

SAP Practitioners Guide

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Introduction

What is the Safe Arrival Project about?

The impact of dropout and resultant NEET to life outcomes of young people are startling. Those who dropout:

- 1 in 5 have no qualifications
- Are 22 times more likely to be parents under 18
- Experience 60% more drug use
- Are 20 times more likely to commit crime
- 50% more likely to have poor health
- Have 10 years less life expectancy.

The SAP project's main objective addresses European Priority 6, Strategies to Reduce the Number of Dropouts in initial VET that in turn will improve young people's lives. It also works towards the EU Strategy 2020 to reduce dropout to 10%. This will be done by maintaining motivation to complete education and training, transferring good practice to partners and giving a particular focus within our work; the development of strategies for migrants and Roma's to fulfil their potential. We aim for a 50% reduction in dropout and a 40% reduction in NEET amongst end users in the 5 partner countries.

What does the project involve?

Pilot 1: Development of a screening tool

This is the gathering and testing of possible factors that may be significant in predicting those young people at a greater risk of dropout. All significant factors will then be combined to create a locally devised SAP screening tool.

Pilot 2: Implementation of the screening tool

This is the use of the locally devised SAP screening tool to identify young people in vocational learning at risk of dropout and to implement intervention to reduce and eliminate this where possible.

Below is an article reproduced from a British Psychological Journal to provide background knowledge.

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Developing a NEET screening tool

Christopher Arnold and Tracey Baker

Abstract: This paper outlines the development of a local screening tool to identify young people early who are at risk of entering the NEET category. It considers the necessary and sufficient conditions to justify the process and evaluates the outcomes for one educational establishment.

Introduction

The term NEET (Not in Education Employment or Training) was first coined in 1999 to describe young people who did not engage in educational or vocational activities after statutory education. Quite aside from the economic deprivation usually experienced by individuals in this group, the life outcomes are startling:

- 1 in 5 have no qualifications
- 22 times more likely to be parents under 18
- 60% more drug use
- 20 times more likely to commit crime
- 50% likely to have poor health
- 10 years less life expectancy

Arnold, Yeomans and Simpson (2009)

The last government highlighted the problem establishing Connexions and setting targets for the reduction of young people who are NEET. Local authorities now have responsibilities for NEET reduction. New Statutory Guidance for local authorities published in April 2011 gives local authorities freedom to determine how best they meet their statutory responsibilities. However, the population seems quite resistant to intervention. Numbers, nationally, have remained stubbornly static (Simmons, 2008; LSN, 2009, DfE, 2011).

This article presents an outline of the development of a screening tool to be used at a local level.

Why develop a local tool?

The percentage of young people in the NEET category varies widely according to region. In 2007 the lowest area (Torbay) had just 0.7% of young people in the NEET category, whilst another (North Lincolnshire) had 22%. The factors leading young people into this category might be radically different in these two areas. Even within individual regions, there can be local differences. This was illustrated in a study exploring risk factors for school non-attendance in neighbouring secondary schools (Arnold, et. al 1995). Whilst it was possible to distil over 90% of the predictable variance into just three variables, the variables were different in the two schools. A

factor in one school was gender (girls attended less than boys). When the phenomenon was examined in more detail, the ethnic mix revealed families in which girls were under more pressure to stay home to look after needy grandparents. This was not a factor in the other school. Accordingly applying national models in local settings might not capture the fine detail of local circumstances.

The benefits of screening are clear and include:-

- Early identification of children at risk.
- Facilitating early intervention.
- Providing a baseline for evaluating interventions.

Developing the tool

There are some necessary and sufficient conditions to be met for screening to be justified:

1. There are measurable factors.
2. The factors are sufficiently discrete to discriminate effectively.
3. These factors are robust across time.
4. It is economically viable and socially acceptable to collect data.
5. There exist interventions which, if executed early, promote better outcomes.
6. There is a political will, reflecting public opinion that such exercises are legitimate.

The authors adopted a pragmatic eight stage approach to the development of a local screening tool:

1. List all the possible contextual risk factors.
2. Look at economics of collecting data.
3. Decide feasibility of data collection.
4. Decide on sampling method (possibly use a pilot).
5. Collect data.
6. Analyse data – build model.
7. Test model in volunteer school (Y8 or Y9)
8. Build interventions.
9. Evaluate.

Space does not permit expansion of the stages, but full descriptions can be found in Arnold, Baker and Aparicio (in prep - 2012). The model found that just eight factors were statistically significantly associated with NEET in one urban authority:

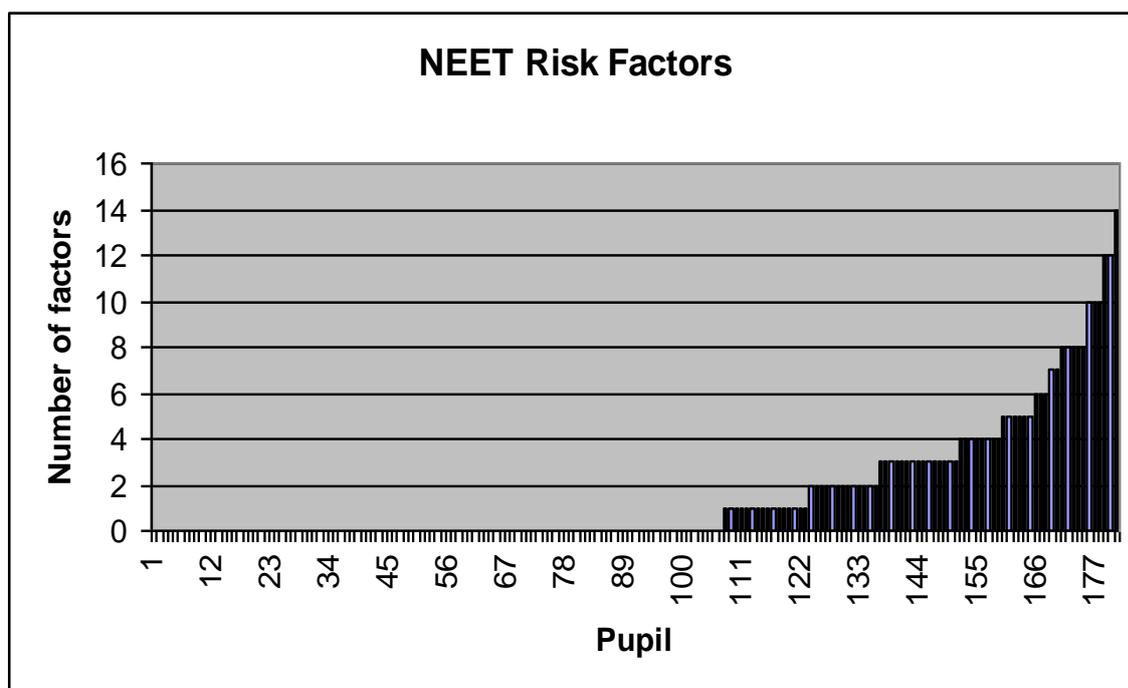
1. Unstable accommodation
2. Low motivation
3. Behaviour problems reported by school
4. Unemployment in family
5. Poor Basic skills
6. Known to Youth Offending Team
7. School attendance < 80%

8. Learning Difficulty/Disability

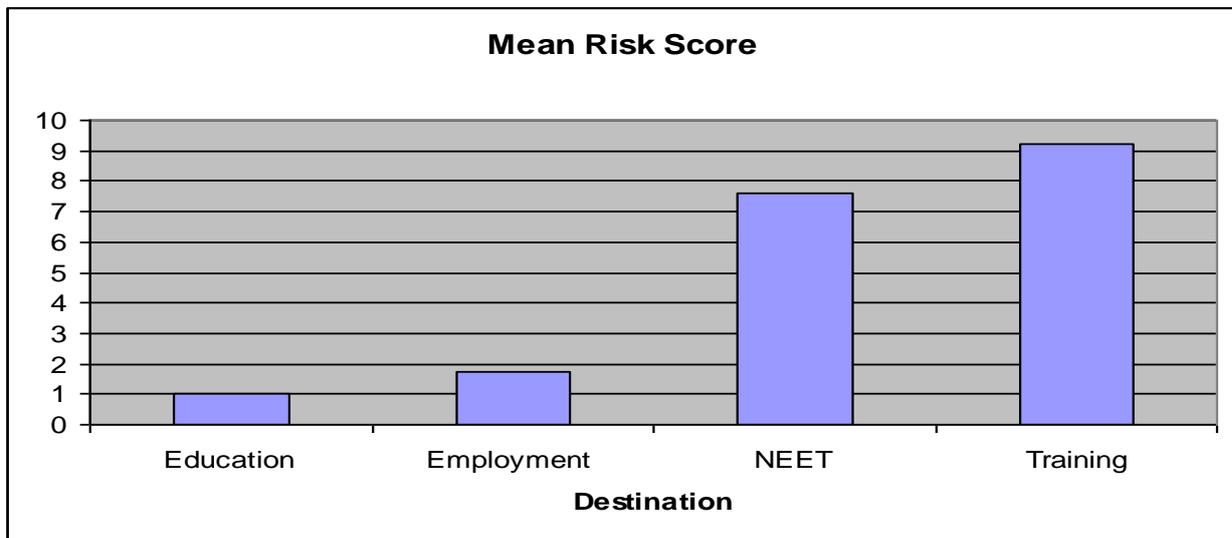
The factors were weighted to reflect the different prevalence in the education, employment and training groups. Factors discriminating between the NEET group and just one of the others (EE or T) were weighted 1, those showing significant differences between two of the groups, were weighted 2 and those finding significant differences between the NEET group and each of the EET groups, were weighted 3. This led to factors 1 and 2 having a weighting of 3; factors 3,4 and 5 having weightings of 2 and the rest weighted 1. The maximum weighted score for the eight factors was 15.

The model was used to screen 14 year olds in a high school in the West Midlands. As the status of NEET cannot apply until after statutory school leaving, there is a considerable time between the screen and possible evaluation.

181 young people were screened, this representing a complete year cohort. The scores were:



The mean risk factor score by destination are:



There are significant differences between NEET/Training and Education/Employment, but not between Education and Employment nor NEET and Training.

This suggests a different approach to employment than previously considered. Young people entering employment directly from school are not from higher risk groups than others, particularly from the vast majority who stay on in education.

The similarity in profiles for the NEET and training groups reflect the work that the Personal Advisors do with the more vulnerable young people. It is easier to allocate a training place to a young person who may become NEET after leaving school than obtain employment or persuade the individual to continue with education.

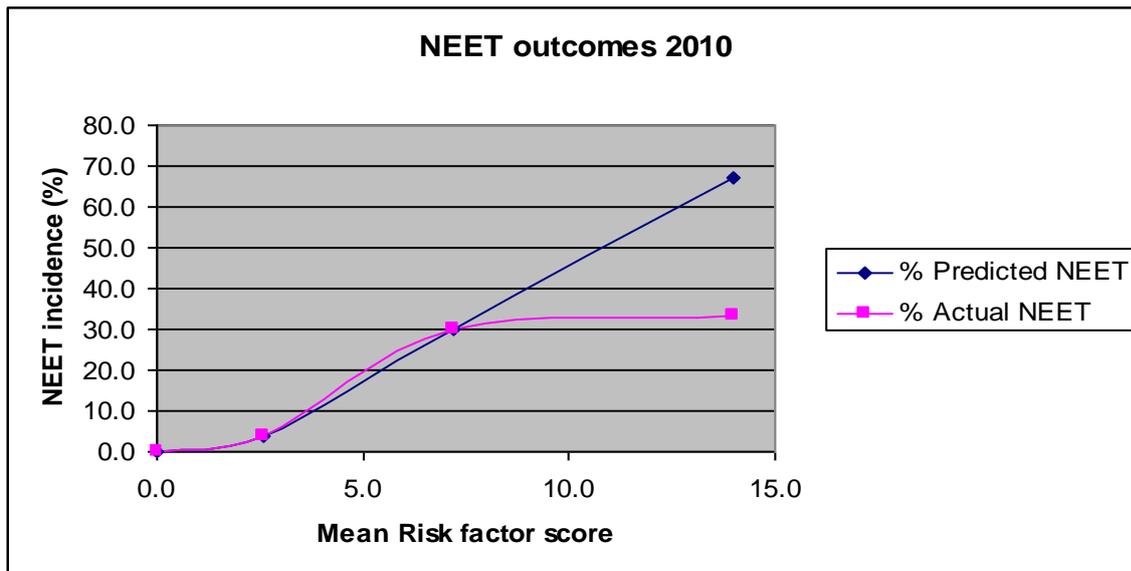
The key finding was the accuracy of the identification three years ahead of the young people vulnerable to entering the NEET category. As there were interventions mounted for the high and medium risk groups they were assigned to the "high intervention" group. However, as time progressed it became clear to the worker that other individuals, not identified early, were also at risk of becoming NEET. These were included for intervention in Y11 alongside those identified early.

The accuracy of the screen can be represented:

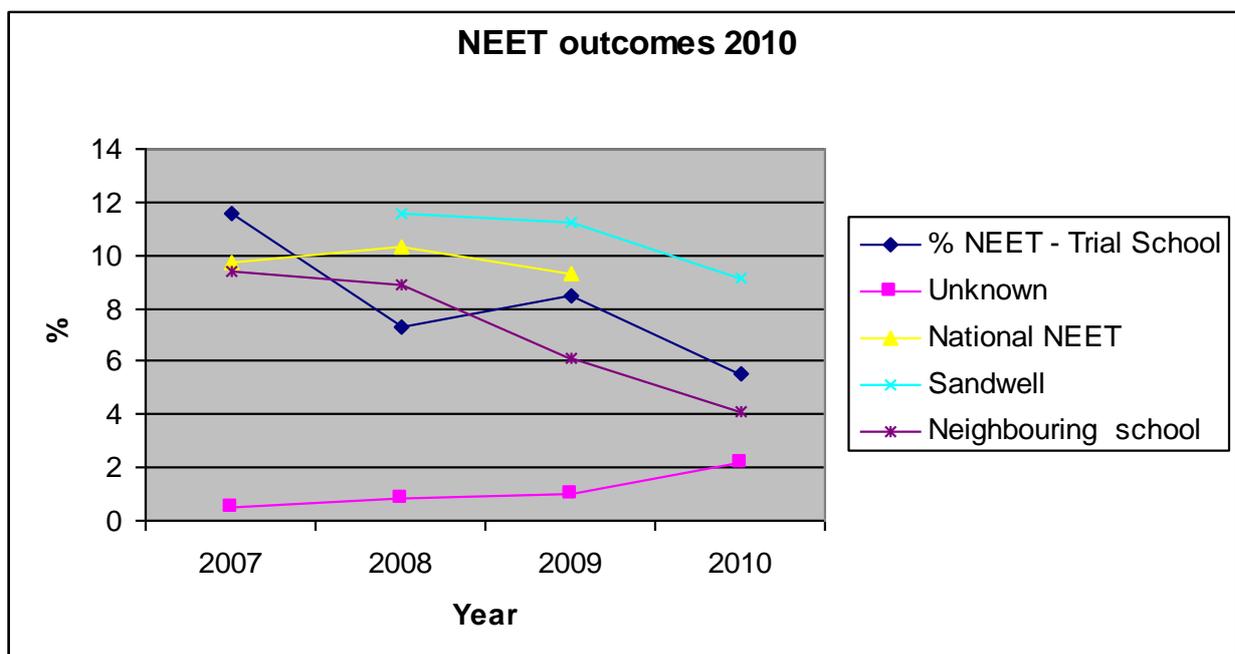
Factor	Enhanced intervention	Standard intervention
High/Medium Risk Factors	16	0
Low Risk Factors	13	150

In other words the model correctly identified 16 out of the 29 most vulnerable students three years before the event. Furthermore, it facilitated some early intervention two years before the Connexions team would usually engage with the students.

The outcomes for the students were collated for the four groups (High risk; medium risk; low risk; very low risk – see above):



There was an overall reduction of the NEET population in this cohort from 8.46% in 2009 to 5.52% in 2010. This compares very favourably with the national picture which is more static at 10% +/- 1% since 2003 (DfE – 2011).



Conclusions

Developing a screening tool at a local level is well within the capacity of local services, if supported by professionals with some basic statistical skills. The process can identify vulnerable students and be used to justify early interventions. In times of reducing budgets, some services which were universal may need to be targeted. Although not part of the original specification, a local screening tool can provide an evidence base on which to justify the selection of students who will receive the enhanced service. It is likely to offer good returns in times of budget reductions.

References

Arnold,C., Baker, T. and Aparicio,A (2012 in prep) *NEET – Risks, Rewards and Realities* Stoke on Trent: Trentham Press

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Step by Step Guide

Pilot 1: Development of SAP Screening tool

Step 1:

- Form a task group to include a wide section of professionals who work with young people who dropout from vocational schools or courses.
- Identify a comprehensive list of local risk factors that may affect young people

Step 2:

- Identify how each factor can be measured
- Identify which factors are inexpensive to collect or held centrally

Step 3:

- Decide which factors can be easily collected for a large number of young people
- Identify what data may be held by the school or organisation

Example:

School Attendance <80% - from school/college records

If <80% - record 1

If >80% - record 0

- Develop questions to give a yes/no answer that will show if the factor is present

Example:

Accommodation issues – Have you moved house more than once in the last year?

If yes – record 1

If no – record 0

Step 4:

- Identify a sample of 40 young people in VET matched against young people who have dropped out of VET

Step 5:

- Collect data on each factor for the required number of young people
- Record and collate all answers onto the spreadsheet provided

Step 6:

- Send completed spreadsheet to SMBC for analysis through SPSS statistical package
- A list of significant factors will be produced to use as the final screening tool

Pilot 2: Implementation of SAP Screening Tool

Step 7:

- Test the model within a VET cohort (vocational school or course) – collect data on significant factors for a complete cohort.
- Record data on excel spreadsheet provided on the communication platform

Step 8:

- Assign banding to the identified cohort – high, medium, low and very low risk groups
- Reform task group to agree possible intervention for each band
- Monitor, record intervention and track young people throughout the duration of the VET course

Introduction To Young People and Participating Organisations

As you will be asking for information from both young people and local organisations, it is important to make sure they are aware of what the project is all about. This is a guideline for how to introduce the project to participants.

The key points to cascade are:

- The young people/organisation need to understand what the project is about and permission to collect data
- The data must be obtained in the same way for each young person to maintain accuracy
- That the information the young people/organisation give is confidential
- The importance that the young people give truthful answers – otherwise the predictions may be inaccurate

Examples of how to achieve this is outlined below:

For Young People:

We are working on a European project to help address dropout rates and to try to support young people to complete their VET.

We are going to ask you some very brief questions which we ask for an honest response. The information you give will not be shared with anyone else other than for use in this project.

Please be as truthful as possible when answering the questions and help us to help you.

Thanks for your time.

For Organisations:

The European Strategy 2020 is to reduce the dropout figure within VET. To achieve this we are developing a SAP screening tool which will help us to identify those young people at most risk. Once identified, we will work with you to put interventions in place to support those young people to complete their VET course.

In order to create this tool, we will require access to a cohort of young people and some support in collecting data from each one. This will be kept confidential and used only for the development of the tool.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Help Available

- SAP help line – this helpline has been set up to answer any queries throughout the life of the project. The line will be open during UK office hours (9.00am – 5.00pm).

Tel: +448453520063
Or
+447792059757

- In addition should you require any further help outside of these hours you can email the SAP helpdesk on: traceybaker809@gmail.com

Your query will be answered as soon as possible

Useful Partner Contacts

Partner Number	Country Code	Institution	Contact Person	Address	Contact Details
P0	UK	Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council (PUB-LOC)	Peter Holtham (Project Leader) Ed Dales (Project Manager) Tracey Baker (Project Coordinator)	Sandwell Council House PO BOX 2374 Oldbury B69 3DE Connexions Sandwell 155-157 High St West Bromwich B70 7QX	Tel: +441215698481 Email: Peter_holtham@sandwell.gov.uk Tel: +448453520055 Fax: +448453520087 Email: Ed_dales@sandwell.gov.uk Tracey_baker@sandwell.gov.uk
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