

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Supplementary agenda no.1

A meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be held on:

Date: 8 January 2026

Time: 6.30pm

Venue: St George's Centre, Pembroke, Chatham Maritime, Chatham ME4 4UH

Items

5	Meeting theme: Education	(Pages 3 - 20)
	Presentation	

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Date: 7 January 2026

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Children and Adults Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Education Theme 8 January 2026

By Paul Clarke

Agenda Item 5

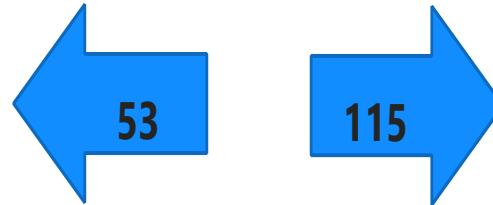
NEET update report

Presented by Paul Clarke

Summary



3.12% (240) of 16 & 17 year olds were NEET (Not in education, employment or training)



There were **53** NEET Leavers

There were **115** NEET Joiners



24.02% (1847) of 16 & 17 year olds had their destination recorded as not known

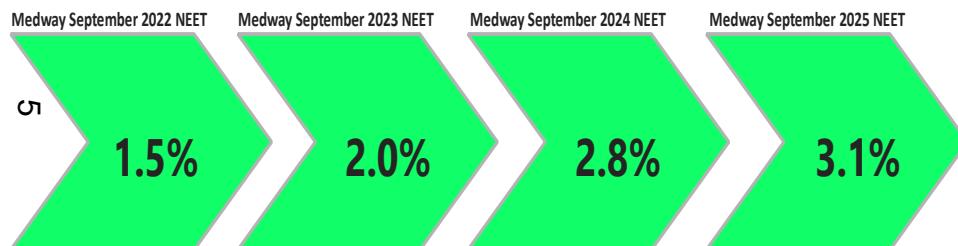


The combined figure for NEET and 'Not Knowns' was **27.14% (2087)**



33.8% of 16 & 17 year olds who were NEET belong to a vulnerable group*

23.5% of 16 & 17 year olds with an unknown status belonged to a vulnerable group*



The chevrons show the NEET figures over the last 4 years for September.

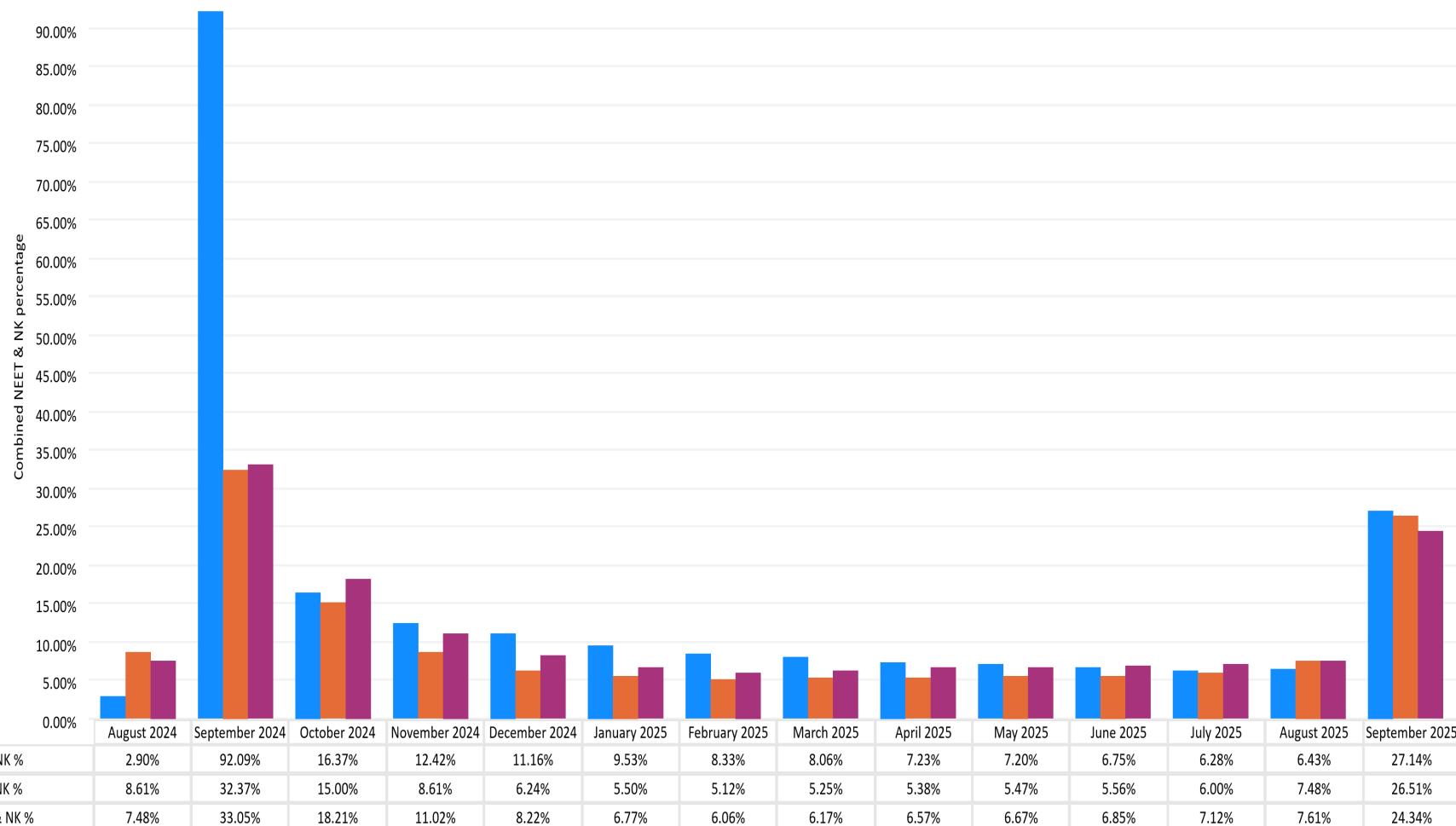
The green is for good and shows consistently low levels of NEET each September. High levels of NEET will be shown in red and would be closer to 100%.

Low numbers of NEET young people is positive as we want as many young people as possible to be in Education, Employment or Training.

Current NEET Position and Key Pressures

- **Rising NEET Rates**
- Medway's NEET rate has recently peaked, indicating serious challenges in education and employment access.
- **Key Contributing Factors**
- Shortages in post-16 education, rising dropout rates, insufficient funding and limited training capacity drive the NEET increase.
- **Impact on Social Mobility**
- Lack of pathways risks long-term social mobility and economic stability for affected youth.
- **Need for Coordinated Action**
- Schools, colleges, and authorities must collaborate to expand opportunities and implement targeted interventions.

Medway combined NEET and NK % against National and South East Averages

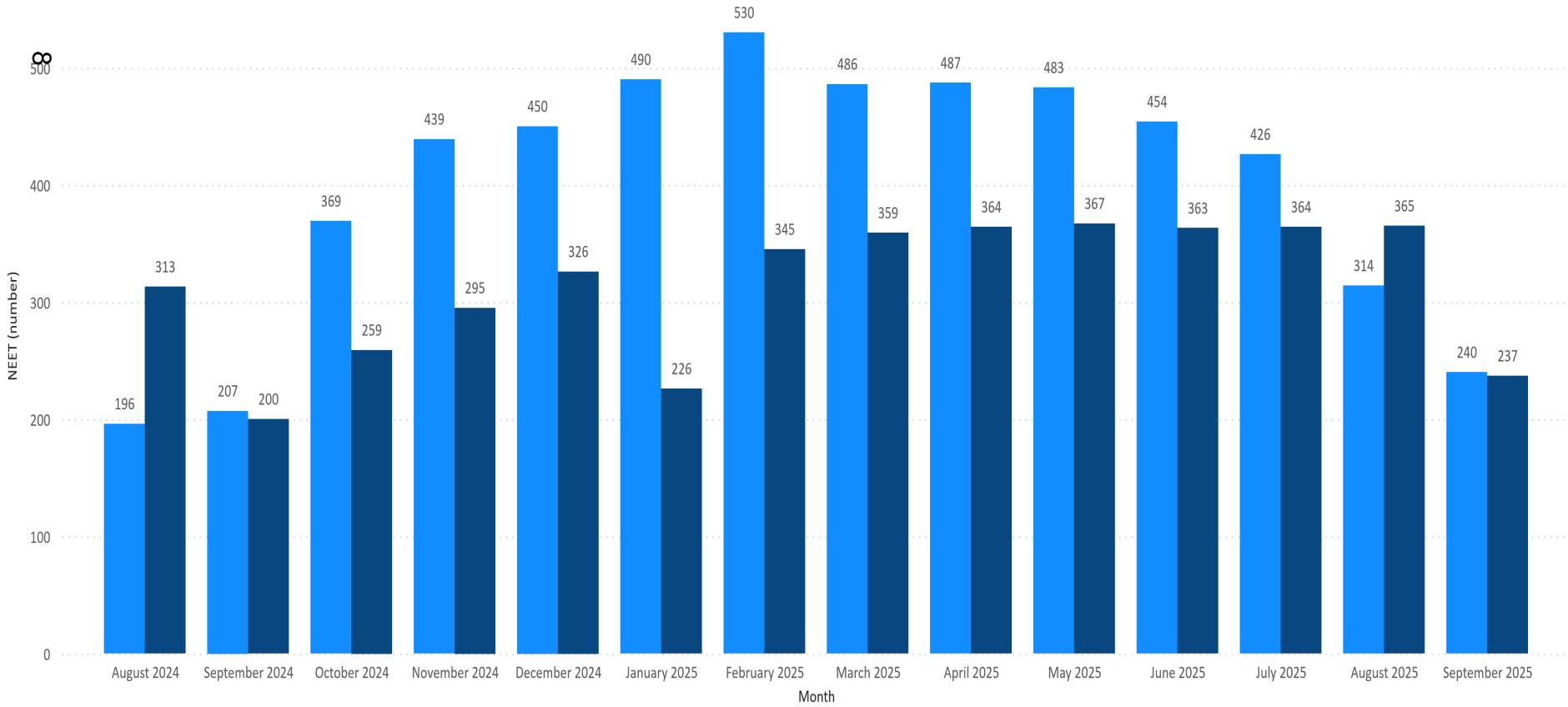


This month saw a negative 20.71 percentage point increase in the proportion of NEET and not knowns from August to September, this contrasts the 90 percentage point decrease seen over the same period last year. Medway's combined NEET and NK percentage is 64.95 percentage points lower than in September 2024 (as shown in the chart above).

Medway are 0.63 percent points higher than the National average and 2.8 percent points higher than the South-East average, which is a greater gap then the one seen in September 2024 where Medway were 59.72 pp better than the national average and 59.04 pp lower than the South-East. Medway's figures are much better than this time last year and much closer to the National and South-East averages.

Medway NEET number against the comparator group average

● Medway NEET ● Comparator group NEET average

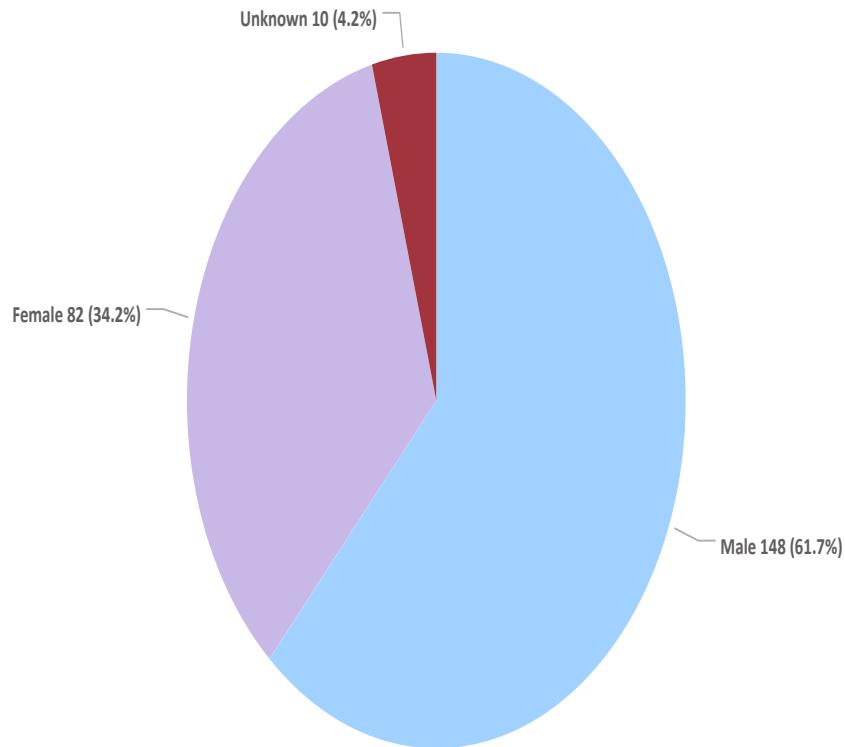


Medway have seen a fall of 1.1% in their NEET figure from August to September which equates to 74 young people although this improvement has not been reflected in their position in the comparator group; as they continue to have the second highest NEET figure. Medway are now 3 young people above the comparator group average.

The number of 16 and 17 year olds recorded as NEET in Medway is 240 young people. This is 37 more young people than the same time last year. Medway's figures are much better than this time last year and much closer to the comparator group average.

Summary of Key Trends

- **Rising NEET Figures**
- NEET levels in Medway have reached a recent high, indicating systemic barriers in education and training access.
- **Impact on Vulnerable Groups**
- Vulnerable groups like low achievers, EHE students, and SEND/SEMH youth are disproportionately affected by current trends.
- **Need for Flexible Pathways**
- Lack of flexible and inclusive pathways limits progression options for many young people needing tailored support.
- **Call for Immediate Action**
- Addressing gaps requires better tracking, improved partnerships, and expanded opportunities for all youth.

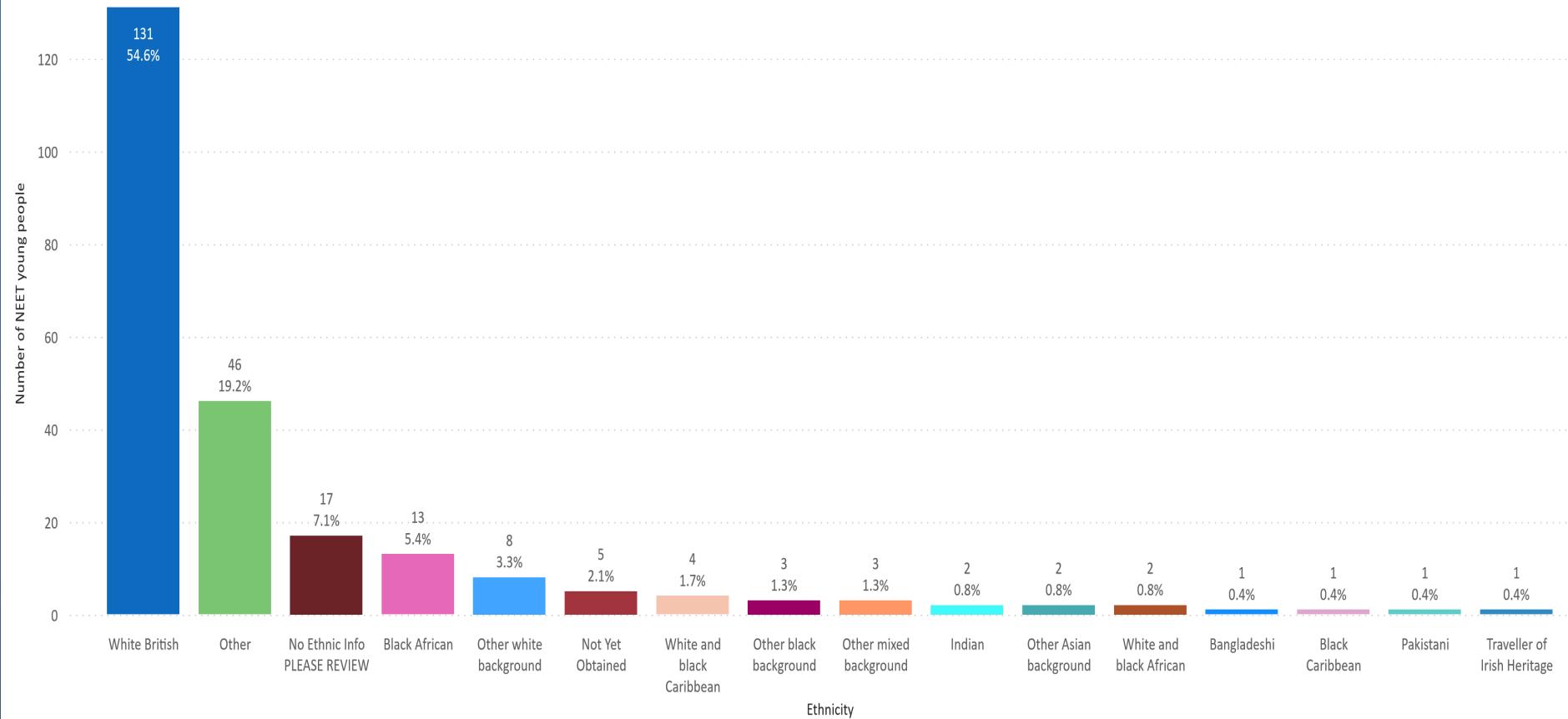


61.7% of NEET young people are Male, 34.2% are female and the remaining 4.2% have an unknown sex.

Data has been released to monitor young people's preferred gender, and how they prefer to be addressed. This data is now populated from the Census and further work is being done to populate this data for all young people on Core+.

The data in this table displays gender at birth. Work will continue to reduce the number of young people in the unknown gender category.

Medway NEET by Ethnicity



The most prevalent ethnic group for NEET 16 and 17-year-olds is White British at 54.6%. The second highest is Other ethnic background at 19.2% and the third is Black African with 5.4%.

7.1% of the NEET cohort have no ethnicity recorded. Ethnicity is updated from the information in the Spring Census and will be reflected in the data at the end of the academic year.

Challenges in Post-16 Provision

- **Capacity Limitations at Mid Kent College**
- Mid Kent College is at near full capacity, restricting enrolment for foundation-level and vocational courses.
- **Impact on High-Demand Sectors**
- Construction and trades suffer from limited training opportunities and long waiting lists for young people.
- **Lack of Flexible Options**
- Strict academic criteria exclude many students lacking English and Maths qualifications from viable alternatives.
- **Rising NEET Numbers**
- The shortage in provision contributes to increased numbers of young people not in education, employment, or training.

It is important to measure and track those 16- and 17-year-olds who are part of a vulnerable group to ensure that these young people with higher support needs are being supported during the difficult transition between childhood and adulthood.

Number of NEET young people belonging to a vulnerable group

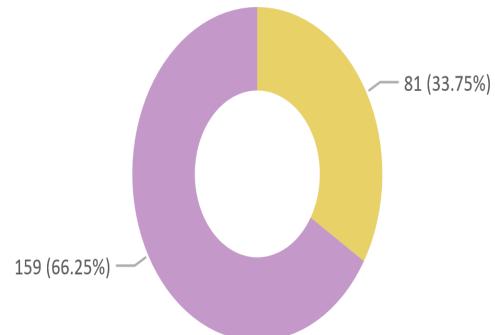
NEET In a Vulnerable Group NEET Not in a Vulnerable Group

The vulnerable groups being analysed in this section are:

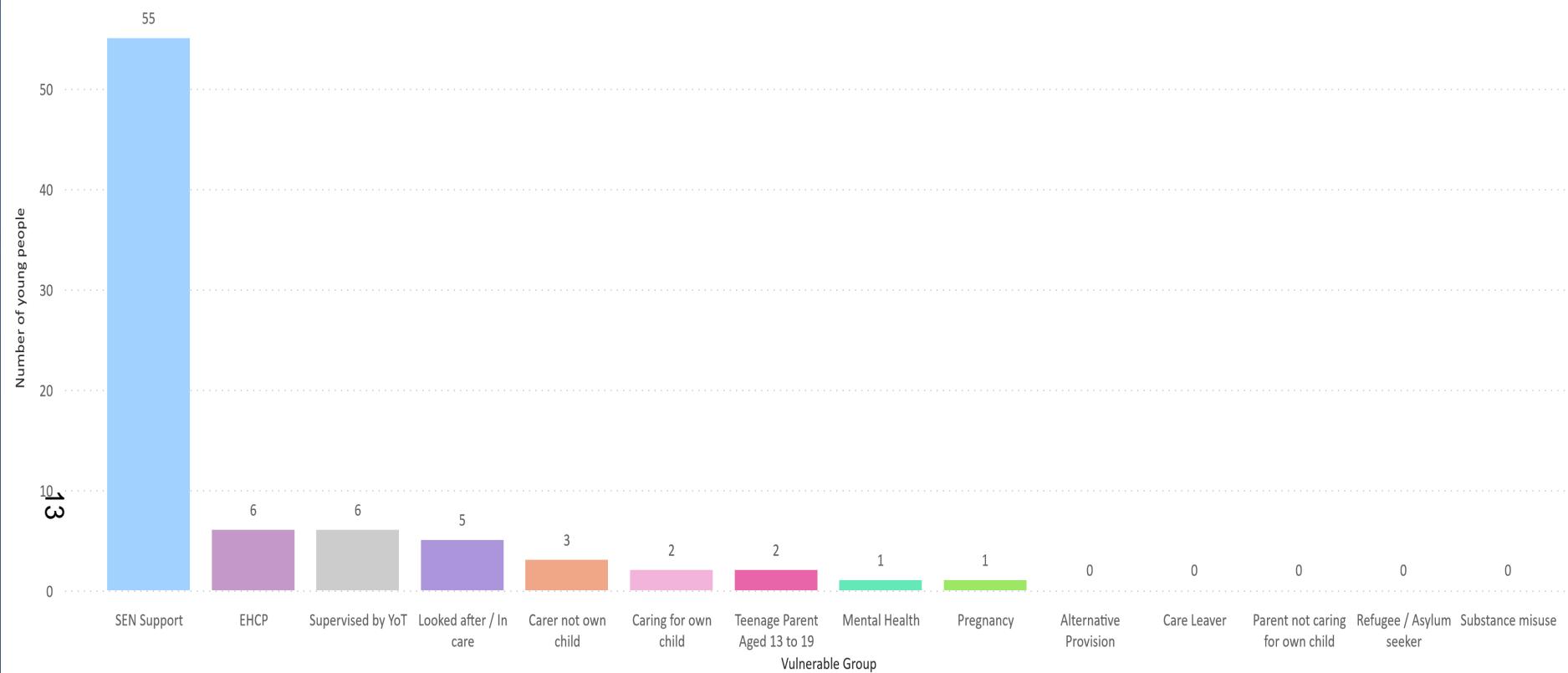
- Children in Care (CiC) *(including POLA)
- Young people with Special Educational Needs (SEND)
- Young people accessing Early Help Support
- Young people accessing the Youth Offending team (YOT)

Within the NEET Cohort of 240 young people there are currently 81 young people who belong to at least one vulnerable group.

*Please note that some NEET young people belong to more than one vulnerable group.



NEET Young People belonging to at least 1 Vulnerable Group



Impact on Vulnerable Groups

- **Disproportionate impact on vulnerable groups**
- Provision gaps especially affect EHE students, and youth with SEND and SEMH limiting success options
- There is a direct correlation between deprivation and being NEET
- **Consequences of limited provision**
- Lack of inclusive options increases dropout rates and the risk of vulnerable youth becoming NEET
- **Need for Strategic Interventions**
- Addressing gaps requires prioritising, inclusivity, and collaboration among education providers and communities

Geographical Distribution of NEET Levels

High NEET Rate Wards

Gillingham South, Chatham Central & Brompton, and Gillingham North have the highest NEET levels, indicating socio-economic challenges.

Low NEET Rate Wards

Cuxton, Halling & Riverside, Rainham South West, and St Mary's Island report the lowest NEET rates, reflecting effective support or advantages.

Targeted Interventions Importance

Understanding NEET disparities enables efficient resource deployment for focused outreach and support programs in high-risk wards.

Last establishment recorded for the young people in the combined NEET and Not Known cohort

Last Establishment Attended	Percentage	Last Establishment Attended	Percentage
Mid Kent College - Medway Campus	19.24%	Out of County - School outside Kent	0.91%
Educated at Home	10.27%	Outside Medway LA	0.91%
Out of County - Misc College	7.58%	Fort Pitt Grammar Girls	0.67%
Out of County - Kent School	4.94%	Unknown School	0.67%
The Howard School	3.98%	Inspire Academy	0.48%
Rainham School for Girls	3.93%	The Rowans	0.48%
Brompton Academy	3.69%	Rochester Independent College (formerly Rochester Tutors)	0.43%
Hundred of Hoo Academy	3.55%	UKAT - University of Kent Academies	0.43%
The Victory Academy	3.55%	Child Missing Education	0.38%
Greenacre Academy	3.26%	PGW Partnership of Greenacre & Walderslade	0.38%
St John Fisher School	3.12%	Ripplevale School Rochester	0.38%
Strood Academy	3.07%	Chatham Girls Grammar School	0.34%
Thomas Aveling School	3.07%	Out of County - Spec School	0.34%
NACRO	3.02%	Kings School - Rochester	0.19%
Robert Napier School	2.93%	Gillingham Football Club	0.14%
Walderslade Girls School	2.30%	Rivermead School	0.14%
Waterfront UTC	2.16%	Abbey Court	0.10%
Holcombe Grammar School	1.63%	Blue Skies School	0.10%
Rainham Mark Grammar School	1.63%	City of Rochester School	0.10%
Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School	1.34%	Not known agency	0.10%
Will Adams Centre	1.10%	Out of County - Spec College (LSC)	0.10%
The Rochester Grammar School	1.01%	School out of county	0.10%

NEET and NK by last school attended

We have now added information about the proportion of NEET and Not Known cohorts by the last school attended. This data is used to target schools directly to help contact ex-pupils who are in the Not Known activity group or to confirm current activity. Some of these children will be NEET but as the school may have more current information than we do this may reduce the numbers of NEET and Not Knowns.

Currently the top 2 destinations account for almost 30% of the last known destination for the combined NEET NK cohort. Work will continue over the year to reduce these figures.

Positive Actions Underway

Guidance and Access Platforms

Kent Choices platform enhances guidance and provides better access to opportunities for young people facing NEET challenges.

Targeted Support Initiatives

Focused work with EHE, Youth Offending Teams, and SEND cohorts addresses the specific needs of vulnerable youth groups.

Event Planning and Outreach

Supported Internship and NEET-focused events planned for 2026 aim to increase engagement and opportunities for young people.

Tracking and Early Intervention

Improved dropout tracking and college liaison enable early interventions to reduce NEET rates effectively.

Barriers and Risk Summary

Funding Limitations

Insufficient funding restricts expansion of educational provision and development of alternative pathways.

Strict Entry Criteria

High entry standards in English and Maths limit access for low-achieving students, increasing exclusion risk.

Rising NEET Numbers

Barriers contribute to increasing numbers of young people not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

Need for Innovative Solutions

Early prevention, flexible provisions, and new funding approaches are critical to mitigate risks.

Strategic Priorities for 2026/27

Maximising Funding Utilisation

Focus on using new 2026/27 funding to expand training and learning opportunities for youth at risk.

Expanding Partnerships

Strengthen collaborations with training providers to increase flexible and inclusive educational provisions.

Improving Tracking and Engagement

Enhance systems to monitor progress and target interventions for young people effectively.

Creating Sustainable Pathways

Develop lasting opportunities for education, employment, or training to reduce NEET figures in Medway.

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