

# Encouraging employers to offer work placements for NEETs in Stockport

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Final Report: February 2022



**STOCKPORT**  
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



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# 1. Executive summary

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## Executive summary

# Project aim & components

**Increasing the number of paid work placements for young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)**

We applied our **TEST** Framework to develop, implement, and evaluate our intervention

Stage	Objective	Key activities
Target	Narrowing down the problem & identifying the target behaviour & population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Process &amp; document review</li><li>• Scoping interviews</li></ul>
Explore	Understanding the behavioural barriers to employers offering paid work placements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Employers and young people interviews</li><li>• Evidence review</li></ul>
Solution	Applying behavioural insights to generate solution ideas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developing solution ideas</li><li>• Prioritising solutions</li><li>• Solution materials/implementation plans</li></ul>
Trial	Testing the effectiveness of the solutions developed through a trial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing a Trial Protocol, specifying our evaluation approach in detail</li><li>• Recruiting participants</li><li>• Analysis of the trial results</li></ul>



# Barriers to offering paid work placements

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Based on our interviews, we identified **three main barriers** facing employers in offering paid work placements



### **Lack of awareness about:**

- how to offer bespoke, paid work
- how to provide adequate support to NEETs at the workplace



### **Lack of understanding about:**

- existing work placements failing to meet the needs of NEETs



### **Beliefs and attitudes about:**

- the value of offering work placements to NEETs
- the behaviour and performance of NEETs at the workplace

# Executive summary

## Trial design & Intervention

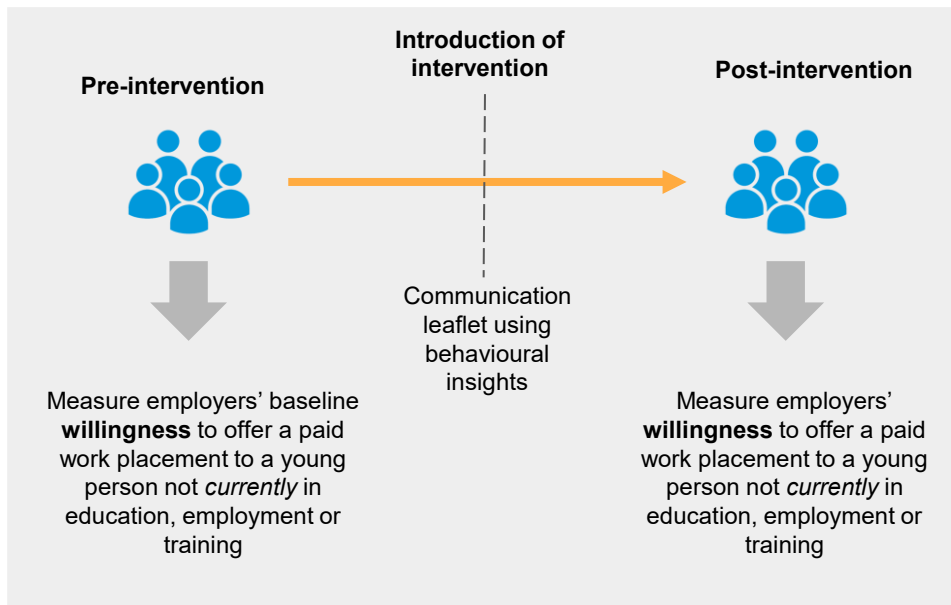


**Method:** We administered an online survey to employers in Stockport and Greater Manchester.

Participants answer **how willing they would be to offer a paid work placement to a young person not *currently* in education, employment or training** before and after the introduction of the intervention.

**Intervention:** Leaflet containing employers' benefits of having young labour at their companies and the support given by Stockport Council to set up a paid work placement.

### Trial design



# Executive summary

## Results & Conclusions

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**Employers' engagement is low:** The number of participants was considerably lower than we hoped for. 45 out of a sample of 3,500 employers responded to the survey. This suggests that **employers' disengagement is the first barrier to overcome** to motivate employers to offer paid work placements to NEETs.



**Direct communications are more effective at engaging employers:** We were unsuccessful recruiting employers through Stockport's Business Bulletin (email attachment). We then changed our approach and **sent direct emails + a lottery incentive to employers** and were able to recruit 45 employers.



**SMBC support is important for employers:** The leaflet helped to ease some of the concerns raised by employers and **made them understand that they could approach Stockport Council to organise a paid work placement.**



**Size matters:** Prior to the intervention, larger businesses were **more willing to offer paid work placements.** They were also **more willing to be contacted by Stockport Council.** However, our intervention **increased willingness to offer paid work placements among smaller businesses.** This suggests that smaller businesses might require more support to set up paid work placements.

\* Survey was sent on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. COVID-19 pandemic might have affected survey responses as businesses faced uncertainty and competing demands on their time. In addition, survey release coincided with key Council communications sent to local businesses about Economic Plan development. This could have generated 'information fatigue' leading to a decreased response rate.





# Executive summary

## Recommendation for Stockport

We recommend that Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council consider and implement the following solution based on our findings in this project:

- **Target and personalise communications:** Personalising communications, and making them seem relevant to their intended reader, can have a large effect on whether people read and act on them. **We suggest SMBC to send out personalised and target information to employers considering the insights from this project:**
  - **Smaller employers:** Communicate with them about what a paid work placement is and the support available to them.
  - **Larger employers:** Approach them with 'work ready' candidates, for example, care leavers who have gone through Stockport's training and support programme.

### Example of email to smaller employer

JS

**From:** [jane.smith@stockport.uk](mailto:jane.smith@stockport.uk)  
Mon, Feb 14, 2022 at 9:00 AM  
**To:** [sally.anderson@manufacturing.com](mailto:sally.anderson@manufacturing.com)  
**Subject:** Support Youth Employment in Stockport

Dear Sally

We are writing **to offer you support to set up a paid work placement** for a young person in your area.

**What is a work placement?**

A period of supervised work that provides you with an engaged young person and provides that young person with an opportunity to work in a specific role in your company.

**What support is available to you?**

- A generous financial support package to partially subsidise longer term placements
- Training for employers on offering a placement
- Ongoing support throughout a placement
- Dedicated personal support for young people who are care leavers

**What to do next?**

Please call us at **161 430 6512** or reach us at [economyws@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:economyws@stockport.gov.uk) to set up a paid work placement.

Yours sincerely,  
Jane Smith  
**Head of Youth Employment**



## 2. Introduction



# Project aim: increasing the number of paid work placements for NEETs



## Youth unemployment in Stockport

Stockport saw a surge in unemployment figures for young people 16-25 years old in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Two thousand young people aged 18-24 were unemployed in Stockport at the end of 2020, an increase of 153% from the previous year.

There were 197 NEETs aged between 16 and 18 years old in Stockport, this represents 3.1% of the 16 and 18 years old population in Stockport.<sup>1</sup>

NEETs often have fewer opportunities to acquire work experience as they often lack the qualifications and skills needed to access quality work placements.

Work experiences which might be more suitable for NEET are not paid. However, NEETs and those in care or leaving care often are in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance or Universal Credit and have difficulties managing a monthly budget.

The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) was commissioned by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) to increase the number of paid work placements for NEETs.

Stockport already support NEETs to look for work placements but there is a significant challenge to getting employers to offer paid placements which are suitable for these young people.

The project aims to understand the barriers to employers offering paid work placements for NEETs

**This final report summarises the findings from this work and presents behavioural science-informed recommendations.**

<sup>1</sup> Data obtained from Stockport Council, March 2021.

# Helping young people transition to employment is more beneficial than proving financial support



## Costs of being NEET

[A study](#) found that the estimated cost to the state of a NEET is £3,300 per year at 16-17 years old, and £7,200 at 18-24 years old.

- The majority of these costs are a result of underemployment due to educational underachievement, unemployment and economic inactivity.<sup>5</sup>
- The public finance costs consist of payments in unemployment benefits (JSA) and Universal Credit to those who are not working and tax losses through direct taxes and reduced indirect tax yields due to lower consumer expenditure.<sup>5</sup>

However, the benefits of education and training programmes targeted at young people who are NEET outweigh the associated costs. For instance, the Youth Contract, a programme targeted at 16-17 year olds NEETs in England costs around £800 per participant. However, the total present value social benefits per participant were estimated to be between £10,000 - £13,000.

This suggests that helping young people transition to paid employment is likely to be cheaper and more beneficial than financially supporting them when they become NEET.

Beyond the financial costs, **the aim of this project is to improve the outcomes for vulnerable youth giving them the opportunity to have successful lives.**

# Project components: mapping out the barriers and co-producing solutions



<b>Scoping</b>	We performed a brief evidence review and had interviews with SMBC staff from the Education and Careers Advice Service Team, the Leaving Care Team and the Economy, Work and Skills Team. We also held a workshop with SMBC staff and external training providers (see <a href="#">Scoping Report</a> ).
<b>Interviews</b>	We conducted interviews with Stockport and Greater Manchester employers and young people to better understand the barriers to employers offering paid work placements.
<b>Intervention</b>	We co-produced tailored solutions through two workshops, the first one with BIT experts and the second one with SMBC staff.
<b>Evaluation</b>	We administered an online survey to employers based in Stockport and GM to measure how likely they would be to consider offering a work placement to NEETs.

## Project elements



Scoping



Interviews



Intervention



Evaluation






# 3. Barriers to employers offering paid work placements

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# Our interviews with employers and young people uncovered three main barriers



Based on our interviews, we identified **three main barriers** facing employers in offering paid work placements

	<p><b>Lack of awareness about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• how to offer bespoke, paid work</li><li>• how to provide adequate support to NEETs at the workplace</li></ul>	<p>Employers don't know how to offer or organise bespoke, paid work placements. They also think it might require too much effort to adequately support NEETs at the workplace.</p>
	<p><b>Lack of understanding about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• existing work placements failing to meet the needs of NEETs</li></ul>	<p>Common work placements such as traineeships and apprenticeships are not suitable for NEETs. Traineeships are generally not paid and apprenticeship require qualifications that NEETs do not have. Employers may not fully understand the limitations of these placements.</p>
	<p><b>Beliefs and attitudes about:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the value of offering work placements to NEETs</li><li>• the behaviour and performance of NEETs at the workplace</li></ul>	<p>Employers do not believe they will benefit from offering placements for NEETs and hold negative attitudes towards young people due to previous bad experiences or word-of-mouth.</p>

# Employers may not know how to organise or offer bespoke paid work placements



Lack of awareness

“Businesses often aren’t aware of what’s available. Lots of good stuff going on that employers don’t know about. Anecdotal evidence of wouldn’t it be good *if*... and the *if* is already happening, but they weren’t aware.”

**-Employer**

**Interviews:** In general, employers were aware of the process of setting up apprenticeships or traineeships. However, they did not know how to organise bespoke paid work placements or advertise these among ‘hard to reach’ groups such as NEETs.

**Evidence:** [One survey](#) of 1,389 British employers found that 16.2% of employers that did not offer educational placements were interested in doing so, but did not know how.



# Employers may not know how to support NEETs



## Unawareness

“If any behavioural issues arise,  
we don’t have the expertise to  
deal with that.”

**-Employer**

**Interviews:** In general, some employers raised concerns about their lack of expertise to support young people, particularly, ‘if behavioural issues arise.’ Additionally, some employers expressed that NEETs would need extra training to get them ‘work ready’ and they were unable to provide that.

**Evidence:** A report produced for the Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector found many organisations viewed young people as ‘necessitating levels of support and supervision which the organisations are unable to provide’.<sup>2</sup>

# Current placements targeting NEETs are not fit for purpose



**Lack of  
understanding**

“It’s not front and centre of an employer’s mind: many think that existing work placements are fine and they don’t see it as their responsibility.”

**-Employer**

**Interviews:** Employers were very familiar with apprenticeships and traineeships and believed that these types placements, in particular, traineeships were adequate for NEETs as they didn’t require as many qualifications as apprenticeships. However, traineeships are unpaid and NEETs are often in receipt of benefits. Thus, unpaid work might exacerbate the financial pressures that NEETs already experience.

**Evidence:** [A survey](#) of employers offering traineeships found 84% planned to offer additional placements specifically for NEETs.

# Employers may be prejudiced towards NEETs and fear having a bad experience



## Beliefs & attitudes

“When someone found out I was a care leaver, there was an assumption that they couldn’t leave me alone near the till.”

**-Young person**

**Interviews:** Although some participants had positive views about working with young people, others had negative experiences in the past. Negative information is often remembered with a greater sense of vividness than positive information (i.e. negativity bias). Thus, negative information might play a greater role in the decision of hiring a young person again.

**Evidence:** A report produced for the Commission on the Future of the Voluntary Sector found many organisations held a ‘negative attitude to young people as volunteers’.<sup>3</sup> In addition, young people may also experience age discrimination by being belittled, passed over for jobs or being paid poor wages just because they are young.

# Employers may not believe they will benefit from offering paid work placements



## Beliefs & attitudes

“There’s the ‘work ready’ point. Some businesses don’t even think about employing young people. They’ve already made their mind up that they want experience, without even looking at young people.”

**-Employer**

**Interviews:** Employers consider the ‘work ready’ point to be crucial in their decision of hiring young people. Some businesses don’t think about employing young people because of their lack of experience and see no value on training them.

**Evidence:** [A survey](#) of British employers previously referenced found 41.9% of employers that did not offer educational placements saw no value for their organisation in doing so. This perception is exacerbated in industries in which self-employment is common, as employers fear they may end up training their future competitors.

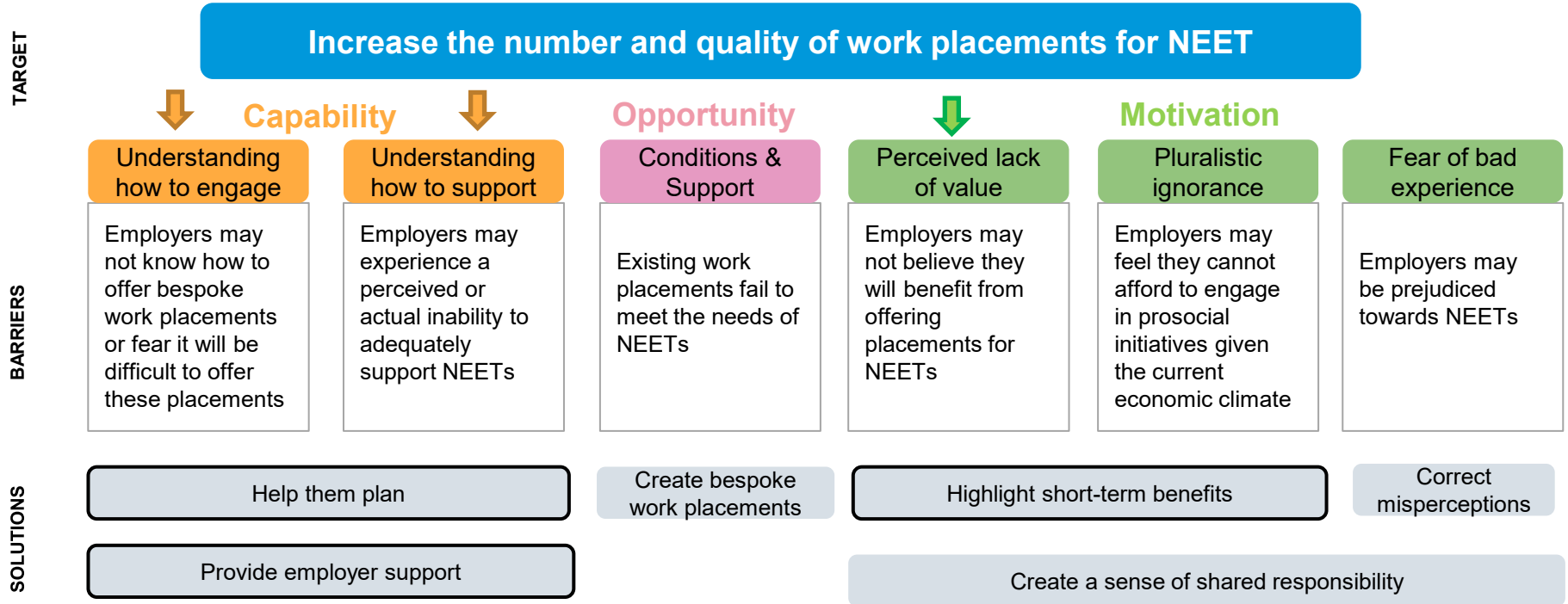
# 4. Intervention & Trial

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# Leaflet addressed behavioural barriers

We worked with SMBC to design a leaflet which addressed **capability** and **motivation** barriers highlighted in the interviews and evidence review.





# We applied several behavioural principles to the leaflet (1)



1. **Help people to take action** by ensuring the target behaviour is clear and easy to understand. Position a clear “**call-to-action**” at the top of communications.
2. **Promote self-efficacy.** We are more likely to take action when we are targeted personally, we feel we are able to take the necessary steps, or the consequences will affect us personally.
3. **Make information personalized.** We are more likely to engage with content that is relevant to us. Messages should be made relevant for the target audience.



## SUPPORT YOUTH EMPLOYMENT IN STOCKPORT

A better future for young people and employers

### NOW IS THE TIME

Young people in Stockport - particularly those not currently in education, employment or training- have been among the worst affected by the pandemic, but are an exciting pool of young labour for the future. A work placement could provide a valuable and flexible resource for your company and change the life of a young person in Stockport.



### SET UP A WORK PLACEMENT



A work placement is a period of supervised work that provides you with a helpful and engaged young person and provides that young person with an excellent opportunity to work in a specific role in your company. The average duration of a work placement is around two weeks; however, this will depend on what suits your company and the young person.



# We applied several behavioural principles to the leaflet (2)



4. **Highlight the 'short-term' benefits.** People are more likely to undertake a particular action if they have an incentive to do so. We are also more motivated by benefits that take effect in the short-term than those delivered later.
5. **Help them plan:** People are more likely to achieve a future goal, if they make plans. Identify any barriers they are likely to encounter and help them plan how to overcome them.
6. **Harness the power of social networks.** We are heavily influenced by what those around us do. The norm of reciprocity is a social norm where if someone does something for you, you then feel obligated to return the favor.
7. **Use an influential messenger.** The person who sends a given communication can affect how it is received. Messages from well-known and well-regarded people are perceived as more credible and lead to increased engagement.

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4, 5

6, 7

## BENEFITS FOR EMPLOYERS

- Boost your reputation as a socially responsible and youth friendly employer.
- Improve workforce diversity and provide different perspectives, skills, insight and values.
- Provide a way of growing your own workforce that is more cost-effective than trying to buy in skills at a later stage.



## PREPARE YOUR WORKPLACE



Hosting a work placement can be straightforward, if the right elements are in place. Stockport Council is keen to support you with:

- A generous financial support package to partially subsidise longer term placements
- Training for employers on offering a placement
- Ongoing support throughout a placement
- Dedicated personal support for young people who are care leavers

Stockport Council is already getting young people 'work ready' by providing pre-employment training. Now it's your turn. Your company has the power to make an extraordinary impact.

To set up a work placement, please reach us at [economyws@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:economyws@stockport.gov.uk)  
We are here to support you!



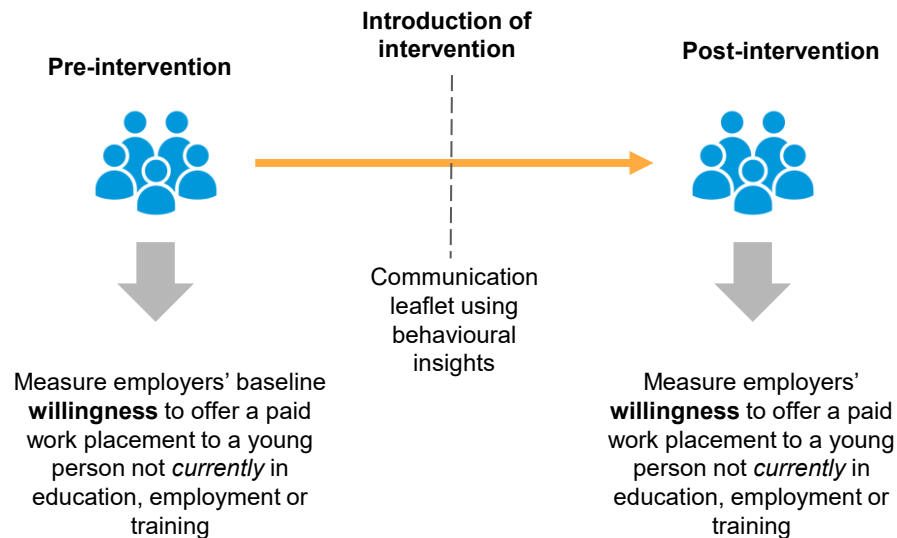
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# We measured employers' willingness to offer paid work placements to NEETs



## Methods

We administered an online survey to employers in Stockport and Greater Manchester. Participants answer **how willing they would be to offer a paid work placement to a young person not *currently* in education, employment or training**. This measurement acted as our baseline condition. The employers then read a leaflet containing employers' benefits of having young labour at their companies and the support given by Stockport Council to set up a paid work placement. Participants were then asked for their updated willingness of considering offering a paid work placement to a young person not *currently* in education, employment or training.





# *Results*

# Only 22% of employers had offered paid work placements in the last two years



## Profile of the employers in our trial



Employers were from a wide range of sectors, the most common being:  
**Information & Communication** and  
**Manufacturing**



Median<sup>1</sup> size:  
**18 employees**  
(min is 0 - max is 17,000)



**22%**  
Offered a work placement in the last two  
years

We recruited 45 employers who were based either in Stockport or Greater Manchester.

Our participants spanned a wide range of sectors and sizes: 11 employers with 0-4 employees (small), 19 with 5-49 employees (medium) and 14 with 50+ employees (large).

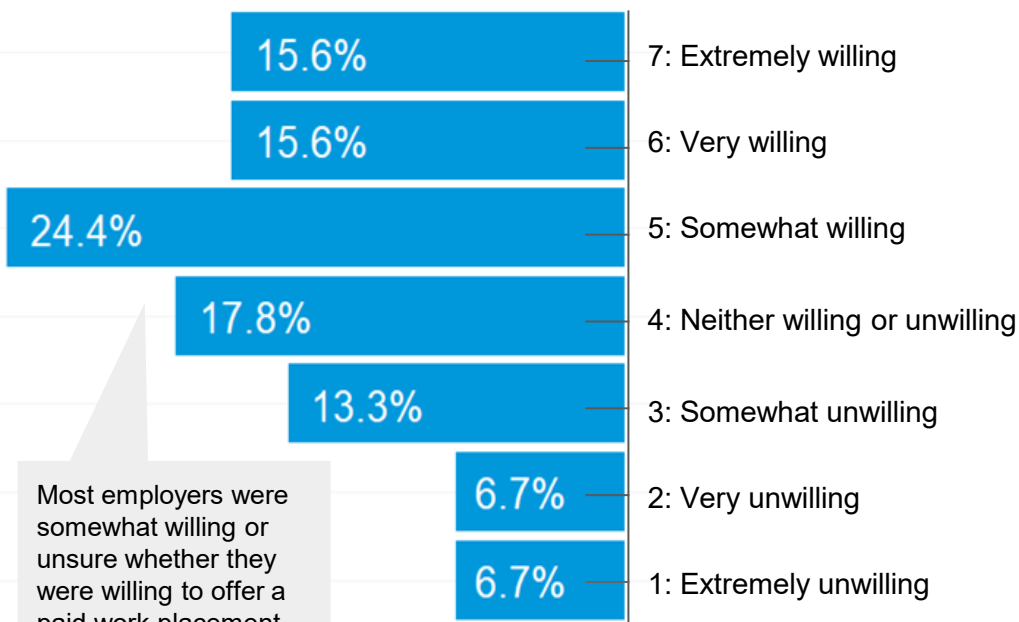
**Only 22%** of employers offered a work placement in the last two years. Large employers were more likely to have already offered a paid work placement (36% Vs. 17% of small or medium sized businesses).

<sup>1</sup> half of the businesses in our sample have more than 18 employees, and half have less than 18 employees

# Average willingness to offer paid work placements ranged between *unsure* and *somewhat willing*



## Baseline willingness to offer paid work placements



Most employers are already at least somewhat willing to offer a paid work placement. Larger and medium size employers are generally more willing to offer a work placement compared to small employers who are unsure (78% of large employers Vs. 63% of medium employers Vs. 18% small employers).

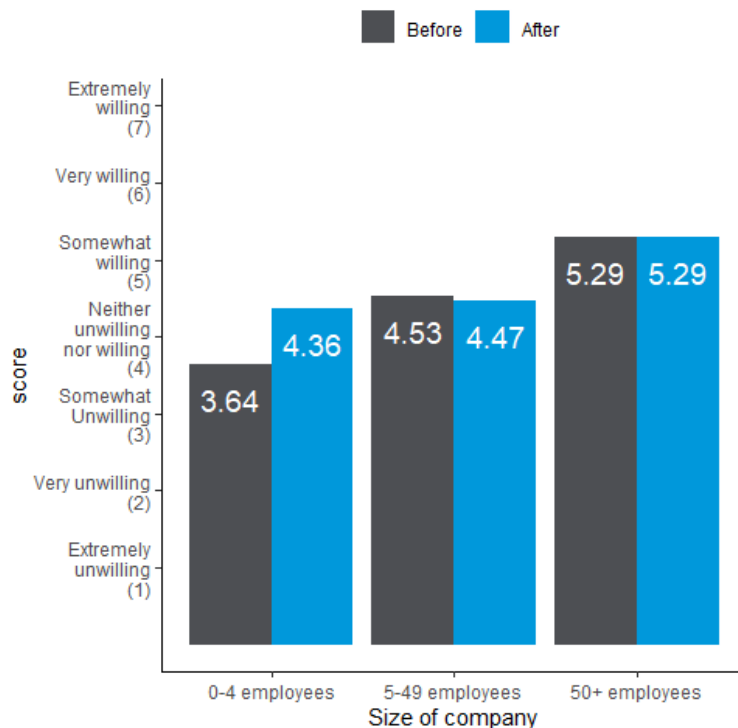
The most common reason for employers not offering a work placement was **that they couldn't provide proper support to a young person employed on a work placement.**

Our findings suggest that smaller employers may be less capable or willing of offering training and supervision compared to larger business due to limited resources.

# The leaflet increased willingness to offer paid work placements among small businesses



## Average willingness before & after reading the leaflet



In this trial, we asked employers about their willingness to offer a work placement to a young person not *currently* in education, employment or training (baseline willingness). Employers then read a leaflet containing employers' benefits of having young labour at their companies and the support given by Stockport Council to set up a paid work placement. Employers updated their willingness to offer a paid work placement immediately after reading the leaflet (See Annex D).

The leaflet **increased the average score on whether the employer is willing to offer a paid work placement by 0.13 points (on a 1-7 scale).**

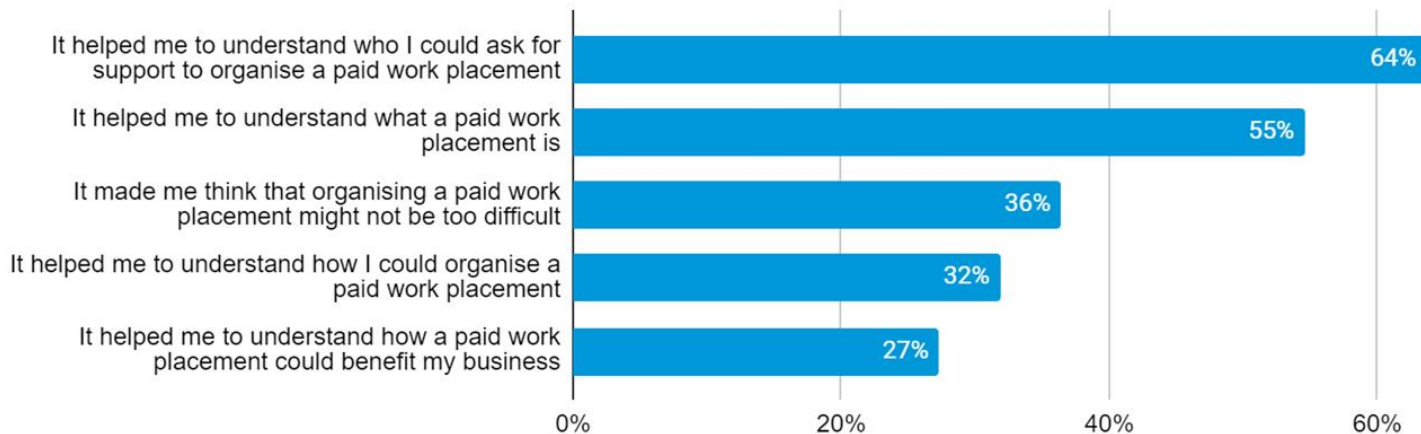
The smallest businesses **were the most impacted by the leaflet, with the average willingness score increasing by 0.72 (on 1-7 scale).**

# The leaflet helped to alleviate employers' concerns about offering a paid work placement



Seventy eight percent of employers indicated they had some concerns around offering paid work placements. Of those employers, **64% reported that the leaflet helped them understand that they could approach Stockport Council to organise a paid work placement.** This result suggests that assisting employers to set up paid work placements might have an impact on their willingness to offer this type of work to NEETs.

## Employers' concerns addressed by the leaflet (as % of employers who indicated that they have concerns)





# Most businesses are happy to be contacted about organising a work placement



## Percentage of employers willing to be contacted

*Would you be happy for Stockport Borough Council to contact you about organising a paid work placement for a young person in your area?*

Size of business	Yes
0-4 employees	55%
5-49 employees	63%
50+ employees	<b>71%</b>

Larger businesses are more likely to be willing to be contacted

Almost two-thirds of businesses are happy to be contacted by Stockport Borough Council about organising a paid work placement. Interestingly, those businesses who are willing to be contacted also showed more willingness to offer paid work placements. In terms of company size, larger businesses are more willing to be contacted compared to smaller businesses.

Taken together, these results suggest that larger companies are generally more open and might have more resources to work with Stockport Borough Council to offer paid work placements. While measuring this causal relationship may be difficult, Stockport may want to consider whether these insights can be included in targeting which employers to reach out to or in investing in maintaining existing employer relationships.



# Limitations of our study: pre-post trial design

## Pre-post design

One disadvantage of pre-post designs is that we cannot be entirely sure that the changes in behaviour are due to the intervention and not other events happening during the period of the intervention. However, **we have some indicative evidence that the observed changes in willingness to offer work placements are due to our intervention** because:

- The endline data collection occurred immediately after the intervention.
- The endline survey included a casual questions (e.g. *Having now read through the leaflet, on a scale of 1-7, how willing would you be to offer a paid work placement to a young person who is not currently in education, training or employment?*)

## Self-reported outcome

We cannot be confident that the increase in the self-reported score is a true reflection of an increase in willingness to offer a placement, or whether an increased willingness will translate in a higher probability that the employer will actually offer a placement.

As it's clear to the respondents what we're trying to achieve with the intervention, it's possible that people give the desired answer (an increased willingness to offer placements) without this truly being the case.



# Limitations of our study: Sample size

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## Low sample size

The number of participants was considerably lower than we hoped for. 45 out of a sample of 3,500 employers responded to the survey. We have to be careful generalising the results to the wider population for two reasons:

1. Smaller sample sizes increase the risk that the results are due to chance.
2. The type of employer who takes the time to voluntarily fill in a survey could differ significantly from the ones who do not. Thus, their behaviour and views are not representative of the wider population.


**These limitations are important and highlight that we should interpret the results with caution, but they have greater value and usefulness than merely prototyping some ideas without testing them, and importantly they reflect local views about a Stockport-specific intervention.**


# 5. Conclusions & Recommendations





# Conclusions

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 **Employers' engagement is low:** The number of participants was considerably lower than we hoped for. 45 out of a sample of 3,500 employers responded to the survey. This demonstrates that **employers' disengagement is the first barrier to overcome** to motivate employers to offer paid work placements to NEETs.\*

 **Direct communications are more effective at engaging employers:** We were unsuccessful recruiting employers through Stockport's Business Bulletin (email attachment). We then changed our approach and **sent direct emails + a lottery incentive to employers** and were able to recruit 45 employers.

 **SMB support is important for employers:** The leaflet helped to ease some of the concerns raised by employers and **made them understand that they could approach Stockport Council to organise a paid work placement.**

 **Size matters:** Prior to the intervention, larger businesses are in general **more willing to offer paid work placements.** They are also **more willing to be contacted by Stockport Council.** However, our intervention **increased willingness to offer paid work placements among smaller businesses.** This suggests that smaller businesses might require more support to set up paid work placements.

\* Survey was sent on November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2021. COVID-19 pandemic might have affected survey collection as businesses faced uncertainty and competing demands on their time. In addition, survey release coincided with key Council communications sent to local businesses about Economic Plan development. This could have generated 'information fatigue' leading to decreased response rate.

# We recommend Stockport engage employers through effective communications

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We recommend that SMBC consider and implement the following solution based on our findings in this project:

- **Target and personalise communications:** Personalising communications, and making them seem relevant to their intended reader, can have a large effect on whether people read and act on them. We suggest SMBC to send out personalised and target information to employers considering the insights from this project:
  - **Smaller employers:** Communicate with them about what a paid work placement is and the support available to them.
  - **Larger employers:** Approach them with 'work ready' candidates, for example, care leavers who have gone through Stockport's training and support programme.
- **Bundle communications to grab their attention:** There are a range of government communications that employers have to look at: business rates bills, tax returns etc. SMBC could use these communications to give employers a timely prompt about offering paid work placements and the support available to them.



# Writing an effective communication




We suggest recommend SMBC to follow these steps to write an effective communication to employers:

1. **Remove even small barriers to carrying out the behaviour:** Send the communication as a direct email with a clear subject line rather than an attachment.
2. **Make the desired behaviour as clear and specific as possible:** The letter should leave the employers with a specific action that is required.
3. **Making the core components clear:** Consider the core pieces of information that they will need to know to understand the letter.
4. **Introduce a call to action:** In addition to putting the message in the subject line, you should also end the email with a clear call to action.

## Example of email to smaller employer





**From:** [jane.smith@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:jane.smith@stockport.gov.uk)  
**To:** [sally.anderson@manufacturing.com](mailto:sally.anderson@manufacturing.com)  
**Subject:** Support Youth Employment in Stockport

**Mon, Feb 14, 2022 at 9:00 AM**

Dear Sally

We are writing to **offer you support to set up a paid work placement** for a young person in your area.

**What is a work placement?**

A period of supervised work that provides you with an engaged young person and provides that young person with an opportunity to work in an specific role in your company.

**What support is available to you?**

- A generous financial support package to partially subsidise longer term placements
- Training for employers on offering a placement
- Ongoing support throughout a placement
- Dedicated personal support for young people who are care leavers

**What to do next?**

Please call us at **161 430 6512** or reach us at [economyws@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:economyws@stockport.gov.uk) to set up a paid work placement.

Yours sincerely,  
Jane Smith  
**Head of Youth employment**



## 6. Next steps for SMBC



# Next steps for SMBC (1)

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## Setting up placements

- Stockport Council are already following up with each employer that wanted to be contacted about a placement. The Council are drawing support from their employment teams at the Council and from Stockport Homes who run a Hidden Talent placements programme and the Steps To Work scheme.
- Using the learning from the project, Stockport Council will record short, informative videos on the key topics and concerns raised by employers.



## Sharing learning internally

- BIT will run a playback session with wider project team including Stockport's comms team
- Stockport Council will share learning from the project through internal communications including all colleague briefings and a lunch & learn session.
- BIT will run a webinar session for Stockport Council and VCFSE sector sharing some learning and ways to use behavioural insights and nudge methods.



# Next steps for SMBC (2)

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## Sharing learning externally

- Project write up to be published through Marketing Stockport and the Business Bulletin
- The project write up will further highlight the support on offer to businesses in setting up placements.
- The project report will be shared with Stockport's Economic Alliance, Social Value steering group, Mayor's Round Table on social value and Climate Action Business Forum.



## Applying the learning

- Stockport Council will use the communication approach within Social Value work. The cross-sector Social Value steering group will inform employers about what social value is as part of a 'hearts & minds' campaign. Representatives from the Social Value steering group will be invited to the playback session.
- Stockport Council's Climate Action Now team will look to apply learning from the project to an internal behaviour change campaign. The campaign will aim to broaden understanding of 'single use' as only relating to plastics and encourage colleagues to think twice about single use items whatever material they are made from.



# 7. Annexes

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# ANNEXES

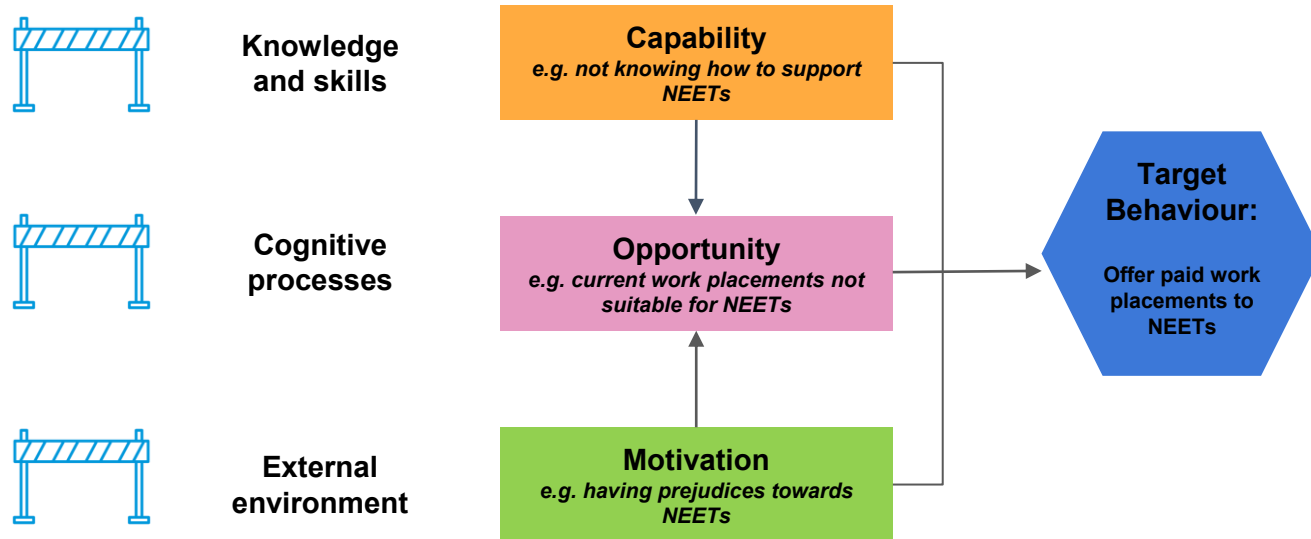
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# A. We used the COM-B model to map barriers

The COM-B model of behaviour change predicts that an individual will engage in a behaviour if he/she has the **capability**, **opportunity**, and **motivation** to do so.<sup>7</sup> We use this model to organise the **prospective barriers to employers offering paid work placements for NEET youth in Stockport**.





## B. Our evidence review uncovered the barriers to offering paid work placements

The table below summarises the barriers to employers offering paid placements to NEETs:

### Capability

Knowledge and Skills

**Understanding of work placements.** Employers may not know how to offer bespoke, paid work placements or thinking it will be difficult to offer these placements.

**Support to employers.** Employers may experience a perceived or actual inability to adequately support NEETs.

### Opportunity

External factors in the environment

**Current placements are not suitable.** Current placements explicitly targeting NEETs such as traineeships are not fit for purpose. Employers may be unaware that these type of placements fail to meet the needs of NEETs.

**Perceived lack of value.** Employers may not believe they will benefit from offering placements for NEETs.

### Motivation

Reflective and automatic decisions

**Pluralistic ignorance.** Employers may feel they cannot afford to engage in prosocial initiatives given the current economic climate

**Fear of bad experience:** Employers may be prejudiced and hold negative attitudes towards young people.





## C. Interviews with employers and young people

SMBC connected us with employers and NEET young people in Stockport and Greater Manchester.

Our aim was to conduct six interviews in total, including four interviews with employers and two with young people.

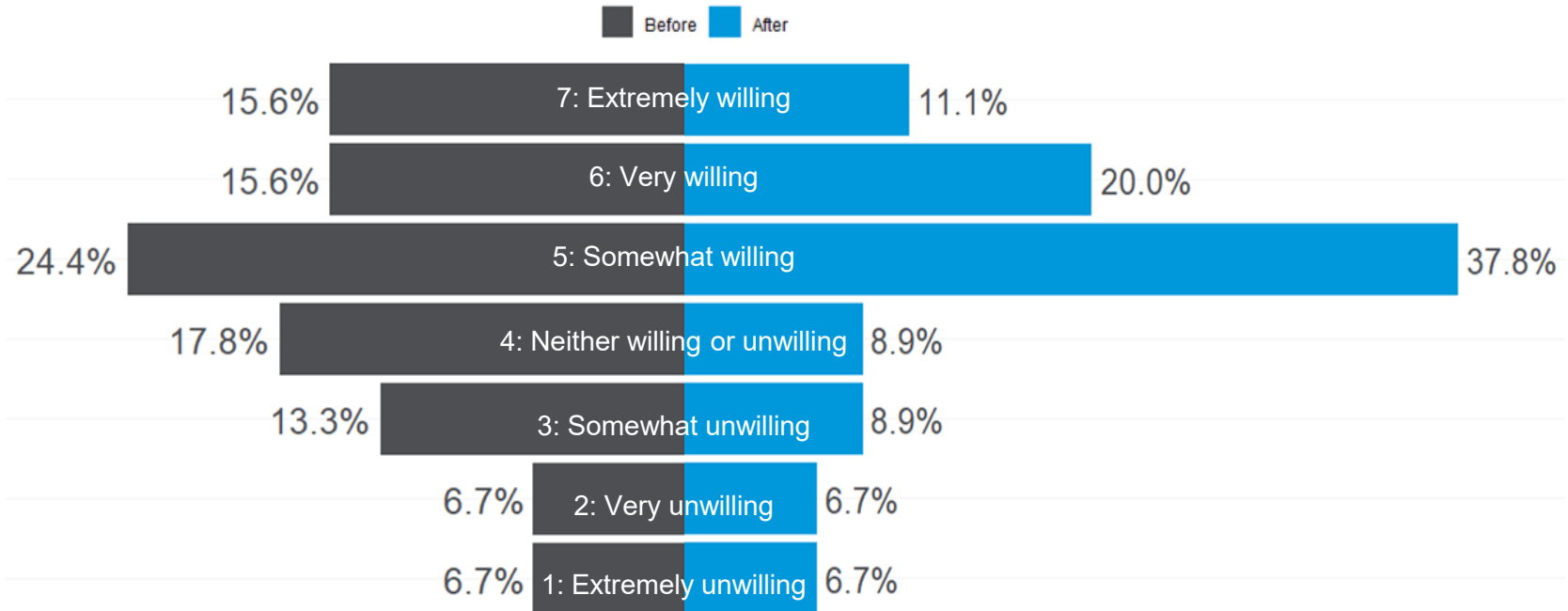
However, we were only able to recruit three employers and one young person who was a care leaver for the interviews.

All interviews were semi-structured, lasted around 40 minutes and were conducted through video calls. Interviews were recorded and transcribed and notes taken. We organised our transcripts and notes to capture themes relevant to barriers, as well as any emerging topics.

### Targeted versus achieved sample for employers and young people interviews

Targeted sample	Achieved sample
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 4 X employers</li><li>• 2 X NEET young people</li></ul> <p>From Stockport and Greater Manchester</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3 X employers</li><li>• 1 X young person (care leaver)</li></ul> <p>From Stockport and Greater Manchester</p>

## D. Willingness to offer a paid work placement before and after reading the flyer



# F. Applying 3 key steps to develop effective communications



## 1. Planning stage

### Objective and context

- Develop a specific objective to change a target behaviour
- Understand who is or isn't currently performing the behaviour and why

## 2. Design stage



### Effective communication design

## 3. Launch stage

### Test, learn, adapt

- Test which designs are most effective
- Carry out iterative rounds of adapting communications to maximise effectiveness

### Attract attention

- Use colour, contrast & images
- Use an influential messenger
- Make communications timely

### The message

- Simplify where possible
- Ensure information is relevant
- Use narratives to personalise

### Motivate action

- Help people to take action
- Harness social networks
- Promote self-efficacy

# G. Recommendations for SMBC to collect and use data

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Refining the use of data presents SMBC with the opportunity to be more responsive to the needs of businesses and residents in general. However, this might require SMBC to change the way they approach several aspects of data. We recommend SMBC to consider the next steps:

- **Develop an internal data infrastructure to combine data from multiple sources:** The ability to combine data sets from across the local public sector can enable more sophisticated analytics. There are several approaches to this task, one approach is to purchase off-the-shelf software which can pull together data from multiple sources. A second and more laborious approach is to manually clean and standardise the data so that it can be linked together.
- **Develop a protocol for sharing data:** Information governance is the biggest challenge for integrating data. One solution is to invest human time into the process and appoint a dedicated information governance lead. Alternatively, a more direct approach involves engaging with people about how their data is shared.
- **Encourage the use of data as a decision-making tool:** Data collected by councils in the form of Key Performance Indicators offer limited ability to influence decisions about activity in the future. In contrast, the use of real-time data provides insights to make decisions about resource allocation, policy shifts, or operational decisions in services.



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