

# **Independent Evaluation of the Vulnerable Learners Apprenticeship Project**

**On behalf of  
Kent County Council**

**Covering  
September 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 – March 31st 2012**

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## Executive Summary

*“It’s a path to a career more than just a year of dead end work – something to aspire to for my daughter – she’ll see me working and helping others and not on benefits –it might change her life too.” (Young Parent)*

The Vulnerable Learner Apprenticeship Project (VLP) is a pilot funded through Kent County Council (KCC) focussing on early intervention for 4 groups of vulnerable people aged 16 to 24 years, considered ‘NEET’. The cohorts are i) Young Parents ii) Young People with Learning and/or Physical Disabilities and/or Mental Health Issues iii) Young Offenders iv) Looked After Children Leaving Care. The VLP intervention aimed to enable 20 young people from each group to access local apprenticeship opportunities and help them to engage/re-engage more fully in the labour market. KCC paid the salary of each young person (£105pw) for 12 months with the support of local specialist teams. Ten Training Providers delivered the assessment and training aspects of the apprenticeships. This evaluation covers the progress of the project for the first 19 months from September 1<sup>st</sup> 2010 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012.

A mixture of literature review, interviews, focus groups, case studies, cost benefit analysis and excel data sheets were used to collect information to address a number of key questions. Results showed that as of August 2011, 69 young people - aged 18 to 24, accessed an apprenticeship through the pilot via a variety of Private, Public and Third Sector organisations, in 41 integrated workplaces. All the young people were NEET prior to starting their apprenticeships and represented a cross section of the most vulnerable young people within our society. All were either known to local Social Services, the Youth Offending Teams and/or receiving educational and/or emotional support. This included 16 Young Offenders, 23 Young Parents, 21 people with Learning Disabilities and/or Mental Health and 9 Care Leavers demonstrating a significant achievement by the project deliverers. By March 2012, 42 young people had either completed or were still undertaking their apprenticeships, representing 61% of those who started, 15% below the National completion rate and 13% below the local rate.

The evaluation highlighted many challenges and issues faced in setting-up and running the prototype pilot project. The lack of existing formalised planning procedures during the early part of the set-up phase meant that there was a back-log of apprentices awaiting assessment and that delivery was often disorganised. Also, the potential to meet the targets set for the pilot and fall-out rates varied across the cohorts, partly due to differences in the service infrastructures, resource availability and expertise required within the specialist teams to support these young people into employment. By March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012, 53% of the Young Parents, 56% of Care Leavers 44% of Young Offenders had fallen off the project compared to 14% from the Learning Disabilities/Mental Health cohort. Results suggest that the relative success of KSE reflects their organisations’ adherence to the procedures that underpin the ‘supported employment’ approach.

VLP deliverers have adapted their services to meet such challenges and the lessons learned from this pilot to include the strengthening of ties with, and in some cases between local organisations, the introduction of an Operational Project Group, and redefining job roles to change internal organisation infrastructure. Another adaptation was the innovation of Apprenticeship Style Opportunities (ASOs) for 7 young people with learning disabilities who found it academically difficult to obtain the qualification: ASOs were employed for a minimum of 16 hours per week and the project paid the NMW for their age. The training was

a combination of classroom based learning and on the job learning. The ASO programme aimed to replicate an apprenticeship as far as possible but at a lower level. This highly inclusive approach is currently unique to Kent.

Most employers (73%) stated that they would not have hired the young person without the wage subsidy. However, less than 10% of employers reported having had apprehensions about hiring a vulnerable person, and were more concerned about the amount of 'red tape' that would be associated with the project. This challenges perceived notions that employers tend to stigmatise vulnerable groups. All the employers interviewed identified advantages for their organisations in hiring the young people and 89% stated they would recommend the project to other employers. Results also suggest that private organisations rather than charities and publicly funded organisations offer the best option for hiring the young people following their apprenticeships.

It is also clear that many of the young people are benefitting substantially from their participation in VLP, suggested by significant increases in their self-esteem and optimism for the future. The young people interviewed were clear about their reasons for undertaking an apprenticeship and viewed it as an opportunity to develop their career prospects and gain a nationally recognised qualification. Some young people had more intrinsic reasons, with many of the Young Parents expressing a strong sense of responsibility towards improving their child's life prospects and many Young Offenders, as a chance to leave behind their offending histories. Results show that the income of the young people increased by 76% and 80% compared to being NEET, although few young people mentioned increases in income as a major motivator, suggesting that the young people saw their apprenticeships as a stepping stone towards career progression, rather than as an end in and of itself.

The cost benefit analysis showed that there are potentially significant savings associated with VLP. Although there were inevitably costs associated with the delivery phase, these are cancelled out at the Taxpayer level with 12 months paid employment, due to savings in welfare benefit payments and inflow to the Treasury of tax revenue and national insurance contributions. Significantly, yearly savings then accrue to the taxpayer of just over £120,000py with potential to save +£604,464 accumulated over 5 years of employment, compared to the NEET condition as a result of just these 42 young people obtaining paid work. This equates to a saving of £2.19 for every £1 of the initial VLP investment. When the VLP fall-out rate was factored into the equation a net cash balance of +£380,813 was observed, which included the costs of running VLP, saving £1.38 for every £1 invested. When savings at the LA level, due to reduced service usage, are also factored into the equation then these have the potential to double the overall amounts saved.

The results show that the project is contributing significantly to the prospects of vulnerable people within Kent and complies strongly with the current Coalition Government's commitment to a 'Big Society', fulfilling the key themes of increased social responsibility, community integration and less dependency on state intervention, while maintaining the potential to generate savings in a harsh economic climate. Opportunities for continued and future investment should be explored. This pilot project, in line with previous early intervention studies, produces some compelling human and financial incentives for continuing VLP and for its funded replication beyond the Kent boundaries.

## Section 1: Introduction

*“It’s good – me and the boss get on real well - I’ve got money, good things in my life now - a job and then an NVQ – might help me stay out of trouble”*

*(Youth Offender)*

### Project Overview

The Vulnerable Learner Apprenticeship Project (VLP) is a pilot funded through Kent County Council. The project sat within the Supporting Independence Programme (SIP) Team and the SIP Project Manager was assigned to oversee the development and implementation of the project. VLP began in September 2010 and was originally planned to run for 18 months. A 4 month extension means the project is due to finish in August 2012, a 24 month duration. VLP focusses on 4 groups of vulnerable young people aged between 16 and 24 years, deemed to be furthest from the labour market and considered ‘NEET’ in that they were ‘Not in Employment, Education or Training’ prior to the project. The NEET groups in this project were i) Young Parents ii) Young People with Learning and/or Physical Disabilities and/or Mental Health Issues iii) Young Offenders iv) Looked After Children Leaving Care.

As of February 2010 Kent had an unemployment rate of 3.5%, this is below the national rate of 7.85% (ranging from 2.1% in Tunbridge Wells to 6% in Thanet). This suggests that the performance of VLP is not too dependent on a particularly disadvantageous jobs market, compared to the UK as a whole. However, the effects of the recession in Kent are in line with national trends. The jobless total for the whole county rose by 1,964 to 37,328, in February 2010, the highest it has been since May 1997 and the number on Jobseekers' Allowance subsequently rose by 1,608 to 29,669 (3.5 %).<sup>1</sup>

VLP aimed to develop local services within Kent to enable 20 young people from each group to access local apprenticeship opportunities to help them engage/re-engage more fully in the labour market and improve their long term employment prospects. In order to address the reluctance of employers to employ these groups, part of the funding was used to pay the salary of each young person (£105 pw) for 12 months with the support of local specialist teams. The project teams were Catch 22 for the Care Leavers, The Kent Young Parents Team, Kent Supported Employment (KSE) for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Mental Health problems and/or Physical Disabilities and the Youth Offending Service. Ten Training Providers have also been involved to assess the suitability of the candidates and to deliver the training and assessment aspects of the apprenticeship. In the initial stages of VLP a Project Steering Group was established to oversee the strategic development of the project and review progress against objectives. An Operational Project Group was also set up in November 2010 to enable those delivering the project to share their experiences and raise any issues with the project team. A cut off point of May 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 was set as an initial deadline for recruitment of apprentices; this however, was extended to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2011.

This report evaluates the progress of the project from September 1<sup>st</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012, a 19 month duration. Any extrapolations about what will happen in the future of VLP represent our best estimates based on the data we have collected.

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<sup>1</sup> Kent County Council (2011) Research & Intelligence [shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/facts-and-figures/Unemployment/un11-2011.pdf](http://shareweb.kent.gov.uk/Documents/facts-and-figures/Unemployment/un11-2011.pdf)

### General Context – VLP Rationale

Research has shown the potential benefits of engaging NEET groups in the labour market. On the one hand engagement offers people increased career prospects, greater access to normative lifestyles and improved quality of life and health outcomes. On the other, it offers increased societal expectations about what these individuals can achieve and a more coherent and less ‘broken’ society. Previous research has identified the potential that early intervention has to provide savings to public sector finance, due to decreased service usage on the part of the young people, reductions in state benefits, and increased Tax Revenue to the Treasury.

### The Potential of Early Intervention

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have data that shows that the UK compares very poorly to other countries in youth unemployment, estimating that the productivity loss to the economy as a result of youth unemployment at £10m a day.<sup>2</sup> Research by the Prince’s Trust in 2007 estimated that the percentage of young people who are NEET could be as high as 20%,<sup>3</sup> costing around £90m a week to the public purse, and that the cost of young people unemployed who are classified NEET may be twice as high. Other studies estimate that 1 in 10 young people are classified as NEET at a cost £13 billion to the public purse.<sup>4</sup>

When analysing the financial costs of being NEET, York University’s lowest estimate for the lifetime of 16 to 18 year olds was just short of £12billion and their lowest estimate on resource costs (e.g. services) just under £22billion (highest estimate = £77 billion).<sup>5</sup> The researchers went on to produce case study scenarios where various young people from different NEET groups were considered. In a case study of a Young Offender, failure to prevent the drift into persistent and serious offending is shown to cost the tax payers in excess of £2million whilst a modest investment (of around £7K) may prevent this. This suggests that any cost savings observed, due to early intervention, will increase cumulatively over time. The researcher’s conclusions were that financial investment in early intervention packages, for groups such those in VLP, were required to significantly reduce long term costs to the public purse.

As a 2009 report by the Local Government Association concluded:

*“Britain has got talent – but it is hidden. Latest figures show there are 935,000 young people not in education, employment or training (NEET); the equivalent of a city the size of Birmingham populated entirely with the able, talented but under-utilised young people of Britain.”<sup>6</sup>*

There are a number of reasons for supposing that the VLP should be a financially viable option, compared to the current situation. When young people access apprenticeships there are instant reductions in welfare benefit costs. Should the young person then go on to get a paid job as a result of their apprenticeship, then there are also ‘flowbacks’ through the young

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<sup>2</sup> OECD (2011) Employment Outlook – How does the UK compare? <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/8/13/48684291.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> The Princes Trust (2007) The Cost of Exclusion Counting the Cost of Youth. Disadvantage in the UK. [trust.org.uk/PDF/Princes%20Trust%20Research%20Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf](http://trust.org.uk/PDF/Princes%20Trust%20Research%20Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Audit Commission (2010) Against the odds. Re-engaging young people in education, employment or training Local government. <http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/SiteCollectionDocuments/Downloads/20100707-againsttheoddsfull.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Audit Commission (2010) Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training. Study by the University of York

<sup>6</sup> Local Government Association/Centre for Social studies (2009) ‘Hidden Talents: re-engaging young people. <http://www.lga.gov.uk/lga/aio/2164402>

person's tax and insurance contributions. Government estimates show that youth unemployment and inactivity costs the Exchequer around £20million per week in Job-Seeker's Allowance alone and there are excessively high unemployment rates reported among the VLP cohorts (Learning Disabilities, Mental Health 94%, Young Offenders, 60% , Care Leavers, 33% and Young Parents, 84% ). If we also add to this the potential savings that accrue due to reductions in local service usage (e.g. Penal Reform Services, Local Authority funded Health and Social Service provision, Child Support Services), then there is a strong case for early intervention programmes as an 'invest to save' policy. The range of vulnerable groups supported through VLP are characterised by differences in the type of support they require, the costs involved and the potential to generate savings. We tailored the evaluation framework to explore these differences within each vulnerable group taking part in VLP.

## **Section 2: The Costs of being NEET**

### Youth Offenders

The Prince's Trust estimated that total cost of youth crime for Great Britain was in excess of £1 billion back in 2005 and that the rate of imprisonment is higher in England and Wales than in 12 other European countries. England and Wales also have the highest percentage of prisoners under 18 and the second highest percentage between 18 and 21. Prisoners are much more likely to be socially excluded than the general population; they are 13 times as likely to have been in care as a child; 13 times as likely to be unemployed; 10 times as likely to have been a regular truant; and 2.5 times as likely to have had a family member convicted of a criminal offence.<sup>7</sup>

Maybe the most striking findings associated with Young Offenders are the amount of disruption this relatively small group can cause within their local communities. Recently, the Kent Youth Offending Team identified 57 young people (55 males and 2 females) within the county. Thirty one per cent had engaged in theft, 23% in criminal damage with 21% being violent to other persons. Between them they had committed 822 offences and 55% of the young people were considered to pose a serious risk to others. There is also a link between offending and unemployment: in 2008, 60% of 18-20 year-olds were unemployed the month before entering custody and 37% were unemployed for the previous year. Re-offending rates are also high with 78.2% of young people sentenced to custody re-offending within one year. For community sentences, this figure is 70.3%.<sup>8</sup>

The financial costs of re-offending to society are high. The total cost of recorded crime committed by ex-prisoners is estimated at around £11 billion per year.<sup>9 10</sup> Around 4 per cent of all ex-prisoners are Young Offenders, therefore, a crude calculation suggests that the annual re-offending costs of this one group (excluding Young Offenders on community sentences) could be upwards of £440 million. According to the Audit Commission, early intervention to prevent young people offending could save public services more than £80

<sup>7</sup> The Princes Trust (2007) The Cost of Exclusion Counting the Cost of Youth Disadvantage in the UK. [trust.org.uk/PDF/Princes%20Trust%20Research%20Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf](http://trust.org.uk/PDF/Princes%20Trust%20Research%20Cost%20of%20Exclusion%20apr07.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> Kent Youth Offending Service (2009) Re Offending Rates. [http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Childrens\\_Services/Kent\\_Childrens\\_Trust/KCT\\_Axec/April\\_2010/Item\\_4\\_Youth\\_Justice\\_Plan](http://www.kenttrustweb.org.uk/UserFiles/CW/File/Childrens_Services/Kent_Childrens_Trust/KCT_Axec/April_2010/Item_4_Youth_Justice_Plan)

<sup>9</sup> Education of Young People Supervised by the Youth Justice System: Background Paper DCFS ( 2007). <https://education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/Youth%20Justice%20-%20Next%20Steps.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Welsh, S 2010 – DY0 population in Kent Criminal Justice Board.



million a year. It costs just over £4,000 to educate a child at school for a year, compared with almost double this to educate them in a Young Offender institution for a year. It has also been estimated that it costs a total of over £60,000 per year to house each young person in a Young Offender institution and upwards of £200,000 in secure training centres and secure children's homes. In 2006, the Youth Justice Board spent £281 million on secure accommodation.

### Young Parents

Research shows that 40,000 young women per year under the age of 18 become pregnant.<sup>11</sup> They are also three times more likely to be NEET, have a much greater chance of being in workless households, find it difficult to access acceptable and affordable childcare, suffer disincentives due to welfare benefits and low wage rates, and are more likely to be anxious about financial pressures, have relationship problems and suffer low self-esteem.<sup>12</sup> The research also shows that there may be powerful social determinants that effect Young Parents. Many Young Parents live in economically deprived areas, with high multigenerational unemployment, often with high crime rates and poor school performance rates; their upbringing is often disrupted, with families more likely to be abusing drugs and alcohol, they were often discontented with their childhood and have low expectations of their career potential. Clearly, one of the most obvious barriers is childcare costs: recent reports putting the average weekly childcare bill at £92 per week.

Most County Councils, as in Kent, aim to reduce this birth conception rate. Although the York study estimated an average lifetime public finance cost of £56,301 for a young person who is NEET aged 16 to 18, they conclude that the costs for teenage parents are likely to be higher. In one case study scenario, the divergent life paths of 'Sophie A' (supported through small scale local projects) and 'Sophie B' (who gets involved in drugs and alcohol) are compared. Sophie A goes on to find work as nurse after training, while Sophie B goes on to have a second child, both of who are taken into care. The researchers go on to compare the financial outcomes for each 'Sophie', suggesting that the costs for Sophie A (following a modest £4,000 investment in service costs) generate a total lifetime saving of £761,227, compared to Sophie B.

Some reports have highlighted the lack of financial incentive for Young Parents to get paid jobs.<sup>13</sup> A study by the Aviva Insurance Company, based on 6,000 families, suggests that 32,000 women have left the workforce since last year after their income was "eroded by the associated costs of working". When the cost of childcare and the expenses incurred getting to and from work are added, many part-time workers would be better off if they did not work. The report goes on to state:

*"The average woman with two children (one year and seven years old) would be out of pocket by £98 per month if she worked part time and better off by just £120 per month if she worked full time."*

The recent government response has been to increase Working Tax Credits to make it more affordable for Young Parents to work full time. This inevitably comes with a financial cost as the Young Parents continue, during work, to receive child and housing benefits on top of

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<sup>11</sup> Audit Commission Targeting Briefing (2010).

[http://www.auditcommission.gov.uk/localgov/nationalstudies/againsttheodds/Pages/targetedbriefingsforpractitioners\\_copy.aspx](http://www.auditcommission.gov.uk/localgov/nationalstudies/againsttheodds/Pages/targetedbriefingsforpractitioners_copy.aspx)

<sup>12</sup> Audit Commission (2010) Estimating the life-time cost of NEET: 16-18 year olds not in Education, Employment or Training. Study by the University of York

<sup>13</sup> Aviva Review of Childcare Costs (2011) <http://www.aviva.com/media/news/12823/>

Working Tax Credits or Employment Support Allowance, to top up income for those working part-time.

### Young Care Leavers

Research suggests that a third (33%) of looked after children, aged 19 are NEET, ranging from 34% to 87% in England. Only 12% of children in care achieve 5 A-C GCSEs, compared to 53% of all children. These numbers could be increasing; recent estimates suggest an increase by 5% since 2009 and by 26% since 2006.<sup>14</sup> Research by The Care Leavers Association suggest that approximately 1% of children are in care (currently just over 60,000), mainly in foster care or residential homes with between 6,000 and 7,000 young people leaving care annually in England.

*“These figures, extrapolated across the life course, explain how we came to our conservative estimate of approximately 350,000 adults in the UK as a whole who spent part or all of their childhood in care. For some of these adults, their time in care will have been relatively brief - a few months or a year - whilst for others it will have encompassed their entire childhood up to the age of 18.”<sup>15</sup>*

They identify that often they may be the victims of abuse or neglect with many getting into trouble at home or at school. Many of these young people – currently over 50,000 – will spend a short time ‘in care’ and return home. However, they estimate that 8,500 will leave the care of social services aged between 16 and 18 years. The Care Leavers Association concludes that there is a need to support these young people to develop a greater sense of belonging and self-worth and a supportive network.

### Learning Disabilities/Mental Health/Physically Disabled

Historically, people with Learning Disabilities and those with mental health issues have been among the most disempowered members of our society, experiencing segregation and marginalisation from mainstream community activities,<sup>16</sup> high levels of unemployment,<sup>17</sup> and often lead unfulfilled and empty lives.<sup>18</sup> Recent Government reports suggest unemployment rates among people with learning disabilities is as high as 95%, with very few young people progressing into work straight from special school or through vocationally oriented college courses.<sup>19</sup> Many remain permanently unemployed. Recently, concern has arisen within the UK about the extent that this group of adults are accessing and progressing via life-long learning routes within Local Authorities. For most adults with a learning disability in the UK the options for accessing progressive routes into paid employment are severely restricted or unattainable.

Although estimates vary, as of 2004, it could be estimated that only 12% of adults with learning disabilities were in paid employment.<sup>20</sup> In 2007, a survey by Community Care surveyed over

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<sup>14</sup> Department of Health (1999) Stein, M & Wade, J Social Work Research and Development Unit University of York.  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/145836.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> As above

<sup>16</sup> Wolfensberger, W. (1972). The Principle of Normalization in Human Services, Syracuse University Press. Syracuse, New York.

<sup>17</sup> Pathways to Work (2002). Department of Work and Pensions.  
<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/consult/2002/pathways/pathways.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Beyer, S., Kilsby, M. & Lowe, K. (1994). What do ATCs offer? A survey of Welsh Day Services. Mental Handicap Research, 7, 16-40.

<sup>19</sup> Department for Education (2011) The Wolf Report - Review of Vocational Education.  
[www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/The%20Wolf%20Report.pdf](http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/The%20Wolf%20Report.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Department of Health, *Valuing people: The story so far... A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century – Long report*, 22 March 2005, available at  
[http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/P](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4107054&chk=i8aSgl)  
[ublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT\\_ID=4107054&chk=i8aSgl](http://www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4107054&chk=i8aSgl) (accessed 27 July 2005)

1,000 people with learning disabilities and found that although 66% wanted a job, only 22% had one.<sup>21</sup> The majority of school leavers either become dependent on local day services or more recently, Colleges of Further Education which rarely enables them to progress into paid work. More recently, there has been a move towards people with learning disabilities accessing college courses on leaving school. However, the extent that these routes are providing valid opportunities for people to progress into employment is questionable. Many students fail to gain a qualification beyond that of foundation level and few go on to use their newly learned knowledge to develop their careers beyond the learning stage. One consequence of this has been that students have tended to move from one course to another without progressing into employment or end up attending a local Day Centre.

The situation for people with Mental Health issues is also acute. Research shows that less than 40% of employers would consider employing someone with a mental health issue.<sup>22</sup> A recent Labour Force Survey showed that 88% of those with longer-term mental health issues were unemployed.<sup>23</sup> One of the main barriers to employment is the stigma associated with Mental Health issues, which often reflects society's general lack of understanding about the nature and treatment of mental illness.<sup>24</sup> As with people with learning disabilities research indicates that with appropriate on-going support, 58% of people with serious on-going mental health issues can achieve competitive employment.

Again, research has shown the potential financial benefits of enabling these groups to access employment at an early age. A national study of supported employment for people with learning disabilities in the UK of 1,400 supported employees across 201 agencies found that from the worker perspective, financial benefits exceeded costs, creating a cost to benefits ratio of 2.47, meaning that supported workers gained £2.47 for every £1 lost in the transition to employment. From the taxpayer perspective, Tax and National Insurance yields were lower than might have been expected, but still saving 43p for every £1 spent.<sup>25</sup>

A report in North Lanarkshire showed that people with disabilities were 113% financially better off after employment, experienced a shift from Income Support to Working Tax Credit once employed and had earnings that represented 50.3% of income in work, the rest being made up of Disability Living Allowance and Working Tax Credit. It also found a 47.5% lower cost compared to Social Service Funded Day Service provision, suggesting a potential saving to the government of 25p for every £1 invested in the service. The key to this success was relatively high numbers of people working over 16 hours (94% of workers), the average being 22.1 hours per week per worker with a learning disability. Working only a few hours and retaining welfare benefits means that people pay little tax, and there are few financial flow-backs to the Treasury, while costs of support programmes remain significant. More recently, a financial cost benefit analysis of Kent Supported Employment, estimated a saving of £1,290 to the LA and £3,564 per person per year at the tax payer level. Research shows that people with physical disabilities are 5 times more likely to be unemployed, compared to

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<sup>21</sup> Community Care (2007) Employment barriers for people with learning disabilities  
<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/31/05/2007/104643/Employment-barriers-for-people-with-learning-disabilities.htm?printerfriendly=true>

<sup>22</sup> Perkins, R Renaldi, M (2002) Unemployment rates among patients with long-term mental health problems - A decade of rising unemployment. *The Psychiatrist* Vol 26, 295-298

<sup>23</sup> (Department for Education and Employment,(1998) Labour Force Survey.

<sup>24</sup> Perkins, R Renaldi, M (2002) Unemployment rates among patients with long-term mental health problems - A decade of rising unemployment. *The Psychiatrist* Vol 26, 295-298

<sup>25</sup> Beyer, S., Goodere, L. and Kilsby, M. (1996). *Costs and benefits of supported employment in Britain*. London: The Stationery Office, London.

non-disabled people and are twice as likely to be in poverty.<sup>26</sup> As with the other vulnerable groups, there is a negative stigma and misconception about people with physical disabilities. Research by Scope suggests that many employers feel they cannot afford to hire a person with disabilities and did not know whether there were costs involved.

Disabled people are more than twice as likely as non-disabled people to have no qualifications.<sup>27</sup> The Register for Partially Blind People shows that many people with physical and visual disabilities also have additional disabilities. Of those people registered as blind with an additional disability, 4% have a mental health problem, 8% have a learning disability, 60% have a physical disability and 27% have a hearing impairment. Of those people registered as partially sighted with an additional disability, 4% have a mental health problem, 4% have a learning disability, 61% have a physical disability and 30% have a hearing impairment.<sup>28</sup>

### **Section 3: Evaluation Questions and Method**

The main questions of the evaluation are:

1. What are the procedural implications for delivering the VLP pilot project, what does the service look like?
2. Who are the beneficiary groups of the project and do those entering the project match the characteristics of the local and national target groups set for supported employment programme and local strategies?
3. Do the apprenticeships obtained reflect a variety of choice for individuals across the employment sectors and where there is economic growth?
4. Have the young people become more integrated into the community as a whole?
5. What proportion of beneficiaries move into paid employment as a result of the project over the project duration?
6. What are the main reasons for the young people falling off of the project and how effective are follow-up procedures?
7. What role did the specialist support offered through the project to the employers and beneficiaries play in the success of the pilot?
8. What are the employer's perspectives on hiring vulnerable adults on apprenticeships (Including would they be happy to pay wages directly)?
9. Do the attitudes of the employers, supervisors, and others change as a result of the project, to be more accepting of these groups of young people?
10. What are the teenager's perspectives on the project – including why they chose an apprenticeship, what worked well and what have been the main barriers to them accessing apprenticeships and progressing?
11. To what extent, if any, has obtaining an apprenticeship resulted in the beneficiaries becoming more independent and less reliant on health and social service provision?
12. What are the financial implications for the beneficiaries - are the young people financially better off as a result of being on the project?
13. What are the cost implications for delivering the project? Are there any potential savings to the Local Authority (LA)?

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<sup>26</sup> Turner, J (2004) Physical Disability, Unemployment, and Mental Health. *Rehabilitation. Psychology*, Vol 49 (3), Aug 2004, 241-249

<sup>27</sup> UK's Office for National Statistics' Labour Force Survey, Spring 2005

<sup>28</sup> [http://www.ic.nhs.uk/webfiles/publications/009\\_Social\\_Care/Regblind11/Registered\\_Blind\\_and\\_Partially\\_Sighted\\_People\\_England\\_31\\_March\\_2011.pdf](http://www.ic.nhs.uk/webfiles/publications/009_Social_Care/Regblind11/Registered_Blind_and_Partially_Sighted_People_England_31_March_2011.pdf)

14. What is the Net Present Value of VLP in terms of amount saved/returned for the investment from the Government/Taxpayer perspective?
15. What recommendations can be made for developing and progressing the project/service further and what are the implications for future funding and investment?

## Evaluation Method

The method focussed on the following 8 areas of information gathering:

### 1. Literature Review

This includes local employment, local context, national strategies and research for each vulnerable group.

### 2. What is the project delivery model?

Identifying the project delivery is important both in terms of describing the key components and a in developing replicable approach. This includes a description of the main services, operational procedures and staffing structures. Interviews were conducted with main project deliverers and key staff in April 2011 and March 2012. Deliverers were asked about their roles and responsibilities within the project, their views about how the project was progressing, what had worked well and not so well, the processes of communication within VLP, and how the Specialist services and Training Providers had adapted their services according to the challenges and demands of the project.

In order to describe the delivery model further, the evaluators devised an excel database for the 4 specialist teams to complete on a monthly basis pertaining to the activities they had undertaken. The teams were asked to identify the proportion of their time spent on various activities including time spent meeting and directly supporting the beneficiaries, time spent with the young people's families and parents, at project meetings, in meeting employers and other organisations.

### 3. What are the characteristics of the young people and the apprenticeships they obtained?

To assist in answering questions 2, 3 and 4 the evaluators devised a spread sheet for the project teams to update each month. This also allows the tracking of data over time, specifying when the apprenticeship started, when and if it finished and reasons for premature drop out.

**Table 1: Descriptive Information Collected**

<b>Prior to starting Apprenticeship/ At referral</b>	<b>On starting and during the Apprenticeship</b>	<b>Following Apprenticeship</b>
Name and D.O.B	Date apprenticeship started	Date completed
Employment background	Title of Apprenticeship	Qualification obtained
Residential status	Employer contact details	Date if fell out off app prior to completion
Marital status	Duration of App	Reason for above
Number of children	SEAC or KCC	Details of any follow-up procedures
Services received	Hours worked	
Stage in Apps programme		

#### 4. What are the financial costs and benefits of VLP?

In the current financial climate, identifying the financial impact of VLP is crucial. Most cost benefit analysts look at costs/saving at the 'Individual Level', to see if the beneficiaries were better off as a result of the intervention, the Local Authority (LA) level, due to beneficiaries using less local services, and at the Taxpayer Level, reflected in such things as reductions to welfare benefits payments and increased income from indirect taxation (VAT) and National Insurance contributions. Savings at the LA level are not just evaluated on amount of service usage, but also on any observed reductions in costs for the services it funds.

A broad distinction can be made between monies flowing directly to the service/intervention from the treasury, and those filtering down to the services via LA budgets. This distinction is important as it allows any savings or costs identified due to VLP to be linked to specific funding streams, either local (e.g., LA) or national (e.g., DWP) ones. Most previous analysis in this field compare the 'pre' situation (unemployed person) to the 'post' one (person in paid work). With VLP it is also possible to look at the financial impact *during* the intervention over the sustained period of an apprenticeship (usually 1 year). It is expected that there will be savings at the taxpayer level during the apprenticeships, as increased income would directly lead to reductions in welfare benefits payments: notably, in Income Support, Employment Support and Job Seeker's Allowances. Of interest was whether or not these savings outweighed the intervention costs of the VLP, and what savings could be predicted given a number of the young people move into employment as a result of VLP.

An Excel Spread sheet was developed and incorporated into the main data base. This allowed separate feedback from each of the 4 vulnerable groups. Financial information was collected on each of the following variables, for the 'pre', 'during' and 'post' conditions.

**Table 2: List of Welfare Benefits and Tax Information Collected**

Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance (SG), Employment Support Allowance (WRC), Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disability Allowance (Mobility), Severe Disability Allowance (Care), Income Support, Housing Benefits, Working Tax Credits, In-Work Tax Credits Council Tax Deductions, Education Support Allowance, Child Benefits, Child Tax Credits, National Insurance Contribution.

This allowed us to compile a matrix comparing the situations before, during and after the apprenticeships, providing an overall indication of the savings due to reductions across the benefit types. Also collected were National Insurance and Tax Contributions made by the young people when, or if, they moved into paid work. These can be broken down by cohorts, to assess the relative costs and savings for each vulnerable group, given sufficient sample sizes. To do this we made the following of assumptions.

#### *Cost Assumptions for Welfare Benefits and Tax Revenue Calculations*

This cost-benefit analysis was bound by practical limitations and takes into account the immediate costs associated with the VLP project and not those on the periphery such as the costs/savings associated with the use GPs, Health Specialists and Social workers. It is also bound by caveats and assumptions and in some instances, restricted by the sample sizes. In the 'post' condition we began with an assumption that those in, or having successfully completed, their qualification as of March 2012, will engage in 12 months paid employment in the 'post' condition. Establishing causality between the intervention and any subsequent

work outcomes is notoriously difficult and would involve detailed follow up at a later date. In this evaluation we use an ‘if’-‘then’ approach, meaning that *if* the described employment outcomes are achieved, *then* these are the resulting financial outcomes. This allowed a comparison of the cost differences between the 3 situations.

The Cost-Benefit Calculation was based on the following formulae and aims to derive a ‘Net Present Value’ (NPV) of the project to derive the net cash balance benefit identifying the savings or costs associated with the intervention.  $R_t$ , represents the net cash flow (inflows - outflows). Where  $N$  represents the sample size,  $t$  represents the current time and duration of the cash flow, and  $i$  represents the ‘discounted alternative’ such as the police services, welfare services, local adult day services, or comparison with local service costs.<sup>29</sup>

$$NPV = \sum_{t=0}^N \frac{R_t}{(1 + i)^t}$$

This was applied to the VLP situation in the following way:

- A. The amount of welfare benefits payments from the treasury, including working and child tax credits, council tax deductions and housing benefit payments made to the young people when NEET;
- B. As A above, but the total during their apprenticeships;
- C. The sum total of A, less any national insurance and income tax payments in the post condition;
- D. The balance during the apprenticeship calculated as B - A to produce a + savings or – cost balance;
- E. The balance following employment calculated as C-A to produce a + savings or – cost balance;
- F. The overall net cash balance calculated as D – E to produce a + savings or – cost balance in terms of savings or costs for every £1 invested in the intervention.

VLP costs were calculated as the amount spent on VLP up to March 2012 over the current project duration to produce monthly and yearly running costs (the investment figure). Better-off figures were calculated in the same way, but were based on the young peoples’ net income per week. To compensate for the potential for those still on the project to drop off VLP, a project fall-out rate was calculated as the proportion of those who started an apprenticeship as of March 2012. This is a conservative measure, as it is likely that less young people will leave the project as they approach the end of their apprenticeships. We predicted the effects of the fall out rate by adjusting the overall balance figures proportionately downwards. Extrapolations made about potential longer term savings at the Taxpayer level, resulting from each young person spending an additional 5 years in employment (over and above the post condition) were made by taking forward the balance of savings observed in the post apprenticeship condition and assuming no further intervention costs above and beyond those already existent within the LA (i.e. additional investment monies). In calculating the benefit-cost ratios associated with each cohort we assumed that the total investment figure was evenly distributed between the 4 cohorts.

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<sup>29</sup> Often referred to as the ‘Discounted Rate’.

For those predicted to enter paid work, we assumed they were paid at minimum wage rates (£4.98ph for this age group prior to April 2012), representing a conservative approach to this calculation, underestimating the flow backs generated through Tax and NI contributions. We assumed that 70% of those gaining work within the cohorts (other than Young Parents) moved into full time paid work at 37hpw, and 30% moved into a part time job at 15.5hpw.<sup>30</sup> We also assumed that 70% of the Young Parents would move into part time work, due to maternal commitments, following their apprenticeship. We also calculated cost figures based upon the assumption all the young people entered full time work for comparison.

We also assumed that all the young people were under the capital threshold set for benefits (£16,000 savings). The benefits calculation takes account of the *current* rate and type of benefits that the young people would be receiving if they left the project prematurely at this stage (prior to April 2012). Similarly, it makes no sense to compare a young person's benefits pre 18 (where they are ineligible), to now, when they are. We had no precise figures regarding the amount paid by those renting accommodation. We assumed a rent of £480pppm and an average payment for Council TAX of £900py.<sup>31</sup> Given that all those renting were found to be single, we calculated a 25% deduction rate maintained for single occupancy while the young people were in their apprenticeship and following paid work. We also assumed that the young people renting accommodation had sole responsibility for household bills and had no changes of address during employment. For those in post apprenticeship employment we took the current Personal Tax Allowance of £7,475 and a 23% tax rate on gross earnings. We calculated travel expenses to and from work at £25pwpp and factored in £92pw child care cost figure for the Young Parents. National Insurance Contribution was calculated at 12% of £9,500 =£1,440pppy.

It also excludes the impact of an increase in flow backs generated by any observed increases/decreases in the spending power of the young people, such as VAT charged on purchasing local goods and services. Finally this evaluation considered the concept associated with 'displacement'. Displacement assumes that if the vulnerable person were not helped to work in these jobs then non-vulnerable people would do them. This would require costing-in any out-of-work benefits and allowances paid to the unemployed non-vulnerable person. However, previous evaluations on supported employment and displacement have shown these effects to be less important than was previously believed and smaller for vulnerable groups compared to the general labour market.<sup>32, 33</sup>

### *Calculations based on Reduced Service Usage*

Clearly, savings from reduced welfare benefits and increases in tax revenue are only one part of the equation. There will also be savings due to other factors such as a reduction in the use of services and the costs they incur. For the VLP groups this would be reductions in the need for locally delivered services such as Penal and Reform Services, reductions in LA funded Health and Social Service provision, and Child Support Services.

One calculation would be to divide the actual costs of services, provided to any one particular group, by the numbers of people receiving the service, to produce a cost per person per year

<sup>30</sup> These figures taken from averages from the Office for Statistics for full v part time split and hours

<sup>31</sup> Figure based on average amount that housing benefits paid, provided by the Job Centre in Maidstone, private correspondence

<sup>32</sup> Tuckerman, P; Smith, R; Borland J (1999). 'The relative cost of employment for people with a significant intellectual disability: the Australian experience'. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 13-2, 109-116.

<sup>33</sup> Kilsby, M and Beyer S (2011) A Financial Cost Benefit Analysis of Kent Supported Employment – Establishing a Framework for Analysis. <https://shareweb.kent>



comparison, which can easily be translated into 'per month' figures. This could act as the 'discounted service' in the above formula and arriving at an alternative cost rate. However, while it is straightforward to compare the outcomes for each condition as it applies to the taxpayer, generating accurate service cost comparators at the LA level is notoriously difficult, as they depend on the accuracy of the cost figures produced and are often the 'best case scenarios', based on individual cases, which can create overestimates of the potential savings when applied to whole groups. For many vulnerable groups the data to allow this direct comparison is absent and we have to extrapolate findings from the existing research literature or from developing frameworks that allow alternative local services to be costed.

#### 5. What are the Employer's Perspectives?

Originally we aimed to get a sample of 20 employer views; however this was increased to 25 in August 2011. This would have constituted a 31% employer sample if the target of 80 apprenticeships had been achieved, all with different employers. By April 2011 the 57 young people undertaking an apprenticeship were spread across 40 employers and 25 of the 40 employers had been contacted, constituting a 62% sample. Further employer views were to be sought in March 2012 via focus groups, however this was cancelled as not enough employers could spare the time to come. To compensate, 16 employers were contacted by telephone interviews, and 8 were interviewed via the case studies as described below. This allowed the evaluators to identify any changes in employer views in the 11 months covering April 2011 to March 2012. The interviews included asking employers if they would have hired the person on an apprenticeship if the salary had not been covered by KCC; to describe any apprehensions they had about hiring the young person, and perceived benefits of the project to the organisation. They were also asked whether they participated in the VLP with a view to hiring the young person, their views on the benefits to the young person and if they would recommend the VLP to other employers.

#### 6. What are the Young People's Views of the VLP?

It was initially intended to conduct telephone interviews to capture the opinions of the young people in April 2011 asking them a number of questions to help get a sense of why they were participating in the project and what they hoped to gain from pursuing an apprenticeship and then repeat the exercise in March 2012 with the support of focus groups. However, in practice contacting the young people proved very difficult. As a result, 52 of the 69 young people who started their apprenticeships were contacted up to March 2012 (75%). Consequently, the emphasis of the questions changed in October 2012 to the reflective opinions of the young people to tell us about any problems or barriers they had encountered along the way and any aspirations they had for the future beyond VLP. These were written up in an ethnographic style, describing the thoughts and opinions of the young people through 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> person narrative.

#### 7. What are the Views of the VLP Deliverers?

Semi Structured interviews were conducted with the project Manager, the Champions and the Training Providers at April 2011 and March 2012. The aim was to get the deliverer's opinions on how the project had gone, how it could be improved and identify future potential issues. Although the interview questions were tailored specific to each deliverer's organisation the general themes were: What does your training organisation do and what is your role in it? How many people from VLP are you currently working with? How are you working/supporting them? What issues/problems if any have arisen? Have there been any differences between working with the vulnerable learners and typical ones? What issues/problems have arisen, if any, due to these differences? What have been the barriers and

the success stories so far? The procedures adapted in the VLP can be broadly split between the period up to the young people entering their apprenticeship and those adopted once the young person has started. A list of recommendations from the deliverers was also compiled.

In April 2011 the evaluators interviewed each of the 4 Champions, The Project Manager, and KATO Director of Operations responsible for co-ordinating local training providers, 3 Connexions co-ordinators and a Performance Monitoring Administration Officer working with Catch 22. A young apprentice also attended the Young Parents Team interview. In March 2012, the evaluators interviewed the 4 champions the project manager and the KATO Director of Operations. A focus group, intended for the Training Providers was set up, but low attendance meant that feedback was obtained from follow-up telephone calls and via email from 6 of the Training Providers.

#### 8. Eight Case Studies

The evaluators conducted 8 case studies (2 from each cohort) aimed at getting a more in-depth view of the young people's experiences of the VLP which were written-up as personal narratives. They involved in-depth interviews with the young people to develop a better picture of their background, get more detailed accounts of their experiences and type of support they got from the specialist teams, family and relatives, the training providers and the employers. Each case study included a summary of the benefits and costs to each person and to the taxpayer.

#### Report Write-up

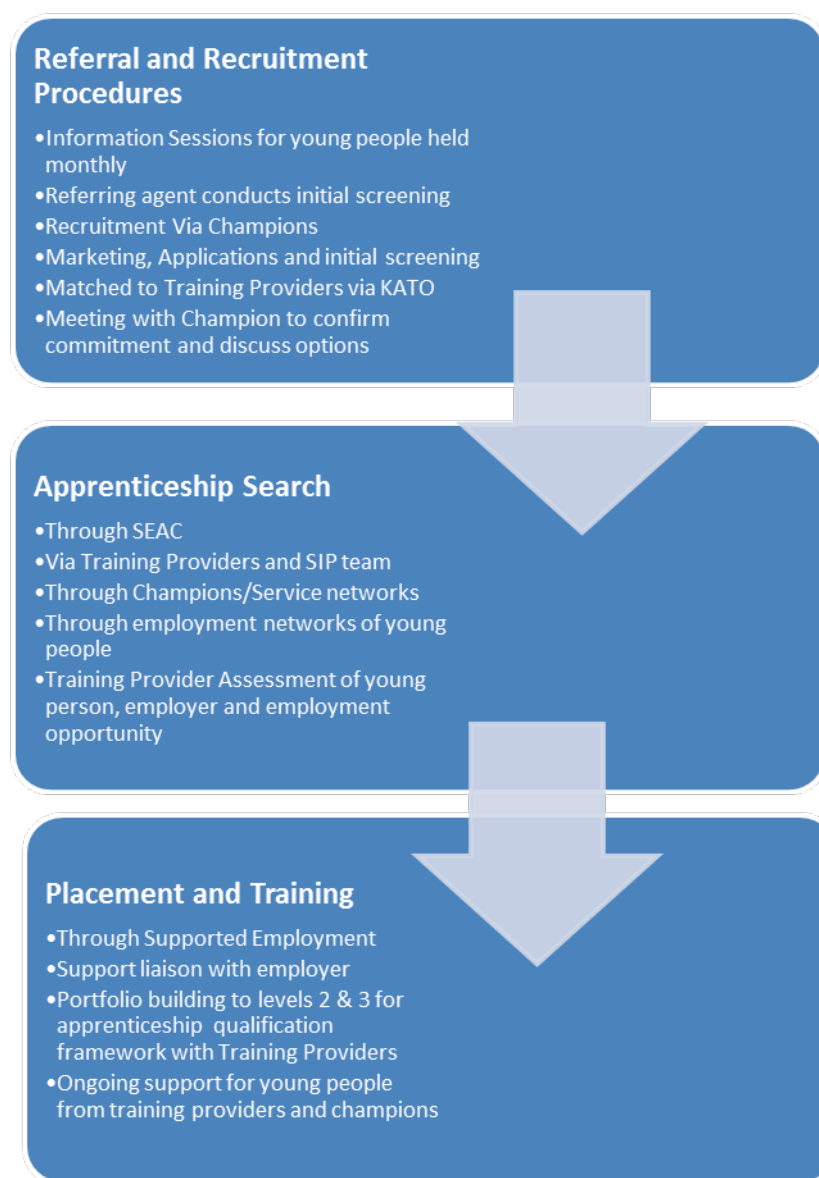
The information was collated to produce a report and identify opportunities to develop, adapt and amend the strategy to increase progression rates and positive outcomes for the beneficiary groups and to assist those wishing to replicate the approach.

### **Section 4: VLP Processes and Procedures**

Figure 1 provides an illustration of the process underpinning VLP. It suggests there are three main procedures: those associated with 'referral and recruitment' for recruiting young people, assessing their eligibility to the project and identifying work preferences; those associated with 'apprenticeship search', for identifying and building relations with host employers; and 'placement and training' procedures aimed at enabling the young person to successfully fit into their apprenticeship and build a portfolio of evidence towards their NVQ qualifications.

Each cohort was assigned a 'Champion' from within a local specialist team who would be the front line contact for the apprentices. The specialist teams were matched to local organisations to utilise and build upon existing service infrastructures. As Figure 1 shows, a number of Training Providers have also been integral to VLP, in assessing the suitability of the candidates for an apprenticeship and to deliver the training and assessment aspects of the apprenticeship. Two of the Training Providers were also host employers. In the initial stages of the VLP a Project Steering Group was established to oversee the strategic development of the project and review progress against objectives. A cut off point of May 31<sup>st</sup> 2011 was set as a deadline to enable 80 young people, 20 for each of the four cohorts, to access the project. This was extended to 31st August 2011 to enable those young people who had identified employers to still be part of the project.

**Figure 1: The VLP Procedure.**



**Training Providers**  
*The Hair Academy,  
 SET Training,  
 KEY Training,  
 IPS International,  
 KEITS,  
 Concept Training,  
 Canterbury College,  
 Amac Training  
 National  
 Construction College  
 JTL  
 Nail and Beauty  
 Academy*

The initial guidance to project deliverers was general in nature, the purpose being that each organisation would adapt their own methods and develop their service infrastructures. Results from interviewing the deliverers in April 2011 show that there were some useful lessons learned during the set-up phase. Host employers reported that communication was initially very confused and required more formalised planning procedures. Most spoke of the need for a central point of contact. Some Champions felt unsure of their roles within the project for example, it was not clear who contacted the employer once the young person had been placed. Additional problems arose when South East Apprenticeship Company (SEAC) did not fulfil their intended role. This led to some of the Champions and the Project Managers having to target and find jobs and most felt this was outside their expertise. Other problems arose when one of the organisations, eager to get their young people involved, started the project prior to all the administration aspects being in place.

The sheer volume of referrals at the project start (157 young people) meant that some Training Providers found it difficult to cope. The database shows that 144 young people were

referred to the project over the first 2 months. Training Providers were unable to carry out their assessment procedures quickly enough creating a bottle-neck with young people stuck in assessment. This led to an average lag time of 11 weeks between the young person being referred to the project and the pre-work assessment, during which time many of the young people lost interest or dropped out of the project completely (28%). Coupled with this was the fact that the assessment procedures (meant for typical groups of young people) were not tailored to take into account the particular and sometimes greater needs of certain groups. Many vulnerable groups lack the necessary literacy and numeracy skills to pass the pre-qualification assessments, and many would struggle to reach the level 2 criteria set for the qualification. During the interviews with deliverers it also became clear that some Training Providers would have benefitted from some form of training about the needs and demands of the cohorts. For example, some did not feel confident about communicating or supporting people with learning disabilities.

It also became clear during set-up that some organisations were better set up to provide employment outcomes for their clients. For example, KSE had a relatively mature supported employment service, set up to contact employers, find jobs, undertake vocational profiling and develop on-going support strategies to assist the young person and the employer once they were in work. The Care Leaver's team, on the other hand, had very few employment supports in place and focussed mainly on the young person's transition into a new home and supporting them to develop their social networks. The potential of the specialist teams to deliver VLP was also affected by the amount of resource available to them beyond the Champion team leaders. Where mature employment focussed procedures were already in place there was greater potential to tap into that resource as part of the overall practice of the organisation (e.g., KSE). With the Young Offenders Team however, the burden of responsibility for screening, and interviewing the young people initially fell solely on the Champion whose job description had been altered to accommodate this new role. In retrospect, the experience that KSE had in developing employment procedures specifically for vulnerable groups was underutilised and could have provided useful information and training for the other specialist teams and the Training Providers when the project began.

#### Adaptations in VLP Procedures

VLP adapted well to these early challenges. A Project Co-ordinator was appointed in January 2011 to act as a central point of contact and oversee the operational implementation of the project. It was also at this stage that the independent evaluators were hired and monitoring procedures established to provide the project and the project co-coordinator with monthly feedback. An Operational Group was also set up which included the Training Providers and key workers who are directly supporting the young people within their apprenticeship. This group also acted as an information exchange for those Training Providers who had limited knowledge or experience of working with young people from the cohorts. Two of the Training Providers employed apprentices on the VLP as did 2 of the specialist organisations.

VLP provides some good examples of developing existing structures within the specialist team's organisations to bridge gaps in their employment transition services. The Young Parents Team used their links to a local crèche to develop upon the existing relationships of the young people and strengthen the social network around them. The Youth Offending Service utilised Connexions Personal Advisors to screen potential applicants and spread the workload, Catch 22 utilized the services of Connexions staff to screen candidates and provide employment search support. Employer Liaison Consultants were commissioned by KCC (8 days) to find host employers across the vulnerable groups. Through the project, the

relationship between KCC and Training Providers was strengthened. A construction Pre-Apprenticeship Programme was also developed for people with Concept Training which helped the young people to understand what would be involved in an Apprenticeship and decide whether it was the right option for them.

The Project also developed Apprenticeship Style Opportunities (ASO) through KSE and KEY Training Services, as it was identified that there were some young people with learning disabilities who would not reach the academic level required for an Intermediate Apprenticeship and an additional programme was developed. An intermediate apprenticeship requires people to have the ability to achieve at least a Level 1 in numeracy and literacy and in most cases the ability to achieve a Level 2 throughout the duration of their apprenticeship. This automatically excluded a high percentage of people who would otherwise have been eligible according to age, disability and vulnerability.

KSE and Key Training Services worked together to develop an innovative programme that included elements of Foundation Learning, Health and Safety in the Workplace and a vocational qualification at Level 1. The young people undertaking an ASO were employed for a minimum of 16 hours per week and the project paid the NMW for their age. The training was a combination of classroom based learning and on the job learning. The ASO programme aimed to replicate an apprenticeship as far as possible but at a lower learning level.

KSE also provided travel training for those who found it difficult to travel independently and the project funded taxi fares for some due to the long distances involved in getting to the classroom session. Funding for the training element of the ASOs was drawn down by KEY Training Service as part of the Adult Responsive funding that they, as a provider, could access. The salary for the young people for 16 hours per week was covered by the project with addition salary being paid by the employer if more hours were worked.

#### Activities of VLP Deliverers

Figure 2 shows the variety of activities undertaken by the specialist teams. It suggests that the deliverers spent the highest proportion of time (44%) meeting with and supporting the young people. This is encouraging, suggesting the primary focus was working directly with the young people. This included supporting the young people to find apprenticeships that matched their interests, providing one-on-one support while the young people were in their jobs and providing moral and motivational assistance. It also shows that a significant proportion of time was spent on administration, including keeping individual records up to date and recording information for project evaluation (22%).

The third largest proportion of time (14%) was spent engaging with the employers, this included: trouble shooting, offering assistance and advice to support the young person and indicates that once an apprenticeship had started, there was a shared responsibility between the specialist teams and the employers. A significant amount of time was also spent in meetings with other organisations mostly with the other project deliverers, excluding project team meetings which accounting for 9% of the activities undertaken. Figure 2 also shows that only small amounts of time were spent on delivering or receiving training, perhaps reflecting a missed opportunity for information sharing between the specialist teams and training providers during VLP set-up.

**Figure 2: Activities of the Specialist Teams Delivering VLP.**



#### Numbers Accessing Apprenticeships.

By August 31st 2011, the final deadline for recruitment, 69 young people had gained an apprenticeship through VLP. This included 21 people with a Learning Disability/Mental Health issue (7 of who undertook an ASO), 9 Care Leavers, 16 Young Offenders and 23 Young Parents.

**Figure 3: Numbers Placed into Apprenticeship up to August 2011**

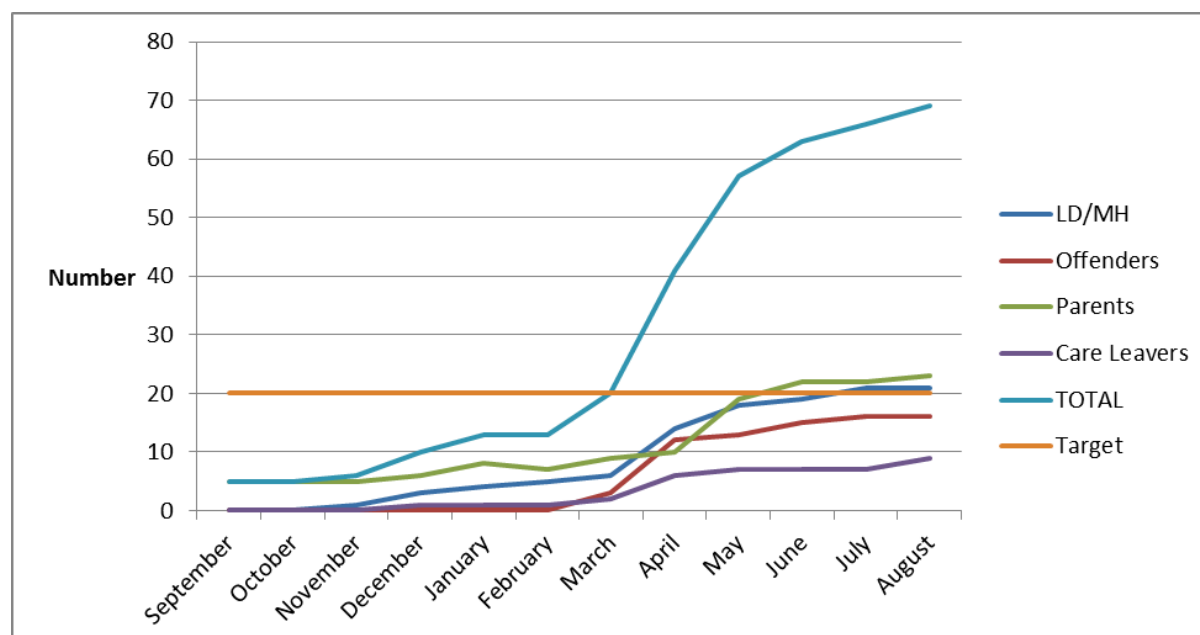
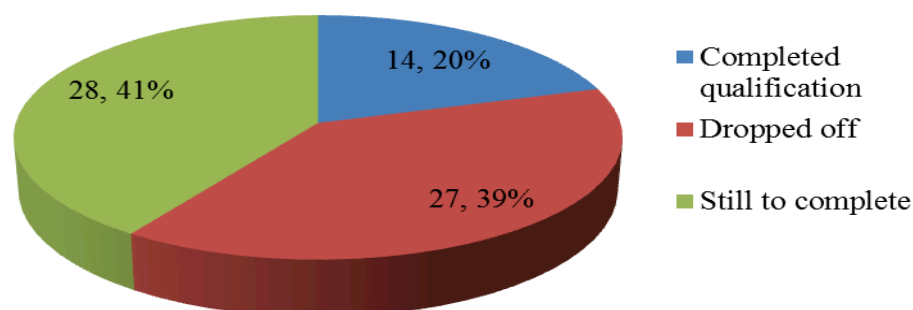


Figure 4 shows that by August 31<sup>st</sup> 2012 of the 69 young people who started their apprenticeships 14 (20%) had obtained a qualification, while 28 (41%) were still on course to complete their qualification and 27 (39%) had dropped off the project.

**Figure 4: Status of Apprentices on VLP Project**



This meant that by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012, 42 young people were still in their apprenticeships: 9 youth offenders, 11 Young Parents, 18 people through KSE and 4 of the 9 Care Leavers.

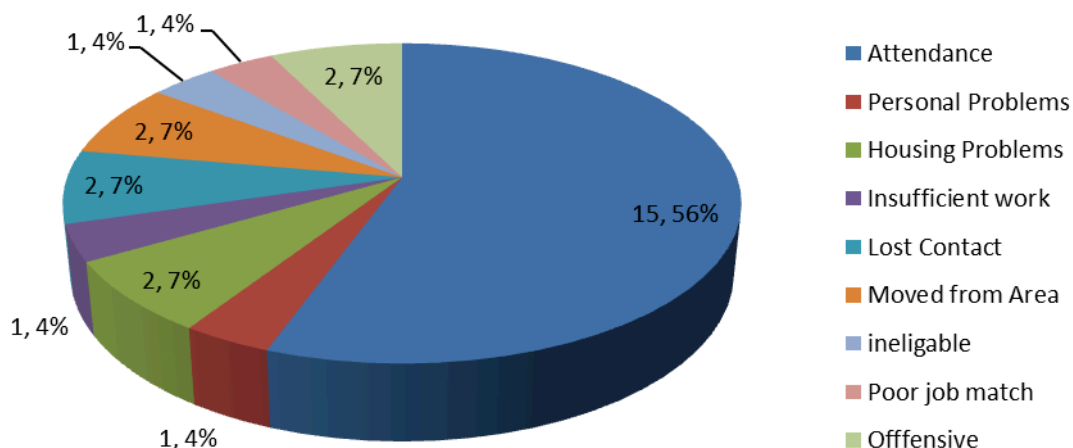
#### Fall-out Rates and Reasons

The VLP fall-out rate of 39% can be compared to recent statistics showing a 24% drop out rate nationally and 26% locally for the 16-24 age groups for non-vulnerable groups in 2009/2010.<sup>34</sup> It would be a notable achievement if VLP remains at this rate given the more complex needs of the cohorts. The Skills Funding Agency reports the average success rate for those actually taking the final qualification throughout the country at 75.5%; of those who have taken the qualification on VLP, all so far have passed. Notably, all 7 of the young people doing ASO's are currently still undertaking their training, reflecting the extended duration required for these young people to complete the qualification. Of those young people not on ASOs who are still undertaking their apprenticeship (21 people), 19 are due to complete their qualification prior to September 2012.

The fall out rates varied across the cohorts. Twelve of the Young Parent's cohort dropped out of the project representing 53% of those who started within this cohort, 5 Care Leavers (56%), 7 Young Offenders (44%) and 3 (14%) from Learning Disabilities/Mental Health cohort. Figure 5 shows that a variety of reasons were reported for the young people leaving the project, suggesting that over half (56%) of those who dropped did so due to poor attendance. This included those who were dismissed for poor timekeeping and motivational issues including 3 of the Youth Offenders. One young Care Leaver left because they were felt to be unsuitable by the employer, 5 individuals simply left and lost contact with the project, one young Care Leaver didn't like their apprenticeship placement, a person with Learning Disability left for health reasons, 2 Young Parents left due to housing problems.

<sup>34</sup> The Data Service (2009) [http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/FF285B3C-3574-4B41-A408-C3801447E642/0/nat\\_SFR\\_Post16\\_Education\\_and\\_Skills\\_June09v6.pdf](http://www.thedataservice.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/FF285B3C-3574-4B41-A408-C3801447E642/0/nat_SFR_Post16_Education_and_Skills_June09v6.pdf)

**Figure 5: Reasons for Young People Dropping off of VLP**



These results reinforce earlier reported findings about the capacity that each organisation had to support the young people once they were in their apprenticeships. Whereas KSE had already established procedures and resources in place to provide on-going support at an individualised level required by each young person, the remaining specialist teams depended upon ad-hoc adaptations, often with very limited resources at their disposal. Interestingly, 4 of the young people reported that the tasks involved in their placements often were not varied or specific enough to fulfil the NVQ criteria, consequently 1 young person left the project and 3 others changed employer, which inevitably delayed their progress. Encouragingly, of the 14 young people who have completed their apprenticeship, only 2 have returned to unemployment, 10 have moved into full time paid work, with the remaining 2 moving onto further education. Conversely, 20 of the 27 young people who dropped out of the project are known to have become unemployed, 3 have moved and 4 people have lost contact with the project. Interestingly, 3 of the young people dropping off the project have moved onto full time employment, raising the ‘causality’ issue outlined in Section 3.

### The Young People

All the young people were NEET prior to entering their apprenticeship with ages at referral ranging from 16 to 24 years old, the average age being 18 and a half years old (mean=18.68 yrs). All Care Leavers accessing apprenticeships were in receipt of 16+ services, while 84% of those obtaining apprenticeships through KSE were known to social services. All the Young Offenders were known by the Youth Offending Team and the majority of Young Parents were receiving emotional and educational support. This suggests that VLP is hitting its target groups.

Figure 6 shows a breakdown of those supported through KSE. It shows that nearly half of the apprentices had learning disabilities (45%), one of whom was also diagnosed with autism and that 3 people were physically impaired (2 visual, 1 hearing). It also shows that 3 apprentices had a dual diagnosis with one person diagnosed as having a learning disability and mental health problems, another reportedly with multiple disabilities. Five of the seven people undertaking an ASO had a learning disability and were taking the qualification at level 1.



**Figure 6: Breakdown of those Supported through KSE**

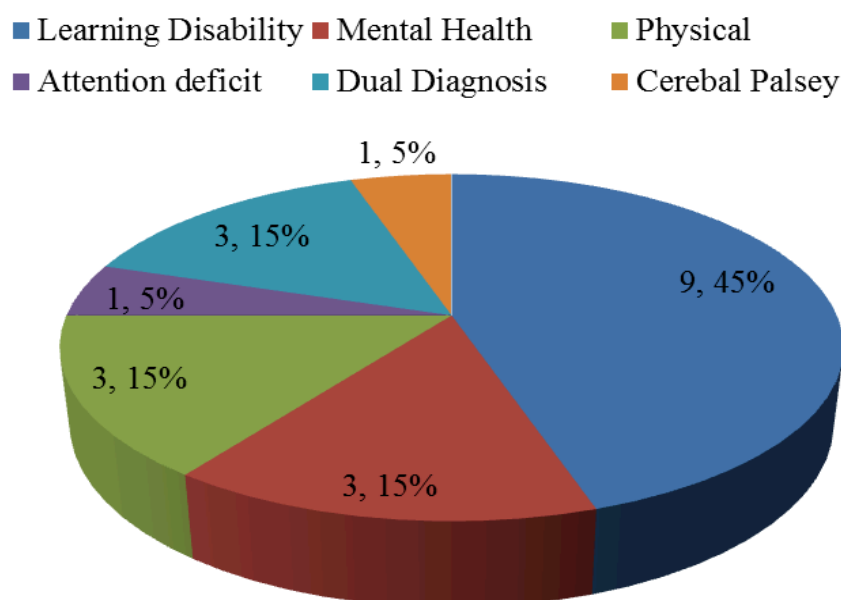
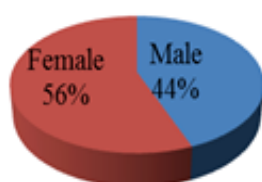
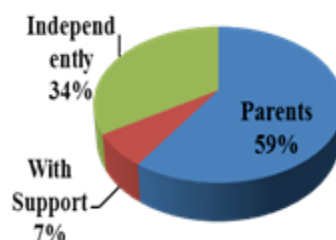


Figure 7 shows that there was a relatively even gender split among those who started an apprenticeship, with 56% of the young people being females. Unsurprisingly, the Young Parents tended to be females (78%), while the Young Offenders were mostly men (69%) and is representative of the gender split within each group. Figure 8 shows that the majority of the young apprentices lived with their parents (59%), with just over a third (34%) living in rented accommodation and liable to collect housing benefits and receive council tax deductions when unemployed. Four young people received some form of residential care.

**Figure 7: Gender of Young Apprentices**



**Figure 8: Residential Status**

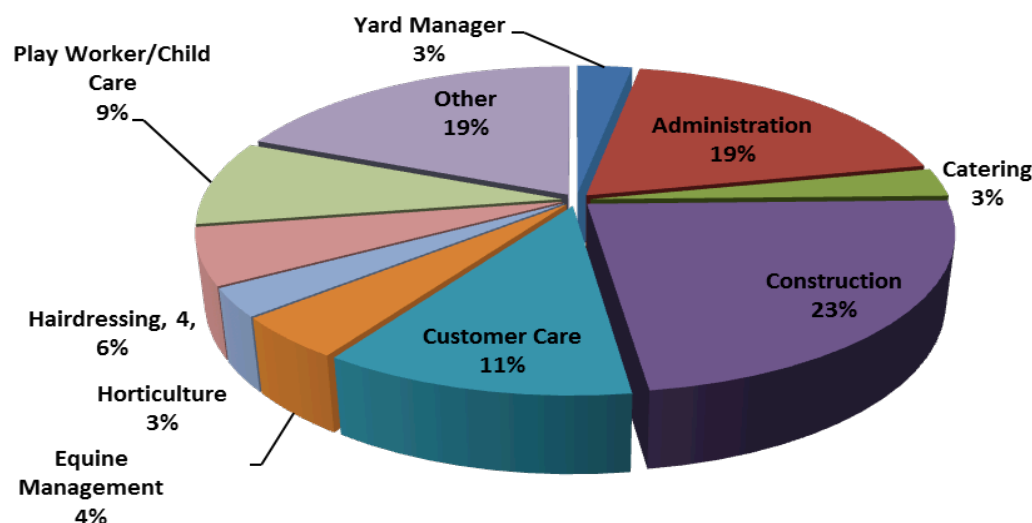


Of the Young Parents, 22% were males and 67% lived independently, with the remaining Young Parents living with family or parents. None of the Young Parents in apprenticeships were married and 1 had 2 children. Of the young people supported through KSE, 55% were female. These data suggest that the project is offering equal access to VLP, despite gender. Of the Youth Offenders 69% were males with 2 of the Young Offenders living independently and the remainder living with their parents. Of the Care Leavers, all had recently left care, 7 lived independently, one with friends and the remaining person in supported accommodation.

### Type of Apprenticeship

A variety of apprenticeships were obtained requiring different abilities and skills which are summarised in Figure 9.

**Figure 9: Type of Apprenticeships**



These included: 'Construction' (23% of Apprenticeships) 'Administration Jobs' (19%) and 'Customer Service' (11%). The remaining apprenticeships were spread across 'Child/Care Assistant' (9%) 'Mechanic', 'Equestrian Work', 'Gardening' (3% each) and 'Van Deliveries' at 6%. The high percentage of apprenticeships in the Construction industry reflects the fact that 11 Youth Offenders accessed construction based apprenticeships through the programme, with 10 young male offenders working for a single organisation. Over half (58%) of the jobs were in the Private Sector, just under half (24%) were in the Public Sector with the remainder (17%) in the Third Sector. This is encouraging as it reflects the current trend in the labour market from public towards private sector employment opportunities.

All the apprenticeships took place in integrated workplaces, with the potential for peer support, supportive networks, working expediently, getting on with co-workers and the imperative of time keeping. Generally, the apprenticeships were spread over different organisations with the 69 young people working for 43 employers in total. This is of importance since studies show<sup>35</sup> that if vulnerable people are grouped together within few workplaces, this can be a barrier to integration, creating employment ghettos and making it more difficult for the young people to socially interact with their work colleagues or learn through the modelling of work habits and skills.

## Section 6: Young People's Views

The interviews conducted with the young people produced a number of key themes. When asked what they hoped to get from being part of the VLP the young people interviewed mentioned several central reasons for their participation in the project these included: having an opportunity to learn and earn; gain work experience; have brighter prospects for the future; and having all the necessary support (financial, practical, academic) available to help them to become apprentices. The majority of the young people interviewed said that the opportunity to gain a qualification was the biggest draw for them:

<sup>35</sup> Wehman, P; Sale, P; Parent, W S 'Supported Employment: strategies for integration of workers with disabilities'

*“I wanted a job that would also get me qualifications” (KSE apprentice)*

*“I’m thinking more about qualifications and how they might help me in the long term” (Young Parent)*

Many elaborated saying that the apprenticeship project was giving them opportunities to gain work experience and career development and was seen by the majority as a means to increasing their future career prospects:

*“I wanted to get a job but didn’t want a dead end job. Now I get paid, get qualified and get to do something I’m interested in and can build on” (Youth offender) and,*

*“With a job you just get money but with an apprenticeship you get qualifications and something to build on” (Young Parent)*

*“I always wanted to do this I’m just further forward and not out of pocket – now I’m getting the experience as well as the qualification – to get a job in this industry you need both” (Young Parent)*

Clearly, the young people we interviewed had definite ideas that an apprenticeship would enable them to make more of their lives and were thinking about the future and what kinds of opportunities were currently available to them. The overriding message from the young people was that when they were first introduced to the idea of an apprenticeship it made very good sense to them from a ‘here and now’ perspective as well as in consideration and contemplation of their futures:

*“I want to better myself so I can support my child” (Young Parent)*

*“Now I have this, I can start really thinking about the future – there’s something there now” (Care Leaver)*

A number of the young people interviewed described having previously tried to access this type of learning/earning model either through school, college, benefits advisors or by themselves but had been thwarted and unsuccessful:

*“I was looking for an apprenticeship myself but was having no luck, it was getting really depressing then this came along” (Youth Offender)*

Several of the young people described working for long periods of time on a voluntary basis in order to gain the skills and work experience they felt they needed to pursue their career goals:

*“I’d been volunteering there for three years – I was never going to get a job there because you need qualifications to be hired there. Now the apprenticeship means I can work there, get paid and get the qualifications that will help me get employed in this kind of work” (Young Parent)*

The vast majority of the young people interviewed cited ‘getting a qualification’ as a primary reason for their participation in the project. This was closely followed by having the opportunity to earn money and be occupied in something which would be of benefit to them now and in the future:

*“Wage, money, qualifications, better job in the future” (Young Parent) and,*

*“I’ll have my own money and I won’t be hanging around on the streets causing trouble”  
(Youth offender)*

Although money was important amongst many of the apprentices interviewed, the apprenticeship qualification itself was more highly valued and some differentiated the reasons:

*“With a job you just get money, but with an apprenticeship you also get qualifications and a better job in the long run” (Youth offender) and,*

*“The project has allowed me to continue working with horses, because they weren’t able to pay me. I want to join the Army and be able to go in at a more senior level like the King’s Troops and be one step ahead of the others” (Young Parent)*

*“I’ve earned money but more important by the time I’m done I’ve gained qualifications, a whole year of work experience. All my previous jobs were not aspirational (like bar work- not going anywhere) – now I will be able to apply for other jobs and build on what I’ve learned – it’s brilliant” (Young Parent)*

Another significant theme to come from the interviews was the notion of ‘getting on the ladder’ and thinking about careers and possibilities for the future. A significant number of the young people we interviewed had been thinking about the future and how to build upon what they are doing:

*“I’d like to own my own business –maybe I’ll be hiring apprentices one day myself”  
(Care Leaver)*

*“Finish level 2 then do level 3 and then go abroad working on a cruise ship”  
(Youth Offender)*

*“Eventually, I’d like to have a job I can be proud of and which makes a difference”  
(Young Parent)*

*“I’d like a more long term job out of it – I’d like to not do the same job forever but build on what I’m doing”  
(LD/MH apprentice)*

*“I will not be my old self sitting on a sofa watching TV wasting my life, I used to look on my life as a joke, now I realise I have the potential to do more in my life. Even if it doesn’t pan out and the employer doesn’t employ me at the end, I’m still further ahead and will have skills maybe another employer will need.”  
(Care Leaver)*

As well as this, the young people recognized other benefits they were gaining including opportunities for networking;

*“Hopefully this will open a few doors for me and springboard me into something - I’m an open book right now” (Care Leaver)*

*“I’ve met so many people through my apprenticeship - they’ve been in the industry a long time and know how to get ahead, I’m sure they will help me to find a job and make contacts if there’s no work here for me” (Youth offender)*

The young apprentices also talked about how having an apprenticeship had given them more confidence, motivated them, increased their self-worth and self esteem and even helped them to mature:

*“This will show people I can do something and I can be useful in certain situations and be an asset” (Youth Offender)*

*“I’m more confident, independent and I’m showing people I can do things”  
(LD/MH apprentice)*

*“I’m more motivated, confident and I really want to complete it” (Care Leaver)*

*“It was looking really grim, no job, nothing- but now I’m growing up and getting more mature about my life” (Youth offender)*

*“It has made me feel more confident – now I feel I could get out there and do other courses and group work – I’m vaguely interested in a social work degree” (Young Parent)*

*“This has been a door from kids world to adult world for me” (Youth Offender)*

We also asked the young people to tell us about their aspirations and hopes for the future;

*“It’s a path to a career more than just a year of dead end work – something to aspire to for my daughter – she’ll see me working and helping others and not on benefits –it might change her life too.” (Young Parent)*

*“I’d like to complete my apprenticeship and have my employer take me on full time” (LD/MH apprentice)*

*“I have always had a 5 year plan this will help me to reduce the time it takes to achieve goals” (Young Parent)*

*“I’m more ambitious: I want to be someone, I want to work, I want to go someplace in my life” (Care Leaver)*

*“It’s good – me and the boss get on real well - I’ve got money, good things in my life now - a job and then an NVQ – ‘ hopefully help me stay out of trouble” (Youth Offender)*

### Young People’s Issues

Many of the young people’s views echoed the deliverers’ opinions that initially the project had been poorly planned. Many felt that the project had not been well advertised and that it was difficult to get information about it. A number of the apprentices waited for upwards of four months before their apprenticeship began which may have caused some of the hopeful apprentices to leave the project before they got started. There are also a few instances where some of the jobs SEAC identified did not fit an apprenticeship frame-work which meant that the apprentice candidate waited for many more weeks than would have been normal and acceptable. During this waiting time many of the candidates reported being in limbo, not knowing what was going on and feeling that they had been “left hanging”.

Three of the young people also talked about not always getting the exact apprenticeship they wanted. One apprentice had their apprenticeship changed three times due in part to early project teething issues with SEAC and subsequent Training Providers being unclear as to the nature of the apprenticeship. Another young apprentice originally wanted an apprenticeship in mechanics but was placed in a ‘coach works’ apprenticeship which he describes as “less mechanical than I wanted – but I’m sure it will still be useful”. In a follow-up interview he noted how glad he was that there had been:

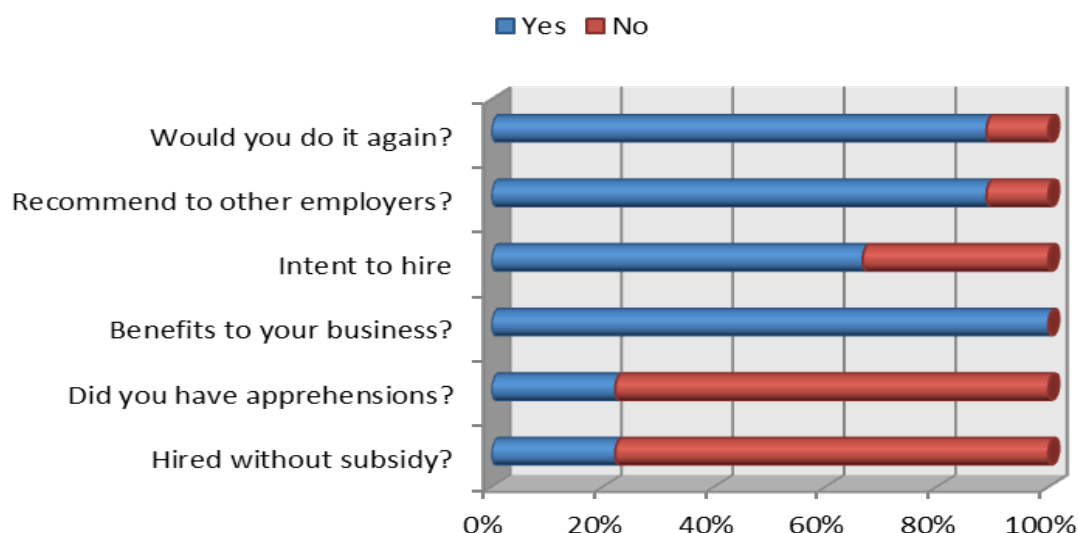
*“...a cock-up at the beginning but I got to do something I’d never have known about – and honestly I’m so glad I did this instead of plain mechanics, this is so much more interesting, I’m learning new skills all the time”*

Often, to find an apprenticeship the young people themselves need to approach employers. The young people involved in this project described not feeling confident to speak with employers and said they were unclear as to the particulars of what they should say to a potential apprentice employer and would have liked more help in this area.

## Section 6: Employer Views

Figure 4 summarises the views of the employers as of April 2011. It shows that when asked if the employees would have hired the young person without the financial subsidy, 21% said ‘yes’ 73% said ‘no’ and 1 employer was unsure (5%). This indicates that ‘selling’ the approach to employers would take significantly more time without the subsidy or some additional support.

**Figure 10: Summary of Employer Views**



The data also shows that those employers who said they definitely would not have hired without the subsidy citing the fact that they were a charity, grant maintained or very small business who would not typically hire apprentices. However, by March 2012 a further 12% of employers said they would hire the apprentice after the young person had shown some success:

*“Perhaps next time we could discuss them (KCC) paying 9 months and us paying for 3 months” and,*

*“No we could not have started without the subsidy but she is working out really well and now there is a good case to be made for partial funding – say 50%”.*

It was also evident that by March 2012, employers had an opportunity to see the apprentices at work in their business and fitting in well with other employees, their commitment to the individual increased resulting in some (employers) considering ways to keep or hire the apprentice including writing a grant proposal where previously, they had no such intent. This clearly illustrates openness on the part of some employers to negotiate either lesser subsidy contributions from the start and/or an agreement to begin with a full subsidy with review after the initial three or six months once the apprentice had been assimilated and accepted into the business.

Clearly, the willingness of employers to employ vulnerable groups is linked to their perceptions of the difficulties and problems that could be involved in employing them. The overriding sense from the interviews was that employers had ‘bought into’ the project, identifying it as a positive for society as a whole and as part of their own social obligations suggesting opportunities to market the project geared toward the more intrinsic benefits for each business or organisation.

*“It feels good to be contributing and helping a young person who has had some hard knocks”*  
and *“Giving young people like this an opportunity is a goal for our organization”*

As figure 10 shows, when the employers were asked if they had any apprehensions in April 2011, 26% replied ‘yes’ and 74% replied no.

Some of the apprehensions the employers cited were about individuals:

*“We worried about the person, not the scheme – the CRB took too long and we weren’t given all the information about the apprentice such as what happens if s/he doesn’t take their medication”* and *“His background was a concern to us”*

The majority of apprehensions were around the process: e.g. too many people involved and concerns about how well the matching of appropriate apprentices to businesses was done:

*“We felt that there could have been a better assessment of the person and of our needs as a company”*

This suggests that many employers will not bias their potential to hire a vulnerable young person with pre-conceived concerns and worries surrounding specific vulnerable groups. As one employer stated:

*“Having someone with a disability around has helped people who work here recognize the challenges faced by our own end users”.*

Some employers did acknowledge having biases or concerns about the young people involved with the project and referred to the involvement of KCC as a motivating factor in persuading them to engage with the project.

*“I’d never have even interviewed her, I’d have thrown out her resume or application but the fact that the project was backed by KCC made me think twice. They told me about her record*

*and she was really honest about it herself – now I really couldn't imagine my business without her"*

Overall, those employers reporting apprehensions (Young Parent employers 31.5%, Learning Disability and Mental Health employers 36%, Care Leaver employers 10.5% and Youth Offender employers 21%) did not tend towards any vulnerable group. Their main concerns were the processes and the matching of apprentices to their individual business needs and that time and consideration needed to be paid to this.

As Figure 10 shows, 95% of the employers identified positives in employing the young person for their business. They identified good public relations, enhanced company image and matches to the ethical standards of company. The majority of employers identified the fact that apprentices do work others (i.e., more highly paid employees) don't have the time to do and that this saved them money. Some employers identified the injection of youth into the business as a positive. As one employer put it:

*"Having younger guy makes some of the other guys feel a bit younger" and "Our business is a dying art – having this youngster here means we have a stab at keeping it alive"*

One employer commented that since she had hired the young person, her hairdressing clientele had expanded to include a younger group. The majority of employers also took reward from providing the young people with an opportunity help them build up their CV's and to develop in confidence into "young adults" through the experience of older co-workers. As one employer stated:

*"It's opened her up – she's now thinking outside the box I can now see her moving onto a career in social work"*

Figure 10 also shows that the majority of employers (63%) had employed the young person with the intention of hiring them following their apprenticeship and that the apprenticeship project had given them an opportunity to train/tailor future staff in their own way to their specific business. This is encouraging, suggesting that the apprenticeship route offers a direct link into paid employment outcomes for the young people. Thirty two per cent had hired without this intent, stating the opportunities they had provided to the young people could potentially act as a stepping stone for them into other paid employment opportunities. In this, there was a clear split between those employers in the Private and Public Sectors, whereas 84% of those in the private sector had intent to hire the young person beyond their apprenticeships, only 40% of those in the public sector had a similar intent. This indicates that the best route into employment via the apprenticeship model is through private sector businesses rather than public sector ones.

While the majority of employers admitted initial apprehensions about hiring vulnerable young people all but 2 of them (89%) stated their willingness to hire vulnerable young people in the future and in recommending the project to other employers, even when the apprenticeship had broken down. This is very positive, suggesting the possibility of creating a data base of employers for future VLP beneficiaries. Two employers, however, went against this grain; one because he felt strongly that the apprentice and the business were not well matched and the other citing dissatisfaction with the Training Provider.



### Employer Issues/Recommendations

The employers also had suggestions for improving the project in the future. Some (42%) felt that not enough had been done to support them once the young people had started their apprenticeship. As one employer put it:

*“We (the employers) are not experts on vulnerable adults, It would have been better if we had had more support, especially at the start, to help us to help them (apprentices) better.”*

Or that the apprentice had not been adequately supported by Training Providers:

*“I’m an NVQ assessor but am not allowed to assess (apprentice) which is really frustrating because I can see clearly that (apprentice) is definitely not getting enough support from the Training Provider” and “(apprentice) has really been let down by the Training Provider – (apprentice) has been here for nearly 5 months and seen the Training Provider only once”*

Over half (57%) of the employers felt the project had been disorganised at the beginning, commenting that there were too many people contacting them and that they often did not know who to contact to get information or when issues arose. One employer told us:

*“Yes I would do it again, but only if all that faffing around at the beginning is addressed. I must have spoken to 7 or 8 people. If it had been my colleague who was dealing with it he would have pulled the plug.”*

Forty four percent also identified a time delay between the person being hired and them getting support from the Training Providers. In two instances, they had not contacted 2 young people and one young person was reported to have had 1 day of training (up to February 2011) although she had started her apprenticeship in October 2010. Encouragingly, much of the disorganisation identified by employers was addressed with the hiring of a central project co-ordinator in January 2011, and subsequent adaptations, such as those mentioned earlier. This means that many of the teething problems associated with the project start-up have now been addressed.

## **Section 7: Cost Benefit Analysis Results to Date**

### Were the Young People Better Off?

Table 3 shows the average income of the young people when they were NEET, during their apprenticeship and following their uptake of a paid job. There are 2 paid work categories, one based on the assumption that 70% of the Young Parents and 30% of the remaining cohorts undertook part-time work of up to 16 hours per week, and a final column that shows their income in the case where all the young people undertook fulltime employment. The figures include Income Tax and National Insurance deductions.

It shows that overall average income rose from £107.03pw prior to them starting their apprenticeships, to £188.57 during their apprenticeships and increasing to £192.80 in full time work. This represents an increase of 76% and 80% in income compared to being NEET. It also shows, maybe unsurprisingly, that if all the young people obtain full time employment, then the average income increases to £239.98, which is a 124% increase over NEET. This suggests that overall there are no financial disincentives for the young people when accessing VLP, but significant financial rewards.

**Table 3: Mean Average Net Income by Cohort in £s Per Week**

	Number	NEET	During Apps	Average In work <sup>36</sup>	100% Full Time
Young Parents	11	142.56	284.07	212.88	344.91
Ld/Mh	18	102.42	160.49	195.20	213.88
Youth Offenders	9	60.87	112.42	160.39	178.18
Care Leavers	4	133.91	198.77	199.73	207.94
<b>Average</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>107.03</b>	<b>188.57</b>	<b>192.80</b>	<b>239.98</b>

Interestingly, the results for the Young Parents are an exception to this, suggesting that they were better off during their apprenticeships, compared with paid work. This reflects the fact that Working Tax Credit is available only to those working full time (16+hrs pw). During their apprenticeships, all the Young Parents were eligible for this benefit. During paid work only 30% of those assumed to be in full time work would be eligible for this benefit. Table 3 shows that when it is assumed that all the parents work full time, then the average wage following employment increases to £344.91 an increase of 21% in income compared to the apprenticeship phase. The relatively low income of Young Offenders reflects the fact that the majority of young people lived at home with their parents and had relatively lower levels of housing benefits income, while the Young Parents income levels reflect Child and Working Tax Credits.

#### Savings to the Taxpayer?

Table 4 shows the percentage of young people claiming each benefit before, during and after their apprenticeship. These figures exclude child benefits, child tax credits, and disability allowances from the list as these were carried over in all circumstances. Unsurprisingly, the biggest reduction was in Jobseeker's Allowance (-23%) and the now defunct Income Support (-20%), predicated on the paid work outcome. However, there were also savings in Housing Benefit and Council Tax payments, down 11% and 9% respectively. The biggest increase in benefits uptake was for those moving onto Working Tax Credit, up 8% over NEET.

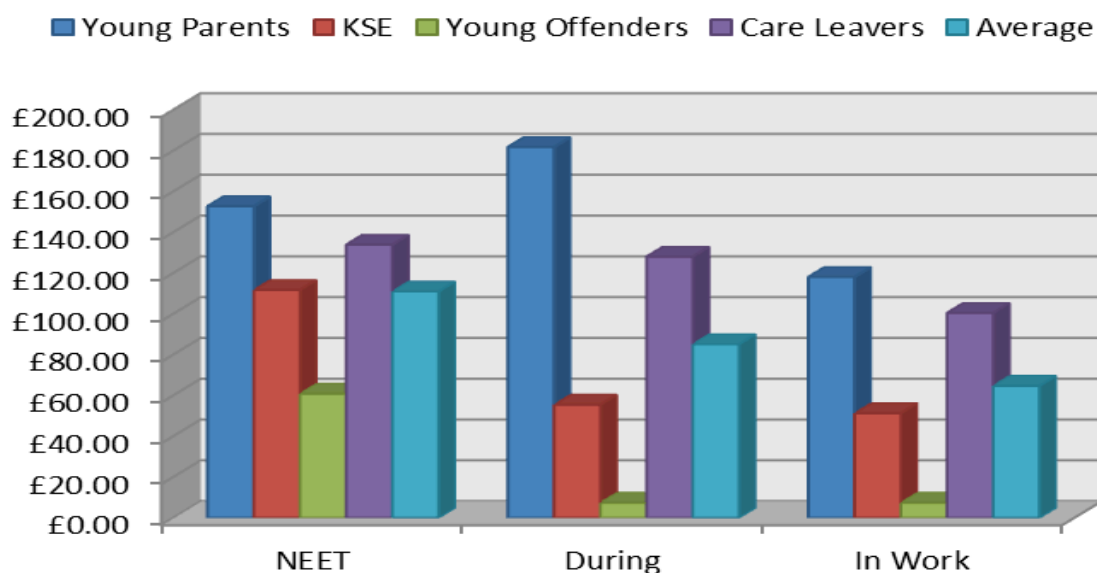
**Table 4: Percentage Uptake of Welfare Benefits**

	NEET	During	Paid Work	Balance NEET v paid work
Housing Benefit	23%	12%	12%	-11%
Council Tax	22%	22%	13%	-9%
JSA	23%	0%	0%	-23%
ESA	10%	0%	10%	0%
Incapacity benefit	5%	0%	0%	-5%
DLA Mobility	22%	22%	22%	0%
DLA Care	22%	22%	22%	0%
Income Support	20%	0%	0%	-20%
Child Benefits	31%	31%	31%	0%
Child Tax Credits	20%	20%	20%	0%
Working Tax Credit	0%	39%	8%	+8%

<sup>36</sup> Based on assumption 70% in full time work (36hrs) and 30% Full-time for Young Parents

Figure 11 represents the amount of Welfare Benefits paid to each cohort across the 3 situations. It suggests that the increase in Table 4 were largely due to Working Tax Credits paid to the Young Parents during their apprenticeships. It also indicates that the average amount of welfare benefits paid to the young people decreased on average from £111.05 in the NEET condition, to £85.19 and £64.78 during and following the apprenticeships.

**Figure 11: Amount of income from welfare benefit payments.**



As of May 2011, a total of 69 young people had started an apprenticeship. By March 2012, 14 had successfully completed, 28 were still on-going and 27 had dropped out, reducing the sample size to 42 young people. The actual spend on VLP up to March 2012 was £275,998.5, suggesting an overall investment figure of £6,571 per person, a running cost for VLP of £14,526 per month or, £3,631.5 per cohort per month, implying £43,578 worth of investment per cohort per year.

Table 5 shows the findings of the Welfare Benefits and Tax Revenue calculations, subject to the assumptions presented earlier, based on the 42 people who had completed or were still undertaking their apprenticeships on March 31<sup>st</sup> 2012. 'N' represents the sample size associated with each calculation. It suggests that, excluding the intervention costs, there is a saving to the Tax Payer of £56,472 per year while the young people are in their apprenticeships and a saving of £120,384, following their assumed uptake of a paid job over a 12 month duration. The result is a combined saving of £176,856 over the assumed 2 year period covering the 12 months of the apprenticeship and 12 months in paid work. These figures include £17,851py in Tax and National Insurance contributions during the post apprenticeship work condition.

If we now factor in the running costs of delivering VLP (£14,526 per month) then, as Table 5 shows, there is unsurprisingly an overall cost associated with the delivery phase of £117,840. However, the overall balance moves above break-even point following 1 year in paid work creating a net cash flow of +£2,544, representing a modest return at this point of 1p for every £ invested at this stage. Clearly these savings will accrue the longer the young people remain in paid work and assuming that in-work savings remain constant over time, then one can predict an accumulated balance of + £604,464 as a result of these 42 young people obtaining

paid work through the project for a further 5 years. This equates to an impressive saving of £2.19 for every £1 of the initial overall investment.

**Table 5: Results of the Cost-benefits Calculation for Welfare Benefits paid and Tax and National Insurance revenue for each cohort in £'s**

	N	NEET	During App	In Paid Work	During Balance	In Work Balance	Overall
Young Parents per month	11	7,283	8,668	5,438	-1,385	+1,845	+460
LD/MH per month	18	8,232	4,328	3,173	+3,904	+5,059	+8,963
Youth Offenders per month	9	2,374	289	-3 <sup>37</sup>	+2,085	+2,377	+4,462
Care Leavers per month	4	2,321	2,219	1,564	+102	+757	+859
Totals per month	42	20,210	15,504	10,178	+4,706	+10,032	+14,738
Totals per year	42	242,520	186,048	122,136	+56,472	+120,384	+176,856
Totals Including VLP Cost per month	42	20,210	30,030	10,178	-9,820	+10,032	+212
Totals Including VLP Cost per year	42	242,520	360,360	122,136	-117,840	+120,384	+2,544

These figures assume that all the vulnerable people currently undertaking their apprenticeships will successfully complete. If we now apply the observed VLP fall out rate (39%) to the remaining 28 young people currently undertaking their apprenticeship, then we can predict that a further 11 people could potentially fall off of the project. This would leave 31 young people having successfully completed the project and the overall balance of savings (£2,544py) would reduce by £941, to £1,603, reducing the cost benefit ratio to 0.5p for every £1 invested following 12 months of employment. When we apply the fall out rate in extrapolating 5 year figures, observed savings reduce by £223,651 to £380,813, a saving of £1.38 every £1 initially invested.

### Young Parents

Table 6 summarises the financial cost benefits of supporting this cohort through VLP and suggests a cost to the taxpayer of £1,385pm, compared to being NEET, while the young people are in their apprenticeships and a positive in-work balance £1,845 pm following their uptake of a paid job. These equate to a cost of £16,620py during the intervention and savings of £22,140 in the post apprenticeship situation, creating a positive overall balance of £5,520 of savings following one year in paid work.

If we now factor in the costs of VLP (£3,631.5pm) then the cost of supporting this cohort in their apprenticeships increases to £12,299.5 pm, creating a negative balance of £5,016.5pm, and overall, a negative net cash balance of £38,058py.

<sup>37</sup> The minus 3 in the in paid work balance reflects the fact that the amount of benefits actually went into positive credit.

**Table 6: Cost Outcomes for Young Parents**

	N	NEET	During App	In Paid Work	During Balance	In Work Balance	Overall
Totals per month	11	7,283	8,668	5,438	-1,385	+1,845	+460
Totals per year	11	87,396	104,016	65,256	-16,620	+22,140	+5,520
Totals Including VLP Cost per month	11	7,283	12,299.5	5,438	-5,016.5	+1,845	-3,171.5
Totals Including VLP Cost per year	11	87,396	147,594	65,256	-60,198	+22,140	-38,058

This translates into a cost of 72p for every £1 invested. Assuming that in-work savings remain constant over time, then one can predict a break-even point will occur when the young people complete 2 years of paid work following their apprenticeships. Extrapolating the savings from the 'in work' balance then savings of £110,700 accrue as a result of these 11 young people obtaining paid work for a further 5 years. This produces a total savings of £72,642, against the yearly investment figure of £43,578, when the negative net cash balance is deducted, suggesting a saving of 66p for every £1 invested.

Clearly, Working Tax Credits, especially those received by the Young Parent cohort, had a significant impact on the results. For example, if we apply a new assumption to the calculation (that 100% of Young Parents moved into full time work, rather than 30%), then each individual's weekly income increases from £212.88 to 344.91, while the in-work balance for the Young Parents group moves into negative, costing £1,715, as opposed to a saving of £1,844 per month, and a yearly cost for this group of £20,580, while they are in paid work. Similarly, if we apply an average wage rate, rather than a minimum wage rates, then we would increase revenue from tax and national insurance contributions, due to the significant rise in individual income. This highlights the fact that subtle differences between actual and predicted paid work outcomes could have a significant impact on the financial results for those assumed to be in paid work.

As with the other cohorts, if the Young Parents continue to work beyond the first year, then these savings will accrue. Our current calculations suggest that any costs due to welfare benefit payments and the cost of delivering VLP would be cancelled out with 2 more years in paid employment for this group. The York study estimated an average lifetime public finance cost of £56,301 for a young person who is NEET aged 16 to 18, but concludes that the costs for teenage parents are likely to be higher. In the case of Sophie B this was definitely the case costing £858,362. As with other research the York study suggests that for Young Parents, the investment is over the longer term and intrinsically linked to the health and upbringing of the child, and in the potential for the mother to take up to full time work during and following their child's education. By comparison, the cost of VLP intervention (£6,571pp) may be a modest investment and falls below the York authors' suggestion of £7,000 per intervention for each young person.

### **Case Study 1: Anna, age 21 - Young Parent**

*Anna is an engaging and self-aware 21 year old. She has a 2 ½ year old daughter and currently lives in her grandparents' home where she and her mother have lived since Anna was 12. She briefly left the family home to live with her boyfriend (the father of her child) prior to her pregnancy but returned when she became pregnant.*

*Anna's parents divorced when she was 3 or 4 years old. Her father remarried, had two more children and moved to the US. Anna describes the difference between what life was like for her and what life was like for her half siblings as being very different indeed. Her mother struggled as a single parent and eventually when Anna was 12 years old they moved in with Anna's maternal grandparents. Anna saw her father infrequently and visited him and her half siblings in the US only once.*

*Anna describes herself as a bit of a rebel at school, she began to drink cider and experiment with drugs at age 13. She attended a Girls Grammar School and felt that she did not fit in well and was in trouble a great deal mostly because she did not understand instructions. Anna is very proud of only being truant from school for one day. At age 14 she was diagnosed with ADHD and was put on medication for the condition. She describes herself at that time as having very low self-esteem, lacking confidence and felt she had no direction in life; she was also 'self-medicating' with drugs and alcohol. Her parents and grandparents are well educated and expected that Anna would attend University or College upon leaving school like many of her friends. Anna thinks that all her teachers believed she would fail her exams however she graduated from school with nine GCSE's.*

*She met the father of her child when she was 17 years old; he was ten years older and had never been employed. She soon moved out of the home she shared with her mother and grandparents and moved in with her partner and his parents. Anna had been taking the birth control pill but was one of the 4% for whom this method was ineffective. When she became pregnant at age 18, Anna considered a termination but decided against it. She continued to abuse drugs and alcohol in the early stages of her pregnancy not realising she was pregnant but quit once her pregnancy was confirmed. At this point she decided to leave her partner and move back home with her mother and grandparents. Anna feels that she has been very lucky that her daughter was born without any of the defects associated with drug and alcohol abuse in the early stages of pregnancy.*

*When she left her partner she had determined that she wanted a better life for herself and her daughter. She began looking for work while pregnant and eventually got her first job as a seasonal worker at the Post Office over the Christmas season. Her daughter's father found a job one week before their daughter's birth, which he still has. He is an involved parent even though he and Anna dissolved their relationship. Anna describes her daughter as being the catalyst for positive life changes for both she her and her ex-partner.*

*Around the time of her daughters' birth Anna became involved with YAP's for a year long programme after which she returned to the YAP's plus programme for a few weeks and it was during this time that VLP was presented to her. She describes her life at that point as somewhat depressing, she was afraid that having a child so early would mean she would have, as she describes it:*

*"Nothing to look forward to but a life on benefits or dead- end, go nowhere jobs".*

*So, when the opportunity for an apprenticeship was presented to her she "grabbed it" since she did not want to go on income support. Her daughter was 10 months old when she began her apprenticeship.*

*Anna wanted to do an apprenticeship in something she would be good at and felt that she could be a role model and peer supporter for Young Parents. She began her apprenticeship in a school programme for Young Parents as an Apprentice Support Worker with the job title 'YAP Apprentice' - a social work based apprenticeship. Anna's apprenticeship did not go smoothly; she began in September 2010 and felt "messed around" after two or three changes of Training Provider which caused confusion around supervision and delays with her assessed portfolio. She also felt that too many people were involved and both she and her employer were unclear who to contact. She*

describes the support she received from the YPT co-ordinator as being "brilliant". Her apprenticeship was then re-jigged three more times and eventually she completed a Customer Service –Level 3 Apprenticeship which in December 2011. During her apprenticeship Anna describes travel and child care costs as a "real issue" especially since she had originally been told she would qualify for 'Care to Learn' which she in fact was not eligible to receive having just turned 20 at the start of her apprenticeship. Anna also says that the change of routine was very difficult to get used to as well as spending long periods of time away from her child.

After completing her apprenticeship Anna is happy that she is "not stuck at home on benefits" and that she now has a "proper job that she can build on and a future to look forward to" and is currently contemplating University. As a mother, she feels strongly about giving her daughter "a better life and instilling a healthy respect for money and an ethic about doing things for herself and not expecting other people to do them for you". As a Young Parent herself Anna feels that in her work she is in a strong position to be able to say "I did it so you can do" without being a hypocrite. Her daughter has just recently been diagnosed with ADHD.

The school where Anna did her apprenticeship have now secured funding to employ her full time as a Young Parent Support Co-ordinator she also works with other vulnerable young people with Connexions and sees herself staying in her job and building on her career as she continues to work supporting herself and her daughter.

#### *Financial Outcomes for Anna*

When Anna was unemployed she received £64.20 in JSA, Child Tax Credit worth £53.00pw and Child Benefit of £20.30. As Anna lived at home she received no deduction on Council Tax and no child care costs. Total=£137.50pw. During her apprenticeship Anna received £105.00 in wages, an in-work credit of £40pw, and Tax Credits worth £148.54. This meant that her income increased to £295.54, an increase of £156.04pw. However, Anna also began to use local Child Care service, which costs £105.00pw. On obtaining work Anna receives the National Minimum wage of £6.08 for 30 hour week £182.40pw, she no longer receives in-work credit, but maintains her Child and Working Tax Credits. She also retains her child benefit of £20.30. Anna also pays tax and national insurance contributions totalling £14.21, meaning that her income during work is £351.20, less £14.21=£336.99, an increase of £199.99, over unemployment. Anna still pays for Child care costs to a local Nursery.

If we now factor in the estimated three year costs of £56,301pp from the York study (£18,767pppy), then the costs, mainly associated with Tax Credits, are transformed into savings of over £17,000py, this is notwithstanding the estimated overall lifetime costs of saving of £761, 227, predicted through the York report case studies.

**Table 11: Financial Outcomes for Anna**

	Unemployed	During App	In paid work	Balance per week During	Balance per week In work	Balance per year In work
Income	£137.50	£295.53	£336.99	+£158.03	+199.49	+£10,373.48
Welfare/Child Benefits	£84.50	£ 20.30	£ 20.30	+£64.20	+£53.45	+£2,779.40
Tax Credits	£53.00	£148.54	£148.54	-£95.54	-£95.54	- £4,968.08
In-work Credit	£00.00	£ 40.00	£ 00.00	-£40.00	£00.00	£0,000.00
Tax/NI contribution	£00.00	£ 00.00	£ 14.71	£00.00	+£14.71	+ 764.92
				-£71.34	-£27.38	-£14,23.76

### **Case Study 2: Ian, age 21 -Young Parent**

*Ian enjoyed school and left with 11 GCSE's and then began studying for A levels which he did not complete, being "unable to commit the time and not knuckling down to studying". He obtained AS levels instead. When he was 18 years old he met his partner who had two young children (neither are Ian's biological children) and began to attend the Young and Active Parents Group (YAP's) with her. At this time he began to take on a series of 'dead-end jobs' such as delivery driver, working at a go-cart track and car washing. He felt that even though he had work, he had 'no direction and no career':*

*"I was worried about having a 'proper job', it was a scary prospect; I didn't have a positive outlook about the future"*

*Ian heard about VLP through the Young Parents Team and was soon interviewed for an apprenticeship with Virgin Media for which he was unsuccessful. Ian was then offered a position with the Young Parents Team as a Project Support Assistant and an apprenticeship in Business Administration NVQ Level 2.*

*In the course of his apprenticeship Ian has learned business administration skills, had an opportunity to develop his own project (Journey of a Young Parent), and spoken at a national conference in London about his apprenticeship. He also feels that he gained confidence, social and communication skills and developed as a person through the opportunities the apprenticeship afforded him. Ian also feels that having completed his apprenticeship in local government has enhanced the way people perceive and treat him. During the course of the apprenticeship Ian struggled with the low wage but was determined to see it through to the end;*

*"I had a big desire to achieve something in my life and the apprenticeship was my opportunity"*

*Ian feels that whilst he received great help from the Young Parents Team he did not have enough contact with the training provider during his apprenticeship and as a result fell behind in his course work, which he found distressing. However, the Young Parents Team helped him catch-up and he successfully completed his apprenticeship;*

*"I felt so proud when I completed my apprenticeship and pleased to begin to build a career; something worthwhile. I felt a sense of achievement – I was finally going somewhere work-wise"*

*Unfortunately there were no employment opportunities available with the Young Parents Team due to cuts in funding. Ian took on a short term position at a day care as a receptionist which lasted for only a few months, he is currently unemployed and actively looking for employment.*

*"This is the most challenging time for me right now, I hate being unemployed, it's the first time I have ever collected benefits (Job seekers Allowance). But the apprenticeship gave me direction and a platform to build on for the future. I'm now getting interviews for jobs I'd never have been able to apply for before my apprenticeship"*

*Ian is very happy to have had the apprenticeship opportunity but feels that additional support, perhaps from the training provider, after completing his apprenticeship would have been beneficial:*

*"The apprenticeship is nice and cosy, but now I need help to move on with stuff like interview skills and maybe some help with how to be in different work environments"*



*Ian has ambitions to work in project or event management and would like to tailor his next NVQ or qualification towards that whilst working.*

#### Financial Outcomes for Ian

*When Ian was unemployed he received £53.45 in Income Support, and £20.30 in Child Benefits (Total=£73.75). As Ian lived with his parents he had no child care costs. While doing his apprenticeship Ian retained his Child Benefit, but was also eligible for Tax Credits worth £89.18 per week, and received £105.00pw earnings. This increased his total income to £214.48pw. If Ian moves into a full time job, then he would retain his child benefits and tax credit, and would receive a salary of £186.26, assuming the current NMW (Total =£295.74). This means that Ian would be better off in work, compared to unemployment, by £221.99pw, or £11,543.48 better off per year.*

Table 12: Financial Outcomes for Ian

	Unemployed	During App	In paid work	Balance per week During	Balance per week In work	Balance per year In work
Income	£73.75	£214.48	£295.74	+£140.73	+£221.99	+£11,543.48
Welfare Benefits –	£73.75	£00.00	£00.00	+£53.45	+£53.45	+£2,779.40
Tax Credits	£00.00	£89.18	£89.18	-£89.18	-£89.18	- £4,637.36
Tax/NI contribution	£00.00	£00.00	£14.71	+£14.71	+£13.49	+£ 764.92
						-£1,093.04.

#### Youth Offenders

Table 7 shows the results of supporting this cohort through VLP and suggests a saving to the taxpayer of £2,085pm compared to being NEET, while the young people are in their apprenticeships, and an in-work balance of £2,377pm following 1 year in a paid job. This balances out to a saving of £4,462pm or £53,544py following 12 months of paid employment for the 9 remaining re-offenders on the project.

**Table 7: Cost Outcomes for Young Offenders**

	N	NEET	During App	In Paid Work	During Balance	In Work Balance	Overall
Youth Offenders per month	9	2,374	289	-3	+2,085	+2377	+4,462
Totals per year	9	28,488	3,468	-36	+25,020	+28,524	+53,544
Totals Including VLP Cost per month	9	2,374	3,920	-3	-1,546	+2,377	+831
Totals Including VLP Cost per year	9	28,488	47,040	-36	-18,552	+28,524	+£9,972

If we now factor in the costs of VLP (£3,631.5pm), then the cost of supporting these young people in their apprenticeship increases to £3,920pm, or, £47,040py, creating a negative balance of £1,546 during the apprenticeship phase, or, £18,552py. However, following their assumed uptake of paid work, monthly savings occur at a rate of £2,377 pm, or £28,524py. This creates a positive net cash balance of £9,972, saving 65p for every £1 invested. Assuming that in-work savings remain constant over time, then savings of £142,620

accumulate as a result of these 9 young people obtaining paid work through the project for 5 years, creating total savings of £152,592, or, £3.50 for every £1 invested.

Although we have no direct comparators for young re-offenders, the link between offending and unemployment is clearly established as are the associated cost of young re-offenders. VLP currently reports re-offending rates within the project of 25% (4 of the 16 who started on VLP). This compares to national figures of 78.2 per cent of young people sentenced to custody and 70.3% per cent for those serving community sentences, and recent reports of a 55.4% re-offending rate within Kent. Table 8 shows some average costs associated with young re-offenders per year.<sup>38</sup>

**Table 8: Average costs associated with young re-offenders per year**

Resource	Cost (£)
Police (cost per crime)	515
Court costs	2,425
Offender Management time	1,537
Custody (based on average stay of 2 months)	10,188
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,655</b>

Of the 16 Young Offenders who began the VLP 4 have been reported as re-offending (25%), all of who dropped off the apprenticeship for issues not relating to these offenses. None of the 9 who have currently completed or still undertaking their apprenticeships have re-offended and 1 person has moved into full time paid work as of March 2012. Taking the 55% figure and combining them with the costs shown in Table 8, the re-offending costs of the cohort could have been £131,895py (55% of 16 =9 people x £14,655), whereas by reducing the re-offending rate the potential re-offending cost of this cohort would be (25% of 16=4 people x £14,655= £58,620py), a reduction in cost to the Taxpayer of £73,275py.

Assuming that those gaining work or still undertaking their apprenticeships do not re-offend before completing 1 years work following their apprenticeship, then the amount saved over the 2 year duration could be £146,550, or, £156,522 when combined with the net balance of savings shown in Table 7, including the costs of VLP. If extrapolated over a further 5 year period (e.g., in work savings =£28,524 + £73,275 x 5, + 9,972, then the savings from just these 9 individuals could exceed £500,000 (Total=£518,967).

### **Case Study 3: Harry, age 18 - Youth Offender**

*Harry is a young man now aged 18, who has a history of offending. When Harry's parents split up he remained living in Kent with his mother. Harry never got on at school and fell into "bad company" and spent much of the time being truant which his Mother spent 90 days in prison for. Harry left school with no qualifications and gained a police record for various offences. This included gang style fighting and house burglary. At the time, Harry says that he was not interested in working, offending provided him with a peer group with who he felt he could identify with and an 'alternative' life style. As Harry describes it:*

*"I couldn't see myself getting anywhere; this just seemed like fun and the thing to do at the time"*

<sup>38</sup> Reported by VLP

Harry's was introduced to VLP by Young Offender's team Champion and began an apprenticeship in construction, renovating houses with a local employer. One of the main reasons he decided to do an apprenticeship was "make things up to his mum" and make her "proud of him". Although he wanted to work in the building sector, Harry felt that the apprenticeship was not providing him with enough opportunities to learn and fulfil the criteria for the qualification. He felt he was more of a labourer than an apprentice as he always seemed to get the menial jobs. Therefore, he changed employer and now works for Andy, a 56 year old qualified builder, with who he has built up a close working relationship. Harry's new apprenticeship has so far given him the opportunity to learn how to replace windows, put up stud walls and bathroom, kitchen and heating plumbing.

Harry is due to complete his apprenticeship in April 2012. He no longer sees the people that he offended with and his employer has indicated that he wants to hire him full time when he gets his qualification. He says the apprenticeship has made a big difference in his life. As he puts it:

"I can't wait to get there – I feel more confident and happy about myself, I can now hold my head up high"

And of his mother:

"She's proud of me now; she doesn't see me as a waster."

Harry says that the best part of doing the apprenticeship is:

"Everything! – I learn something new every day. It's all about confidence".

He also speaks very highly of the support he received from the Training Provider, and most especially of the Young Offenders' Champion of whom he says:

"If it wasn't for her, I wouldn't be here now. I have told her that if she ever wants any building work doing I will do it for her -100% free!"

Harry has clear plans for the future;

"First I want to get my own tools then, I want my own van and maybe my own business. Who knows, one day I may have a fleet of vans working for me."

He goes on to say:

"Who knows, maybe I'll become famous in the building trade and become a millionaire!"

#### Financial Outcomes for Harry

When Harry was unemployed he received £53.45 per week in Job Seekers Allowance. On entering the apprenticeship he received £105pw, an increase in his income of £51.55. Harry calculates that it costs him £20.00pw to get to work on his motorbike, so in real terms, Harry was £31.55 better off in his apprenticeship. If Harry continues into full time work as is predicted, he would receive an income of £186.26, assuming the current NMW. In addition, he would pay a combined total of £14.71 in Income Tax and NI contributions. Therefore, Harry's net income of £171.55pw, would leave him £118.10pw better off, compared to unemployment, prior to travel expense deductions. Harry being in work also generates savings of £3,544.32py to the Tax Payer, as a result of moving off Income Support and contributions he makes through Tax and National Insurance. If we now factor in savings due to predicted reduced use of Offender Services (£5,321.50py), then a conservative estimate of overall savings increases to £8,865.82py.

**Table 13: Financial Outcomes for Harry**

	Unemployed	During App	In paid work	Balance per week During	Balance per week In work	Balance per year In work
Income	£53.45	£105.00	£171.55	+£51.55	+£118.10	+£6,141.20
Welfare	£53.45	£00.00	£00.00	+£53.45	+£53.45	+£2,779.40
Benefits/Tax Credits						
Tax/NI contribution	£00.00	£00.00	£14.71	£00.00	+£14.71	+£ 764.92
				+53.45	+£68.16	+£3,544.32

#### **Case Study 4: Tara, age 19 -Youth Offender**

*Tara is the youngest of three children; her brother is 24 and elder sister is 26. Tara's brother has severe autism and she describes him as being very violent. For most of their developing years Tara had to share a room with her brother who frequently attacked her, suffocating, stabbing and 'mentally torturing' her. Tara's parents are full time stay at home carers and have not had employment outside the home for most of Tara's life. Tara feels that her brother took up most of her parents' time and as a result she feels that she has never had a close relationship with her parents. She characterises her childhood as depressing and full of fear of attacks from her brother. She did not get on well in school, lacking focus and self-confidence and in year 9 was moved to a smaller school. She then attended college in year 11 where, having no idea what she wanted to do she, "experimented a bit and studied both hairdressing and bricklaying". Tara felt she was expected to fail and believes that as a result she did not achieve any GCSE's. In her last year in college she was diagnosed with dyslexia and depression and was given counselling and prescribed the medication sertraline.*

*Upon leaving school Tara began collecting jobseekers allowance and looking for work; she feels that she had very little help from the job centre although she was sent on and completed, a retail course through the jobcentre. She secured only three interviews for herself and was unsuccessful in obtaining employment. Tara was very depressed at this time and began to 'self-medicate' with a dangerous combination of her prescription anti-depressant and alcohol;*

*"I was really, really depressed, I wanted to die, I felt hopeless –'just gave up on everything. I had no clue what to do or what I wanted to do"*

*The combination of the alcohol and her prescription medication made Tara 'act stupid' and indeed, during an argument with her boyfriend in the street after an evening of drinking she was arrested for being drunk and disorderly. Tara was given a 12 month Referral Order which she now describes as the 'best thing that ever happened' to her. As a part of that Referral Order she was required to have weekly meetings with the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and also had meetings with Connexions. It was through the YOT that Tara first heard about VLP which she immediately agreed to try.*

*Tara did not know what she wanted to apprentice in, however her last course with the job centre had been in retail so she asked for something in 'shop work'. The YOT found an apprenticeship opportunity in a florist and she began an apprenticeship in 'Customer Service' in March 2011.*

*She feels that the 'amazing' support she received from the YOT and her employer was crucial to her success. She also says the support she received from the Training Provider was great but feels that she "could have done with seeing the trainer more often" since she has had to add two more months to her course before she completes her NVQ level II in customer service. Tara no longer takes anti-depressant medication 'hardly drinks [alcohol] at all now'. Her employer has offered her a full time job after she has finished her apprenticeship and says of Tara:*

*"Against all kinds of adversity Tara has shown up every day and stuck to things, her confidence has soared. We dealt with a few wobbles at the beginning, but that's hardly surprising given her background. I really admire her – and to think we probably would never have been introduced to her if not for the project"*

*Tara credits the opportunity with increasing her confidence, self esteem and independence as well as helping her to be successful at something and proving that her teachers were wrong about her. She also feels that the experience has helped her grow up and become more of an adult; she has recently purchased her own vehicle which she maintains and pays for independently and she will soon move from her parents' home into a flat of her own. Her parents and people in her community are exceedingly proud of Tara's achievements.*

*"I meet people in the shop all the time now, I'm not shy anymore; I fit in. It's easy to managing my dyslexia here, no-one minds; I just get people to repeat themselves, which most people think is normal anyhow. I have a job and I have a career! I'm already managing and running this shop most of the time; in two years I can see myself managing the other shops and in 5 years I'll hopefully be working towards owning my own business".*

#### Financial Outcomes for Tara

*When Tara was unemployed he received £53.45 per week in Job Seekers Allowance. On entering the apprenticeship she received £105pw, an increase in her income of £51.55. If she continues into full time work as is predicted, Tara would receive an income of £186.26, assuming the current NMW. In addition, she would pay a combined total of £14.71 in Income Tax and NI contributions.*

*Therefore, Tara's net income from work of £171.55 would leave her £118.10 better off, compared to unemployment, prior to travel expense deductions. Tara being in work also generates savings of £3,544.32py to the Tax Payer, as a result of moving off Income Support and contributions she makes trough Tax and National Insurance. If we now factor in savings due to predicted reduced use of Offending Services (£5,321.50py), then a conservative estimate of overall savings increases to £8,865.82py.*

Table 14: Financial Outcomes for Tara

	Unemployed	During App	In paid work	Balance per week During	Balance per week In work	Balance per year In work
Income	£53.45	£105.00	£171.55	+£51.55	+£118.10	+£6,141.20
Welfare	£53.45	£00.00	£00.00	+£53.45	+£53.45	+£2,779.40
Benefits/Tax Credits						
Tax/NI contribution	£00.00	£00.00	£14.71	£00.00	+£14.71	+£ 764.92
						+£3,544.32

#### Those with Learning Disabilities/Mental Health Issues

Table 9 suggests that VLP for this cohort produces savings to the taxpayer of £3,904pm, compared to being NEET, while the young people are in their apprenticeships, and an in-work positive balance of £5,059pm following their assumed uptake of a paid job. This calculates into an overall saving of £8,963pm for these 18 individuals, or, £107,556py. If we now factor in the costs of VLP (£3,631.5pm), then the cost of supporting these young people in their apprenticeship increases to £7,959.5 or, £95,514py. This creates a positive balance of £272.5 during the apprenticeship phase, or a saving £3,270py.

**Table 9: Cost Outcomes for KSE Cohort £s**

	N	NEET	During App	In Paid Work	During Balance	In Work Balance	Overall
LD/MH per month	18	8,232	4,328	3,173	+3,904	+5,059	+8,963
Totals per year	18	98,784	51,936	38,076	+46,848	+60,708	+107,556
Totals Including VLP Cost per month	18	8,232	7,959.5	3,173	+272.5	+5,059	+5,331.5
Totals Including VLP Cost per year	18	98,784	95,514	38,076	+3,270	+60,708	+63,978

Following their assumed uptake of paid work, monthly savings occur at a rate of £5,059pm, or £60,708py. This creates a positive net cash balance of £63,978 worth of savings for these 18 young people, or, 47p for every £1 invested. Assuming that in-work savings remain constant over time then, savings of £303,540 accrue as a result of these 18 young people obtaining paid work through the project for a further 5 years, amounting to total savings of £367,518 when the net cash balance of Table 9 is factored in. The result in an impressive saving of £8.43 for every £1 invested.

Comparators for people with Physical Disabilities and Mental Health issues are difficult to obtain because of the effects of mental health resources, including GPs and costs to the NHS. However, there will clearly be savings for this group as a result of reduced service usage. For example, it is unlikely that those people supported by KSE who could obtain a Level 2 qualification or above would use local day services on a regular basis. However, for each person with a learning disability undertaking an ASO at Level 1 it is reasonable to assume that some of these individuals would receive some form of day service provision in the future.

Using a comprehensive costing from 2005/06, updated for inflation, we can estimate day service costs for people with learning disabilities in Kent per person at £12,007 in 2010/11 for the group of young people with learning disabilities. These figures are not sensitive to the amount of service received (e.g. hours per day) and are therefore representative of low and high level service users classified as 'known to social services'. In this comparison, alternative services for people with learning disabilities would cost £1,000pppm. Currently VLP is supporting 7 such individuals, translating into a potential saving of £7,000 pm, or, £96,000py. This means that the total savings for the KSE cohort across the 2 years (during and after) could be as high as £116,856 assuming that *half* of those with learning disabilities on the VLP would use adult day service if they were not in work. If we extrapolate this over a 5 year period, then a further £240,000 in LA day service costs are saved, increasing overall savings for this cohort to over £500,000.

#### **Case Study 5: Pat, age 23 - Severe Sight Impairment and Autism**

*Pat is a 21 year women with severe sight impairment and Autism. Pat attended a mainstream school, where she felt isolated from the other students due to her disability. She often felt frustrated during school, that the adaptive technology that could assist her to engage more fully in learning was absent.*

*Following school Pat went onto a 'blind college' for 3 years to focus on Business Administration and Information Technology studies. During college she felt more included and developed close friendships with the other disabled students. Over the past 2 years Pats' eyesight deteriorated even more and she was given a Guide Dog.*

*On leaving college Pat had been unemployed for 6 months and was getting bored being at home so much. One of the biggest problems she faced in getting a job was the lack of assistive technology in the workplace that could enable her to undertake administrative and IT work. She also lacked confidence, due to her autism, and found it difficult to speak to people she had not met before. As a result, she was not confident about meeting employers, let alone persuading them to make the significant adaptations she would require to work in their businesses.*

*Pat was referred to Kent Supported Employment (KSE) in August 2010. Her job coach worked alongside her to identify the sorts of adaptations that she would require to work including Super Nova and Read-It screen readers as well as Zoom Match Catcher a screen magnification system. Her job coach introduced Pat to the VLP. This took away much of her anxiety about working as the person who employed her would not have to pay her salary through the scheme.*

*Originally, Pat was found an apprenticeship with Kent County Council, undertaking an NVQ level 2 in admin and office duties. However, there was not enough work to keep Pat occupied, or to cover the variety of tasks required to complete the qualification. Pat left the job and following a month off was helped by KSE to continue her apprenticeship working with Seven Oaks Volunteers, based in a primary school. This provided Pat with the opportunity to learn new skills and develop her skills in filing, typing and data input, information that was used by the organisation to match volunteer applicants to jobs that would suit them.*

*Pat is enjoying her apprenticeship and has a great relationship with her boss. KSE's role was to help Pat with the initial meetings with her new employers and to help her and the employer to make the appropriate adaptations to the workplace. Pat is due to take the written part of her NVQ exam in May 2012. This was frustratingly delayed by 2 months due the amount of time that it took to get an authorisation letter from her Training Provider. Although Pat is confident about the skills assessment part of the qualification, she has some concerns about completing the written exams which are due at the end of May. However, the Training Providers have adapted the exam paper to be in large print and with the aid of 'Zoom', she feels she should be able to cope.*

*Encouragingly, Pat has been told that her current employers wish to keep her on once she has completed her qualification, dependent on funding. However, Pat says she feels far more confident about finding another job if this one falls through now and if that happens KSE will instigate a job search procedure to help Pat find paid work elsewhere.*

*Pat says she now feels much more confident about her long term career prospects and wants to become a full time admin assistant and maybe even an officer manager one day. The best part of doing the apprenticeship, according to Pat, was meeting new people, learning new skills and also developing her confidence.*

#### *Predicted Financial Costs/Benefits Outcomes for Pat*

*When Pat was unemployed she received £106.40 Employment Support Allowance, £37.90 in Disability Allowances, and £95.00 in Housing benefit (total=£239.30pw). Pat also had £18.75pw reduction in her Council Tax bill. On entering the apprenticeship Pat received £105.00 salary, maintained her disability and housing allowances (£132.90), but does not receive Employment Support Allowance, nor a reduction in her Council Tax bill. Her total net income, therefore, while on her apprenticeship is £237.90, a drop in income of £1.40, compared to unemployment. If Pat continues into full time work as is predicted, she would receive an income of £186.26, assuming the current NMW, a reduced housing benefit payment of £65.67 and carry over her Disability Allowances of £37.90. This gives her a total in work income of £289.83. In addition, Pat would pay a combined total of £14.71 in Income Tax and NI contributions. Therefore, Pat's net income in work of £275.12 means she is better off by £35.82 over unemployment. Pat being employed generates a combined saving to the Tax payer of £8,797.88.*

*Table 15: Financial Outcomes for Pat*

	Unemployed	During App	In paid work	Balance per week During	Balance per week In work	Balance per Year In work
Income	£239.30	£237.90	£275.12	-£1.40	+£35.82	+£1,862.64
Welfare Benefits/Tax Credits	£239.30	£114.15	£84.82	+£125.15	+154.48	+£8,032.96
Tax/NI contribution	£ 00.00	£ 00.00	£ 14.71	£00.00	+£14.71	+£ 764.92
				+£125.15	+£169.19	+£8,797.88

### **Case Study 6: Matthew, age 23 - Learning Disability**

*Matthew is a shy 23 year old man with learning disabilities who lives in supported accommodation. He attended a mainstream school leaving at age 16 to attend a mainstream college where he studied Physical Education, English and Information Computer Technology. Matthew describes having very few friends at school and then having to make new friends at college which he found very difficult. While at college he also learned to travel independently on public transport, since the college he attended was in a rural environment and quite far from home. He left college at age 20 with a Diploma in ICT and soon after left his parents' home to move into a supported living environment. He describes a typical day at this time as:*

*"Doing nothing all day - got up at lunchtime, played on play station, have something to eat, more play station or TV, then bed" and says that at this time he was "really bored and frustrated".*

*About a year later Matthew's parents heard about the Kent Supported Employment (KSE) service through a Care Manager and not long after Matthew met with them. Workers at KSE recall that Matthew was reluctant to meet with them and that during those initial meetings he was extremely shy and disengaged. KSE accepted him into their service in January 2011 and began to carry out a Vocational Profile (an information gathering process Supported Employment services use to assist a person with a disability make vocational choices and decisions and which help the service target employment search). KSE also began to actively look for work-experience opportunities. Matthew had never been employed; he had however had some work experience at college in a pre-school working with children and introducing them to computers which he had enjoyed very much. He had been with KSE for only three months when the apprenticeship opportunity was presented to him. KSE had already been working with an after school programme close to where Matthew lives and the opportunity fitted well with Matthew's interests and skills and after a brief tour Matthew indicated that he was very interested in doing his apprenticeship there.*

*A Training Provider assessed Matthew and it was determined that he would do a Level I Apprenticeship Style Opportunity (ASO) qualification in Childcare. Prior to the Level I ASO Matthew undertook a 20 week 'Progression Certificate' during which time he attended classroom based lessons one day per week where he developed a self-directed project on a subject of his choice (he chose Cheryl Cole as his subject). Whilst this has nothing in and of itself to do with childcare the process of working on an interest based project is considered to address interpersonal and social skills as opposed to work related skills. At this time Matthew also worked in the after school programme the other four days each week in the afternoons.*

*Matthew will finish his Level I ASO studies toward the end of May 2012 and says that doing the ASO helped him decide what he wants to do in the future - so much so that he plans to go on immediately to an NVQ Level 2 apprenticeship. He has enjoyed getting to know people, making friends at work and earning money. He feels that he could not have been successful without the help of KSE who helped him throughout with developing and customising the job for him, assisting him in the interview, travel training, on the job support (to him as well as his employer) and job coaching.*



People around Matthew describe him as being less shy, more confident and independent (he now lives in a more independent living situation and is learning how to cook 'real' meals for himself), and having more friends. Matthew says he feels better about himself and that he would highly recommend the apprenticeship programme to other people as:

"A really good thing to do- you should do it because I got a job out of it and it might help you get a better job at the end."

He now sees himself as always having a job and earning money in the future. The after school programme where Matthew did his Level 1 ASO will be unable to hire him unless they can find funding for his post.

#### *Predicted Financial Outcomes for Mathew*

When Mathew was unemployed he received £53.45 in Employment Support Allowance, combined Mobility and Care allowances of £66.75, and received £67.50 in Housing Benefits (Total=£187.70). During his apprenticeship, he received £105.00 salary, and maintained his Disability Allowances and Housing Benefits (£134.25). Therefore, Mathew's income during the apprenticeship was £239.25, an increase of £51.55, compared to unemployment. If Mathew moves into a paid job and receives £186.26, assuming the current NMW, he would maintain his Mobility and Care Allowances and his Housing Benefit (combined=£388.10) and would pay £14.71 in Tax and National Insurance Contributions. This means that Mathew would receive a net income £373.39 during work and would be better off by £185.69, compared to being unemployed. Mathew employed also generates savings to the taxpayer of £3,544.32py. In addition, when Mathew undertakes a job, he would be ineligible for a reduction in his Council Tax payments, generating £895.44py in savings to the LA.

*Table 16: Financial Outcomes for Mathew*

	Unemployed	During App	In paid work	Balance per week During	Balance per week In work	Balance per Year In work
Income	£187.70	£239.25	£373.39	+£51.55	+£185.69	+£9,655.88
Welfare Benefits/Tax Credits	£187.70	£134.05	£134.05	+£53.45	+53.45	+£2,779.40
Tax/NI contribution	£ 00.00	£ 00.00	£ 14.71	£00.00	+£14.71	+£ 764.92
				+£53.45	+£68.16	+£3,544.32.

#### Looked after Children Leaving Care

Extreme caution should be applied to these figures due to the small sample size. It suggests that through VLP there is a saving to the taxpayer of £102pm, compared to being NEET, while the young Care Leavers are in their apprenticeships and an in-work positive balance of £757 pm following their uptake of a paid job. This calculates into an overall saving of £859 pm for these 4 individuals. If we now factor in the costs of VLP, then the cost of supporting these 4 young people in their apprenticeships increases to £5,850pm or, £42,348py. This creates a *negative* net cash balance of £3,529 during the apprenticeship phase, or a total cost of £42,348. Following their assumed uptake of paid work, monthly savings occur at a rate of £757 pm, or £9,084py. This, however, is not enough to create a positive balance costing £2,772, or £33,264 following 1 year of employment, or, 76p for every £1 invested.

Assuming that in-work savings remain constant over time, then this amounts to an accumulated saving of £45,420 as a result of these 4 young people obtaining paid work through the project for a period of 5 years, or £12,156 when the negative net cash balance in Table 10 is deducted. This equates to a modest saving for this small sample, of 28p for every £1 invested.

**Table 10: Cost Outcomes for Looked after Children Leaving Care in £s**

	N	NEET	During App	In Paid Work	During Balance	In Work Balance	Overall
LD/MH per month	4	2,321	2,219	1,564	+102	+757	+859
Totals per year	4	27,852	26,628	18,768	+1,224	+9,084	+10,308
Totals Including VLP Cost per month	4	2,321	5,850	1,564	-3,529	+757	-2,772
Totals Including VLP Cost per year	4	27,852	70,200	18,768	-42,348	+9,084	-33,264

Cost comparisons for Care Leavers are difficult to obtain as, like Young Parents, the support packages they receive are varied and complex. However, the research is clear that a failure to intervene early on for these young people, could lead to increased costs due not only to unemployment, but also for some, costs associated with offending and drug and alcohol abuse. Research by York University suggests that a failure to implement early intervention strategies for Care Leavers could lead to significant increases in cost to the public purse. They compared the life paths for a young person, comparing the human and financial cost where the person receives support through intervention to one where they do not. In the positive scenario, the person receives £50,000 worth of support packages, which included a life changing trip to the Pyrenees and childcare support while she undertook a Level 3 qualification that led to a paid job. By contrast person B required a lot of support throughout his late teenage years and his early twenties interspersed with long periods of unemployment. The researchers estimated that the cost could spiral to over 60 times the investment figure in this situation.

*Case Study 7: Steve, age 19 - Care Leaver*

*Steve left the foster care system just over three years ago and is proud of the fact that he has lived independent of aid from Social Services since then. He now lives with his partner and their two children.*

*By his own admission, Steve did badly in school and after many warnings he was "understandably" expelled in year 10 when he was 15 years old. He then attended Canterbury College where he achieved a City and Guilds entry level 3 in car mechanics. After successfully completing the City and Guilds course the college sent him on a repeat of the same course which he felt was a "complete waste of [his] time" and "really insulting". He left college and began to make applications for employment to garages and car repair businesses in his community.*

*At this time Steve had no prior work experience apart from a newspaper route when he was 11 years old which he was fired because;*

*"I had a bad attitude and cocked up one too many times, I didn't know anything about work and didn't know what being employed was all about".*

*Not surprisingly he was unsuccessful in his search for employment and became deeply frustrated and depressed about his situation. Steve was unemployed for a year which he describes as:*

*"A really crap time, I was doing sod all with my life, I watched television inside all day every day and I wasn't bothered about anything, I didn't know any different."*

Steve heard about the apprenticeship project from his Connexions worker. He was originally interested in doing an apprenticeship in mechanics and had earmarked his girlfriends' fathers' car repair business, however health and safety issues made this unfeasible. Connexions found Steve an apprenticeship in another part of the motor industry which he had not previously considered and in February 2011 Steve embarked on an Industrial Awareness NVQ Level II apprenticeship which he completed in Feb 2012. Steve speaks very highly of the Training Provider and Connexions who he says backed him "100%". Steve believes wholeheartedly that he would not have made it through the apprenticeship without the support of key people within those organizations and his employers.

*"I'm really happy to have passed this, I haven't passed many things in my life, I was never able to stick at anything and now look – I've got a job for life and I'm providing for my partner and son. I feel like I'm part of the world now. People think I'm a better person - I'm not a brat anymore! Since I've been here I learn something new every day it's brilliant, I'll build on what I've learned and stay here for as long as they'll have me!"*

Steve has now been hired full time by the coachworks business he apprenticed at and is now earning £6.25ph (£1.27ph above NMW)

#### Financial Costs/Benefits Outcomes for Steve

When Steve was unemployed he received £53.45 per week in Job Seekers Allowance and £67.50 in Housing Benefits (Total=£120.95). On entering the apprenticeship he became ineligible for JSA but received £105 wages and Tax Credits worth £48.11pw, while maintaining a reduced housing benefit of £37.55 (Total = £190.66). This meant that Steve was £69.71pw better off in his apprenticeship, compared to unemployment. Now that Steve has entered into full time work he receives a salary of £231.25 pw and becomes ineligible for Housing Benefits and Tax Credits. He also makes a NI and Tax contribution of £18.78 pw. This means that Steve has an in-work net income of £212.22, an increase of £91.27pw compared to unemployment.

Steve in employment also generates savings of £7,265.96py to the Tax Payer, as a result of moving off of Income Support and contributions he makes through Tax and National Insurance.

Table 17: Financial Outcomes for Steve

	Unemployed	During App	In paid work	Balance per week During	Balance per week In work	Balance per year In work
Income	£120.95	£190.66	£212.22	+£69.71	+£91.27	+£4,746.04
Benefits/Tax Credits	£120.95	£85.66	£00.00	+£35.29	+£120.95	+£6,289.40
Tax/NI contribution	£00.00	£00.00	£00.00	+£00.00	+£ 18.78	+£ 976.56
				+35.29	+£139.73	+£7,265.96

### **Case Study 8: Jeanne, age 18 - Care Leaver**

Jeanne is an 18 year old Care Leaver who is also under a probation order. Coming from a traveller family background, she attended school until age 13 at which point she was 'chucked out of school' and remained at home (in keeping with her family traditions) with no further schooling. During her few years in school Jeanne felt very different from the other school children, she did not get along with them and felt that most people were scared of her, adding that even before people got to know her, she was tarnished with a bad reputation because of her family background. Her father died when she was 11 years old and her relationship with her mother was difficult due to her mothers' abuse of

*alcohol and drugs and involvement in an abusive relationship. Jeanne describes feeling very angry all the time.*

*At age 15, after the serious breakdown of her relationship with her mother and family, Jeanne was placed into foster care. During the next eighteen months she lived with 12 different foster care families which she describes as being the worst time of her life. She then lived in supported lodging for a further eighteen months where she got on well, and really liked and respected the woman who supported her in there. However, this relationship and situation broke down when Jeanne broke house rules and had a party at the house when the woman who was supporting her had gone away for the weekend. Jeanne was then placed in bed and breakfast accommodation by social services; this was intended to be a stop gap but lasted for fourteen months which Jeanne describes as being a very miserable time. She portrays herself at this time as very angry, not respected by others and not respecting other people in general. She was also verbally and physically violent with others, especially females (who she feels uncomfortable around) and has had minimal respect for other people's property which resulted in a probation order and involvement with the Youth Offending Team.*

*"Before I started the apprenticeship I was a little s\*\*t, I couldn't be bothered with anything or anyone and felt that my life really couldn't get any worse"*

*Jeanne had never had any work experience, indeed she had no expectation of work in her adult life, so when she was approached by Connexions about the VLP she had some difficulty deciding where she might like to work. Because she relates better to males than females, she chose carpentry, woodworking or bricklaying as her first choices with hairdressing (because she had always cut other people's hair) as her last choice. She was surprised to be offered an apprenticeship in a hairdressing salon and it was with great trepidation that she accepted and took on the apprenticeship.*

*Jeanne herself describes having some 'hiccups' in the course of her apprenticeship; she was nearly fired, had lots of bad moods at work and is still dealing with anger issues. Her boss has been very supportive and even though she would not have employed Jeanne without the support of the project she has taken Jeanne under her wing and mentored her beyond the scope of work and the apprenticeship. Even though Jeanne's apprenticeship has not completed yet her employer has hired her however, it has come to light in recent weeks that she has been missing her classroom based training. Her employer describes her work performance as:*

*"Sometimes great, sometimes bad; one day she comes to work dressed very smartly then the next day she's really scruffy, she has no support from anyone really – she has a social worker but they're never around for long – she once had a social worker for two days!"*

*Jeanne was supported by a Connexions worker but when she went on maternity leave Jeanne felt there was no-one else to give her the support she needed. However, Connexions did continue to support Jeanne beyond the scope of their remit (to work with NEET young people) and capacity and remain in touch with her on a peripheral basis. She also receives support from the Youth Offending Team – although not specifically around her apprenticeship. Her involvement in the apprenticeship project is through Catch 22 (as a Care Leaver) and she obviously still needs coordinated support. Jeanne has a few weeks of college attendance left to complete her apprenticeship. However, her employer has recently discovered that Jeanne has been absenting herself from college resulting in a college disciplinary and this combined with performance issues at work have resulted in the employer also taking disciplinary action against Jeanne. Both disciplinary actions have put completion of her apprenticeship in jeopardy.*

*Jeanne is optimistic that she can try harder and finish her apprenticeship; she believes that the apprenticeship has:*

*"Given me something of my own, something I can always fall back on, I've really accomplished something. I feel better about myself now; I'm much more independent, I've grown up a bit. I get more respect from people and so I give other people more respect now".*

### *Financial Outcomes for Jeanne*

*When Jeanne was unemployed she received £53.45 per week in Job Seekers Allowance and £79.92 in Housing Benefits (Total=£133.37). On entering the apprenticeship she became ineligible for JSA but received £105 in wages and Tax Credits worth £48.11pw, while maintaining a reduced housing benefit of £62.40 (Total = £215.51). This meant that Jeanne was £82.14pw better off in her apprenticeship, compared to unemployment. If Jeanne enters into full time employment on completion of her apprenticeship, which she intends to do, then she receives a salary of £231.25pw and becomes ineligible for Housing Benefits, but maintains her Tax Credit (Total = £279.36). She also makes a NI and Tax contribution of £18.78pw, meaning that Jean has an in-work net income of £260.58, an increase of £127.21 compared to unemployment. Jeanne working also generates savings of £5,146.44py to the Tax Payer, as a result of moving off of Income Support and contributions she makes through Tax and National Insurance.*

*Table 18: Financial Outcomes for Jeanne*

	Unemployed	During App	In paid work	Balance per week During	Balance per week In work	Balance per year In work
Income	£133.37	£215.51	£260.58	+£82.14	+£127.21	+£6,614.92
Welfare	£133.37	£110.51	£49.11	+£22.86	+£84.26	+£4,381.52
Benefits/Tax Credits						
Tax/NI contribution	£00.00	£00.00	£18.78	£00.00	+£14.71	+£ 764.92
Total				+22.86	+£98.97	+£5,146.44

## **Section 8: Discussion Conclusions and Recommendations**

### Overall

The results for the VLP pilot as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 are very encouraging and Kent County Council should be congratulated for innovating and funding the pilot project. Although it did not meet the original target of 80, 69 young people (aged 18 to 24) have accessed apprenticeship opportunities through the project. As of March 2012, 42 young people had either completed or were still undertaking their apprenticeships, representing 61% of those who started, compared to 74% nationally. The project is hitting its target population and the 4 cohorts represent some of the most vulnerable NEET groups in our society with a diverse range of support needs, each facing different barriers to labour market engagement. These ranged from the challenges faced in motivating and supporting the young people, to those who found it academically difficult to attain an intermediate level qualification. The project deliverers have done well in adapting their procedures to meet these challenges, including developing a prototype for Apprenticeship Style Opportunities (ASOs) for 7 young people with Learning Disabilities to counter the problems they had in attaining an intermediate level qualification.

Any cost benefit outcomes would be purely academic without positive benefits to the young people, or without the support of the employers. Results show that the pilot has had a major impact for the majority of young people participating; many reported significant increases in their self-esteem; felt they had proven something to themselves and others; saw it as chance to change direction and did not see the apprenticeship as an end in and of itself. This new sense of optimism is well expressed in the case study examples. Similarly, most employers, while acknowledging the significance of the wage subsidy made clear their intent to hire and

all saw mutual benefits in the hiring of the person for their organisation and for the young people themselves.

The cost benefit analysis revealed the potential that this approach has to produce significant savings at the taxpayer and local authority levels due to the high costs involved should these groups remain NEET, returning £2.19 for every £1 of the initial overall investment (£1.38 allowing for fall-out) at the Taxpayer Level. In line with other reports in this area, this leads to the conclusion that it makes economic sense to invest in the early intervention approach of VLP and leads to the following recommendation:

*Recommendation 1: Further funding should be made available for continuation and development of VLP and for replication of the approach beyond the Kent boundaries.*

#### Building on Lessons Learned

The target shortfall was largely due to the issues faced by the deliverers in the initial stages of the pilot. Each specialist team have had to adapt and develop new procedures to plug the gaps that existed within their organisations towards the aims of VLP. However, it became clear during the set-up phase that there was a large variation between each specialist teams' service infrastructures and resource available towards delivering the project. Unsurprisingly, KSE as a mature supported employment agency with a service structure geared towards job matching and job finding, on the job support for both the employer and employee and on-going procedures to support those in work in the longer term, were the best placed of the specialist teams from the beginning.

However, the remaining three teams had little or no such infrastructure, being geared towards helping their cohorts to cope within their local communities and historically, referring their clients to mainstream employment providers external to their organisations. This had a major impact on the Care Leaver cohort. The lack of expertise at finding jobs within the organisation and the subsequent loss of SEAC meant that only 9 Care Leavers were recruited onto the project. These differences in infrastructure are also reflected by results showing the fall out rates for the LD/MH cohort were only 14%, compared to a range of 44% to 56% for the remaining 3 cohorts. While the Young Parents team had the highest number of apprenticeship starts, they reported not having the resource or service infrastructure to provide appropriate levels of support once the young people were in employment.

It is also clear that during project set-up, some of the Training Providers lacked knowledge regarding the additional needs of some of the cohorts; knowledge that would have proven useful in developing flexible assessment criteria and in anticipating the additional time and resource required by some prior to project set up. Clearly differences in the cohorts also had an impact on fall-out rates; the inclination to re-offend, motivational issues as well as domestic and personal circumstances were all high among the reported reasons for young people leaving the project.

*Recommendation 2: All deliverers should become acquainted with the methods of 'Supported Employment', especially the procedures developed around the 'place-train-maintain' approach. This could be used as a basis for identifying gaps in service provision.*

*Recommendation 3: Prior to implementation there should be an emphasis on identifying the amount of resource available to deliver the project within each specialised team and*

*the identification of how existing internal resource can be deployed or rearranged to support VLP*

*Recommendation 4: Thoroughly explore the potential to link into other local service providers and/or other cohort resources in order to plug any gaps not catered for internally.*

*Recommendation 5: Ensure the specialist teams have the capacity to support, or develop procedures to support, the young people during and following their apprenticeship.*

*Recommendation 6: Ensure that Training Providers are aware of the support issues regarding each group.*

The lack of a formal operational plan and co-ordination during the initial stages of VLP also had a negative impact on the pilot project, evidenced by reports from the specialist teams, the host employers and the training providers. The bottle-neck of applicants waiting for assessment became an issue, with some having to wait 11 weeks between being referred to the project and the pre-work assessment, during which time over a quarter of those referred to the project lost interest or left VLP. All of those associated with VLP stated that the appointment of a central co-ordinator from the offset to drive and oversee the operational implementation of the project is vital. The evaluation suggests that not only is a full time project manager required but also a full time project marketer/job developer whose responsibilities would be to ensure co-ordinated job search and employer engagement practices across cohorts. Also high on the list of project start-up priorities is ensuring that the administrative and programmatic processes are in place or as many have put it, 'having all the ducks in a row' prior to any engagement with young people. In the final analysis, the positive results achieved through this project were due in large part to the dedication of a few core deliverers.

*Recommendation 7: Appoint a central Co-ordinator from the offset to oversee the operational implementation of the project.*

*Recommendation 8: Employ a dedicated job search co-ordinator to work across the cohorts.*

*Recommendation 9: Develop follow-up procedures when apprenticeship starts are delayed to maintain contact and update the young people on progress.*

Given the focus of the VLP evaluation on the outcome of apprenticeships it is easy to overlook the diversity of activities undertaken by the specialist teams in its delivery. The fact that the deliverers spent the highest proportion of their time during VLP on meeting with and supporting the apprentices suggests the primary focus was working directly with the young people. Interestingly, the lowest proportion of time was spent attending or delivering training events. This highlights an underused opportunity to bring together the pool of expertise existent within the cohort teams to not only share information between cohorts, but also to assist Training Providers in understanding the needs of the groups to help them plan and tailor their procedures more quickly and appropriately.

This idea is reinforced through the clear overlaps that existed across the cohorts; for example some of the Care Leavers may also have had a Learning Disability or learning difficulties due

to severe interruptions in their schooling while some were also Young Offenders and/or Young Parents. Similarly some of the Young Parents had presenting mental health issues (depression) and could also have been involved with the Youth Offending Team. Therefore, it is easy to see the opportunities for information and expertise exchange as well as the benefit of co-ordinated support from a variety of different Champions for some of the young apprentices. In retrospect, the supported employment model and procedures used through KSE could easily have been generalised to the other cohort groups. The exercise of identifying the core components that comprise job searching and matching procedures and those required to provide on the job support to both the employee and host employers could have provided an opportunity for deliverers to map these procedures against what existed in their organisations.

Some young people's comments highlighted the importance of job matching. The results suggested that in a few cases, the jobs the young people obtained did not have the necessary diversity of skills to meet the apprenticeship criteria and subsequently they had to find new employment. Three young people did not get apprenticeships in the sectors they found interesting. Clearly, jobs matched to interests' increases motivation. This reinforces the need for deliverers to adopt the methods of vocational profiling, job searching and job carving or customising associated with the practices of supported employment and may go some way towards overcoming the motivational issues associated with some of those falling off the project. Other young people suggested there should be some kind of follow-up from the project beyond the apprenticeship, especially for those individuals who would not be employed by their apprenticeship employer.

One young apprentice said he felt 'abandoned' when at the end of his apprenticeship he was unemployed and had no further support or assistance to find employment from the project. Some of the young people stated they would have liked more support and advice on how to approach potential host employers on their own behalf. This suggests there would be advantages in developing a set of procedures to help the young people approach employers, negotiate placements and potentially carve out areas within the apprenticeship that match their own work interests.

*Recommendation 10: Ensure that procedures are in place to match the employment preferences of the young people to available jobs to direct job targeting and search.*

*Recommendation 11: Assistance with how to approach employers should be made available to young applicants.*

*Recommendation 12: All jobs obtained through the apprenticeships should be assessed for their potential to provide the range of experience needed to meet the qualifications criteria.*

The development of the ASO within the project is a unique innovation which has the potential to open apprenticeship opportunities for those previously considered unable to meet the academic criteria set for Intermediate or Advanced Apprenticeships. Doubtless, the debate will begin around whether or not ASO's constitute a 'real' apprenticeship. However, if the opportunity to undertake an apprenticeship is to include those not academically inclined, then the focus necessarily needs to focus upon the practical abilities of the young people to



demonstrate they have the skills to reach the standards set by the qualification and those demanded in the workplace by the employers. A recent report commissioned by the Apprenticeship Unit<sup>39</sup> makes 20 recommendations to halt the decline in the number of people with Learning Disabilities accessing apprenticeships. Results from this evaluation endorse those recommendations but would go one stage further and conclude that there is a need to seek to extend this approach to include all vulnerable groups.

*Recommendation 13: Assessment procedures for the Intermediate qualification should be adapted to include verbal and non-academic assessment for those with Learning Disabilities and those who struggle academically.*

*Recommendation 14: Training Providers to develop assessment procedures based on verbal, observational and practical frameworks, such as the ASO developed through VLP*

### Employer Outcomes

The young people obtained apprenticeships in a variety of Private, Public and Third Sector organisations that reflect jobs that are available in the local labour market. All jobs took place in integrated workplaces with the potential for peer support, supportive networks and the imperatives associated with employment and workplace culture. For the most part, the apprenticeships were spread over different organisations, with the 69 young people working for 43 employers in total. This is important because grouping vulnerable people together in only a few workplaces can easily act as a barrier to integration by making it more difficult for the young people to interact socially with their work colleagues. There is much research suggesting that social integration factors such as the ratio of vulnerable people to ‘typical’ people in any given workplace greatly impacts the assimilation potential of that workplace and in turn the probability of active support from co-workers and that this has a dramatic effect on job retention for vulnerable people. The highest proportions of apprenticeships were in the Construction Industry with 10 young male offenders working for a single organisation. It is probable that many Young Offenders want to work in construction. However, VLP and any future projects should be mindful to obtain a wide variety of host employers in different locations to avoid this.

The results also lead to the conclusion that there were differences between the types of employer and their intent to hire; while employers who were charities and organisations that rely on grants and public funding often had no intent to hire, those in commercial private organisations often saw the apprenticeship as a way of training up their staff in-house. From this we can conclude that private organisations or businesses should be targeted in order to give the opportunity for long term employment to develop over the course of the apprenticeship. This would not exclude charities and grant funded organisations as apprenticeship placements but we would caution an over reliance on a ‘soft option’ apprenticeship in favour of targeting the marketing of VLP and job search towards community employers with long term employment potential. In terms of marketing VLP, most employers we interviewed were heavily influenced by having an association with KCC and saw this as a highly positive factor in their decision to participate.

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<sup>39</sup> [http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/~media/documents/AU-CreatingAnInclusiveApprenticeshipOffer-Report-May2012.ashx?utm\\_source=http%3a%2f%2flists.niace](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk/~media/documents/AU-CreatingAnInclusiveApprenticeshipOffer-Report-May2012.ashx?utm_source=http%3a%2f%2flists.niace)

*Recommendation 15: Job finders should target employers, prioritising the Private Sector, who are intending or have the capacity to hire the young person following their apprenticeship.*

*Recommendation 16: Job finders should prioritise Private Sector Employers looking to train apprenticeships for in-house employment.*

Continued commitment from the employers has played a central role in the success of the VLP to date with all the employers interviewed identifying advantages for their organisations in hiring the young people. Although some of these were practical profit driven motives, they were also driven by the ethical considerations and the potential benefits to the young apprentices they employed. On the crucial question of whether or not they would have employed the person without the subsidy, 70% stated they would not. This, however, was far from unequivocal: for some employers this was because the organisations were creating apprenticeships to provide them with opportunities as a stepping stone, rather than with any intent to hire, while other employers had changed their minds about the need for subsidy having seen the young people's enthusiasm and diligence in work and most essentially, having developed a relationship with the young person.

Interestingly, the Young Parents Team through forward negotiation, managed to secure 3 apprenticeships at the 50% subsidy level and 1 at the 75% funded level. Although the current data suggests that the subsidy has been crucial to the success of the VLP, it also implies that there is potential to explore the possibility of negotiating part or partial subsidies with the host employers. This is reinforced by the fact that 63% of the employers stated they had employed the young person with an intent to hire them on completion of their apprenticeships. The employers who reported being apprehensive about employing people from these vulnerable groups were more concerned about the potential red tape and the amount of support they were perceived to require while in their apprenticeships, rather than preconceived ideas around stigmas and deviancy. In several instances employers reported targeting a specific group or cohort close to their own life experience. This highlights openness on the part of the employers to hire these individuals and suggests the financial inducement acts more as a safeguard around the perceived bureaucratic implications of the approach and highlights the importance of on-going employer support.

Encouragingly, 89% of the host employers interviewed stated their willingness to hire vulnerable young people in the future, while all but 2 of the employers stated they would recommend the project to other employers. This suggests that despite early teething problems, the majority of employers endorse the VLP approach and could become useful allies in the future.

*Recommendation 17: The wage subsidy should be maintained, but the potential for negotiating partial funding options for some employers should be explored.*

Despite the caveats and assumptions of the financial cost benefit analysis, we conclude that not only are the young people better off as a result of VLP but also that there are potentially significant savings in adopting the VLP approach. The headline figures show that although there were costs associated with the delivery phase of VLP these are cancelled out at the Taxpayer level following one year in paid employment as a result of savings in welfare benefit payments and inflow to the Treasury from revenue and national insurance contributions. Significantly, yearly savings then accrue to the taxpayer to just over

£120,000py with potential to save +£604,464 accumulated over 5 years of employment, compared to the NEET condition. Even when the VLP fall-out rate is factored into the equation this still leaves a net cash balance of +£380,813, including the costs of running VLP. This based on the sample size of only 42 people. Savings would inevitably be greater should it prove possible to support higher numbers of vulnerable young people into apprenticeships. Similarly, once the VLP has been set-up, it has the potential to support increasing numbers of vulnerable people through an on-going rolling intake programme, without the expenditure required for project start up.

Clearly, the relatively small sample sizes in some cohorts restrict the extent that the evaluation findings can be generalised to the wider population of vulnerable young people and the figures based on five year predictions do not take into account the extent that those moving into work as a result of their apprenticeships subsequently fall back into NEET. Similarly, financial outcomes of the evaluation are susceptible to biases of certain types of benefit e.g., in the case of the Young Parents the uptake of Working Tax Credit which suggests the other cohorts produce greater savings. In addition, they are subject to changes made in the welfare benefits system. For example, the Coalition Governments' objective of raising the personal tax threshold to £10,000 in their March 2012 Budget by 2013 will reduce revenue to the treasury from these cohorts. On the other hand, it may increase the fiscal motivation of the young vulnerable adults.

These problems can only be fully countered with a follow-up analysis of VLP, tracking the young people over time. However, any negative effects on fiscal outcomes due to this fall-out are balanced to some extent by the fact that the analysis assumed National Minimal Wage levels, and are therefore based on 'minimal' Tax returns. It is also worth reiterating that these savings occurred at the *Taxpayer* level without factoring in savings to the Local Authority due to reduced usage of local services. When we tentatively added these to the equation, it became very clear that there will be other very significant savings to local commissioners, which in two instances indicate a doubling in savings (the KSE & Young Offenders cohorts).

*Recommendation 18: VLP should be subject to a follow-up cost benefit analysis to determine the financial outcomes more accurately.*

#### Potential for 'Invest to Save' Strategy

In line with previous 'early intervention' research the results from this evaluation show that there that there are some very powerful human and financial incentives for continuing VLP and for funded replication projects beyond the Kent boundaries. Opportunities for continued investment should be explored. Given the direction of the savings, it would make sense that any investment strategy should at least involve a partnership between the LA and Central Government departments. One approach being piloted at the moment involves 'Social Impact Bonds' or (SIBs).<sup>40</sup> The Social Finance Organisation recently defined SIBs as:

*'.... based on a commitment from government to use a proportion of the savings that result from improved social outcomes to reward non-government investors that fund the early intervention activities.'*<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Sometimes referred to as 'Payment by Results'

<sup>41</sup> Social Finance (2009) Social Impact Bonds: Rethinking finance for social outcomes.  
<http://www.socialfinance.org.uk/work/sibs>

They go on to argue that although most public sector funding is contingent upon them achieving certain criteria, the financial implications (such as savings) are rarely factored into the equation. Consequently, there are no financial incentives for improving services as payments are not linked to results. Three SIB pilots have been launched by the Ministry of Justice, the first in Peterborough Prison in September 2010. The Social Finance organisation raised £5m from 17 social investors to fund work with 3,000 male, short-sentence prisoners leaving Peterborough prison. The approach involves a third party investor (in the Peterborough Pilot these were Charities) who finance the intervention (in this case £5m).

The interventions are delivered through existing specialist organisations that develop their current services to meet the criteria set. Payments from the central funding pot are made to investors contingent upon certain targets being reached. In Peterborough this is a reduction of 7.5% in recidivism rates. Investors receive a return if re-offending among the prison leavers falls by 7.5% or more compared to a control group of short-sentence prisoners in the UK. If a drop in re-offending rates goes beyond these figures, investors receive an increasing return, which is capped (Peterborough =13% over an 8 year period). The Public Sector, therefore, only has to pay for effective service as the third party investor bears all the risk.

Definitions of SIBs vary. The above description suggests that public sector organisations are excluded from third party investment. However, an alternative definition provided by John Loder and his colleagues suggest that third party investors can include Public Sector organisations, which could potentially open the door for LA investment.<sup>42</sup> Recently the Government have conveyed a desire to extend this approach to include other vulnerable groups including young vulnerable adults.<sup>43</sup>

There are also currently a number of unanswered questions regarding SIBs. For example, there are no agreed guidelines as to how the control groups will be set up and monitored, or what criteria should be used for groups other than those of Offenders. Certainly, savings due to reductions in welfare benefits could be one possibility. Another issue regarding SIBs is that they are based on an implicit assumption that the key to delivering success lies in the financial inducement for a third party investor. Some commentators have argued that the financial investment should be restricted to the Public and/or Third Sector investors only to create a 2 way relationship between for example, the LA and any corresponding Central Government payments. This would ensure that any 'profits' handed down from the treasury would remain within the LA (or charity) for local re-investment. This prevents the possibility of third party Private investors pocketing the profits for personal gain, but places the burden of risk on the LA.

Another issue relates to the pressure for maximising profit through customer selection. Where targets are profit driven, there could be a tendency for contractors to work with those who require less help to obtain employment, and who generate the biggest returns. This could potentially exclude some groups who are more costly to support. As discussed, the current results suggest that this may be less likely to happen if the investment is targeted across vulnerable groups and the control groups represent a cross section of the vulnerable young people. Previous research has shown that people tend to drop out of work if there is a crisis

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<sup>42</sup> Loder, J; Mulgan, G; Reeder, N; & Shelupanov, A (2010) Financing social value: implementing Social Impact Bonds. The Young Foundation

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.civilsociety.co.uk/finance/news/content/6476/treasury\\_hints\\_at\\_more\\_social\\_impact\\_bond\\_trials](http://www.civilsociety.co.uk/finance/news/content/6476/treasury_hints_at_more_social_impact_bond_trials)

and they don't have access to support.<sup>44</sup> A small investment in on-going support for some, after progression from VLP is easily justifiable within the context of these findings. It makes sense financially to enable those falling out of work or experiencing problems to regain access to the support they require, rather than allow them to fall back into NEET status.

Therefore we make the following recommendation:

*Recommendation 19: The methods pertaining to VLP should be widely disseminated to other Government organisations and the benefit – cost potential made explicit.*

In conclusion, the results show that VLP is contributing significantly to the prospects of vulnerable people within Kent. It complies strongly with the current Government's emphasis on early intervention strategies for vulnerable young people and has produced increases in the levels of social responsibility, independence and optimism for the future among the young people taking part. It also has the potential to generate significant savings at the Tax Payer and LA levels in a harsh economic climate and may be highly conducive to an 'invest to save' strategy, with the potential to attract investment monies from outside the LA. This pilot project, in line with previous early intervention studies, produces many compelling arguments human and fiscal, for continuing VLP and for its funded replication beyond the pilot phase and the Kent boundaries.

As one young apprentice sums it up:

*"I was doing nothing with my life; even my Mum said I was probably going nowhere and I'd end up stuck on benefits; but now I think I can really do something with my life. I've got something I can build on. I'd eventually like to have my own business; I could be hiring people myself one day – who knows? I feel like one of the lucky ones!"*

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<sup>44</sup> Burchard, T, (2005). The Education and Employment of Disabled Young People: frustrated ambition Marston Book Services, PO Box 269, Abingdon, Oxon.