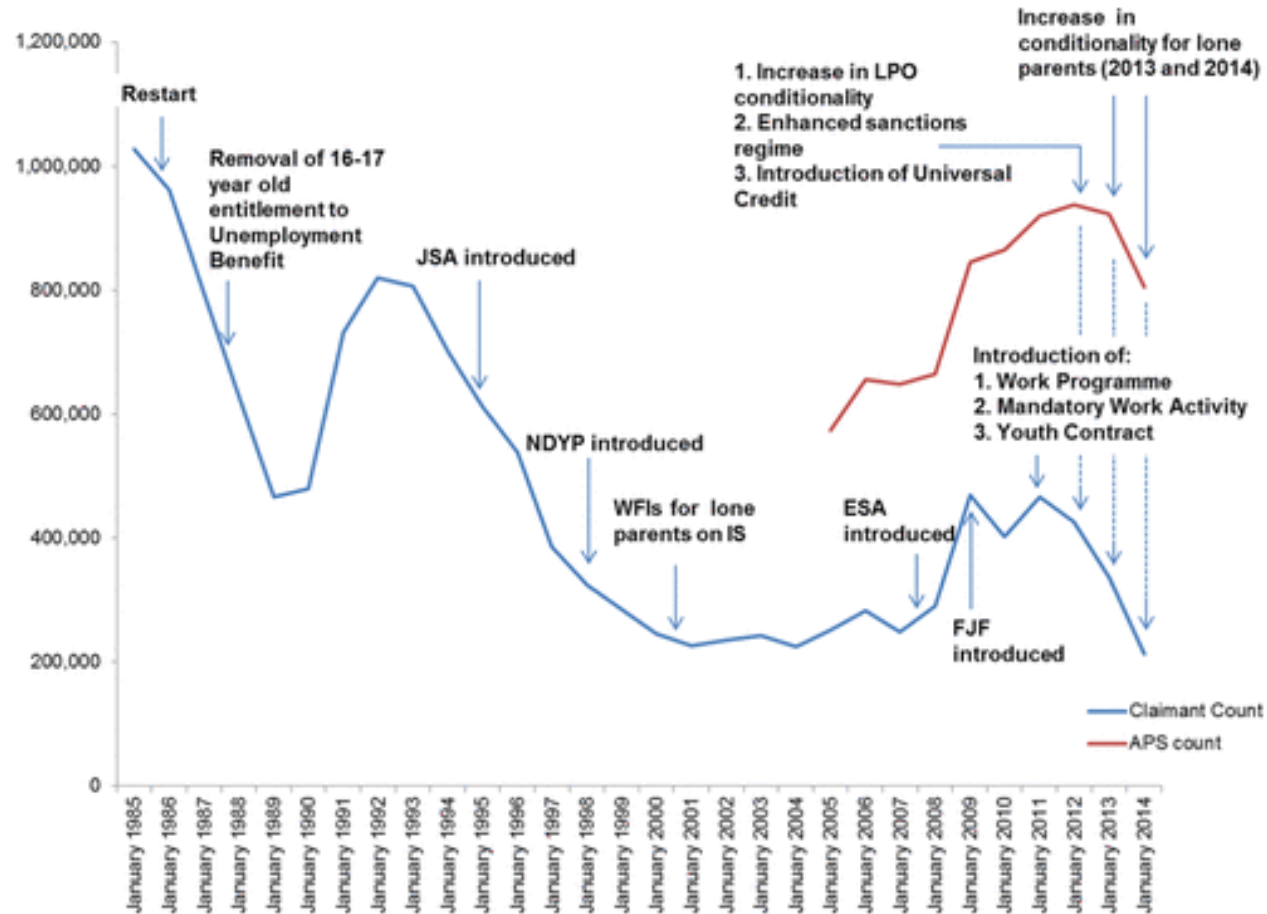
- ***Longstanding concerns about unemployment statistics:***
- *“Exact statistical measurement of “the unemployed”, or even a close estimate of those ‘out of work’ any given time is impossible at present. The miserably defective character of our statistical machinery forms an adequate basis of ignorance upon which to base official answers to awkward questions” (Hobson, 1895)*
- *“The Department of Employment readily acknowledges that its regular series of unemployment statistics, dependent as they are on a strict definition of unemployment ... are imperfect indicators either of the pressure of the demand for labour or social distress” (Garside, 1980: 68)*

# Measures of youth unemployment (18-24), 1969-2011 (Bivand, 2012)

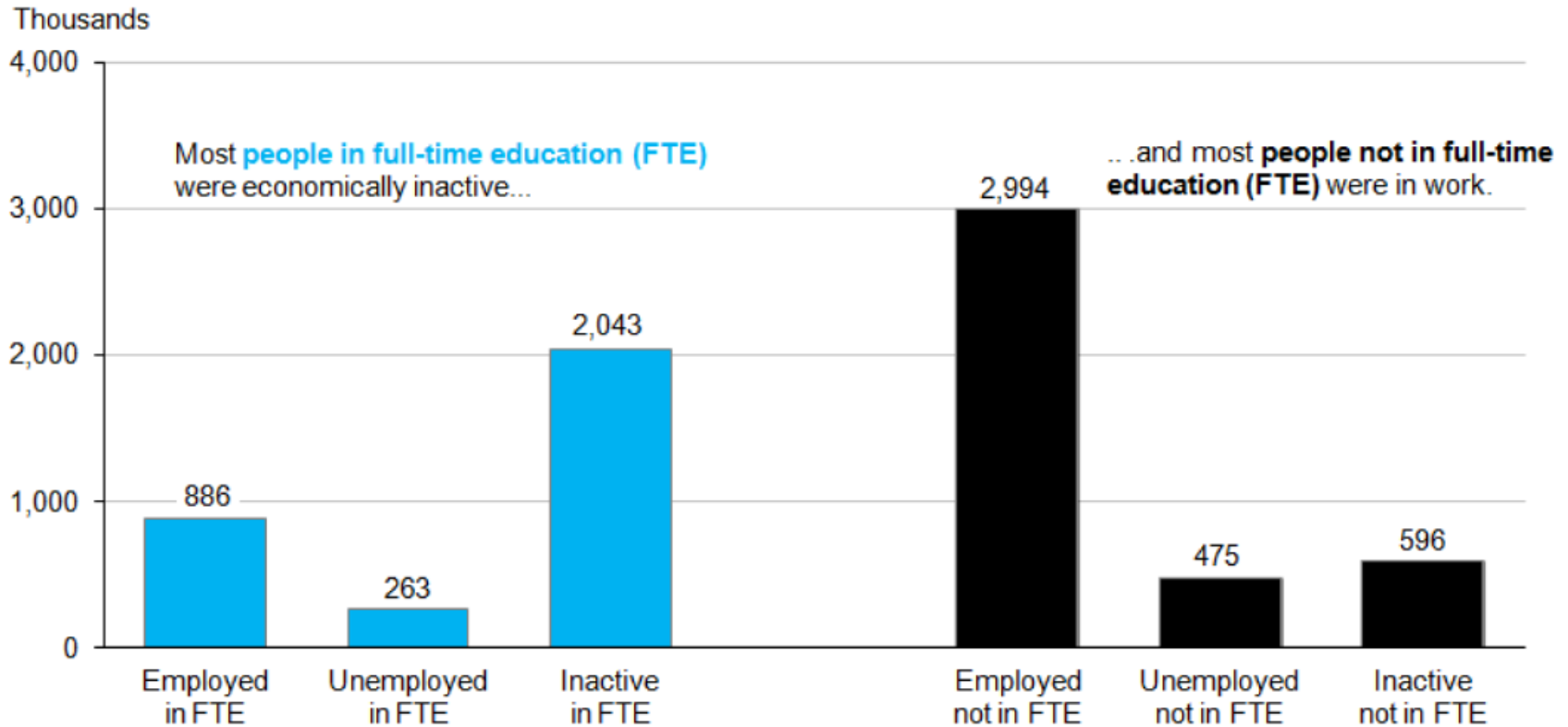


# Youth unemployment – showing labour market reforms

(Crisp and Powell, 2017)



# Young people aged 16-24 in the UK labour market, April-June 2015 (ONS)



# NEETs and 'hidden NEETs'

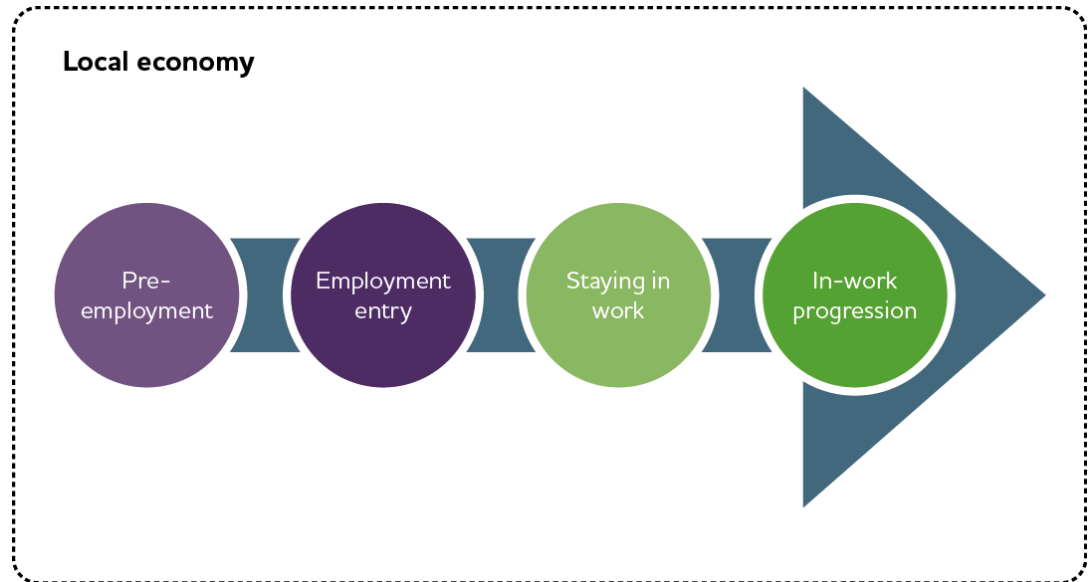
- **NEETs**: 16-24 year olds (initially 16-18 year olds) who have left full-time education and are not in employment or training
- **'Hidden NEETs'**: beyond the 'public gaze' – who they are:
- Young people living at home supported by parents
- Sofa surfers or homeless
- Drop-outs from education/ training
- Moved 'off the radar' after benefit sanctions
- At risk of offending/ involved in criminal activity
- Carers
- Young people with mental health problems
- Workers in informal economy

# Youth unemployment: policy perspectives

- ***De-moralisation***: failure to socialise young people with the required work ethic
- ***Cultures of dependency and intergenerational worklessness***: rhetoric vis-à-vis evidence of work attachment and class-cultural expectations about value of early transitions from education to work
- ***Low skills and qualifications***: suggests supply-side interventions (much less emphasis on demand-side)
- ***Deficiencies in the education system***: failure to prepare young people adequately for the world of work
- ***Individual failure***: punitive approach and benefit sanctions

# Helping ‘hidden NEETs’ transition into employment

- Role of **voluntary sector** providers
- Need to look **beyond job entry** to entire employment pathway (Green et al., 2015, 2017)
- **Local interventions** involving holistic local partnership working
- Some resonance with the **‘capability approach’** (Edgell and McQuaid, 2014)





# Talent Match – theory of change (D2N2)

- ***Employability development journey:***  
young people develop their employability to secure an employment outcome
  - ***Participation journey:***  
participation in the Talent Match to ensure programme is ‘fit for purpose’ while enhancing employability
1. Registration and assessment
  2. Breaking down barriers
  3. Employability and skills training
  4. Work experience and skills training
  5. Employability, education and enterprise
  6. On-going mentoring support

# Key issues

- Flexibility
- Extended and non-linear transitions
- Punitive regime
- Who counts?
- Support along whole pathway to employment
- Human capital and social capital
- Local opportunity structures
- Balance between supply and demand-side approaches
- ‘Work first’ vis-a-vis ‘career first’