



E-Bulletin

December 2025 Vol.77



FOREWORD: ANDY CROSSLAND, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, HLC:

“As we approach Christmas, I’ve been reflecting on the difference we’ve made together for communities across Hull, the East Riding and beyond. Over the past 15 years, Humber Learning Consortium (HLC) has worked alongside VCSE and community-based delivery partners to **attract £73.5m of investment into the local area** - funding that has changed lives.

Between 2016 and 2023, **15,008 local people benefited from our ESF programmes**, gaining skills, confidence, and routes into work. **Over 5,700 of these were NEETs**. Through UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and Multiply we have already supported more than 4,000 people, many taking their first step back into learning in community settings that feel safe, welcoming and rooted in place.

None of this would be possible without our staff, learners, partners, funders, and key stakeholders. Thank you for your continued belief in HLC’s role as a connector, convener, and champion for inclusive learning.

As we look to the year ahead, we remain committed to making Hull and East Riding a great place to learn and work, and to **ensure that investment in HLC’s neighbourhood delivery model produces real, lasting impact** for the people who need it most.

Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and a hopeful New Year.”

NICHE LEARNERS CROWNED CREAM OF THE CROPS AT REGION’S TOP HAIRDRESSING AWARDS....



Winner Lillie's sustainability Hair Up creation.

Learners from Niche Education and Training in Hull attended the Yorkshire Student Hairdressing and Barbering Competition at Leeds College last week, and three of them were successfully short-listed as finalists, with two then beating off stiff competition from across the region to take first place in their respective categories!

All three 16-19 Study programme learners competed in the Level 3 category against learners from 7 of the largest mainstream further education colleges from across Yorkshire.

Summer (@styledby_sums) won first place in the Level 3 Creative Colouring category with her Autumn hair theme and Lillie (@lillies_lush_hair) came first in the Level 3 Hair Up/Down category, with her theme around sustainability to raise awareness of mass fishing and pollution.

Finalist Katie’s innovative creative work, using pool noodles as an alternative curling method, (@xhairbykatie_) also caught the attention of the eight respected judges in the Level 3 category with her beautiful sustainability work.

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Jody Annandale-Hotte, Director and Owner of Niche Education and Training, said,

"We are so proud of the girls and their hard work and commitment, they really stepped out of their comfort zone and rose to the challenge under pressure competing against some of the largest colleges in Yorkshire! A huge achievement for our learners, and their tutor - Bethany Rose who did such a brilliant job representing Niche Education & Training!"

Lillie (18) the winner of the Level 3 Hair Up/Down category said,

"It was an amazing day. I absolutely loved it! It's the first competition I have done. I am thrilled to win this award. It has really brought my confidence up. By thinking out of the box and doing something different we stood out and came away with trophies and a huge range of industry prizes worth over £400 each. It was a real team effort and my friends on the course really supported me. It was the best experience."

See [LINK](#) for more photos from the day.



Autumn hair by Niche learner Summer.

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND INACTIVITY: THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT – OR ARE THEY?

There has been widespread national media coverage about the worrying increase in 16 to 24-year-olds not earning or learning, so-called NEETs or Not in Education, Employment or Training. Across England, there are now 946,000 NEET young people who are increasingly disconnected from education, work, or training - a trend that has been rising since Covid-19.

The Government's 2025 Budget announced a range of policies in response: an extended Youth Guarantee for areas of highest need[1], NEET Trailblazers, and a roll out of Youth Hubs - with more details unveiled earlier this month. Former Cabinet Member, Alan Milburn, will also be leading an independent national NEET investigation. A National Youth Strategy has been launched, with a 10-year plan for youth services.

In **this** edition, we explore what this means at a local level in Hull and East Yorkshire and focus on the success that HLC and our '**neighbourhood front door**' community delivery partners are having via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Exploring Opportunities (EO) programme.

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YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND INACTIVITY: THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT – OR ARE THEY?

Hull and East Yorkshire - In context:

Hull and East Yorkshire (HEY) NEET and not-known rates for September 2025 range from 6.3% in Hull to 6.1% in East Riding – 6.2% average for Hull and East Yorkshire. 16-18 NEET levels in Hull (4.8%) and East Riding (2.6%) are both above the England average of 2.1%. There are close to 900 NEET young people across HEY, rising to over 2,000 when factoring in those with an Education, Health and Care Plan.

Comparing local and national data is not straightforward given different collection and publication mechanisms. Across England, 1 in 8 young people are NEET with more economically inactive than unemployed.

Across Hull and East Yorkshire, there are more than 19,000 economically inactive and unemployed 16-24-year-olds, close to 1 in every 4 young people and more than double the national level. However, 12,000 of these are students in full-time education, who will hopefully enter the labour market after their studies.

Young people aged 16-24 years make up 20% of the total inactive population, of which the majority (69%) are aged 16-19 years.

OUR 'NEIGHBOURHOOD FRONT DOORS' COMMUNITY-DELIVERY MODEL....



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Between 2016-2023, HLC supported over 5,700 NEET and inactive young people through the innovative Springboard programme which was recognised by DWP as a national exemplar of good practice for employment outcomes.

Our current UKSPF EO programme is making notable inroads with inactive and long-term unemployed individuals. 44% of the 750+ participants supported since April 2025 have been NEET young people aged 16-24 years, of which one-third were aged 16-18 years. 90% are drawn from high deprivation wards and 29% have no or low qualifications (level 1 or below). More than one-third cite some form of disability or learning difficulty.

Nationally, there is widespread concern at the scale of young people's mental health and well-being, reportedly around 20% of all young people. Possibly the most striking indicator from the EO programme is that 52% of young people supported cited a mental health issue compared to 40% for other age groups. Additionally, 27% of all people accessing CAB's specialist EO debt/financial support are young people. This is concerning and needs to be put under the policy spotlight.

It's important to note the impact the programme is having, with 76% of young people moving into a positive work or further learning destination, with a strong correlation emerging between these positive progressions and the receipt of specialist mental health and debt/financial advice support services.

Whilst we await further details on the Government's youth-focused policy support, there are some primary asks for policy

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OUR 'NEIGHBOURHOOD FRONT DOORS' COMMUNITY-DELIVERY MODEL....

decision-makers at national and local level.

Springboard demonstrated the traction from a **wider age approach, supporting young people up to 29 years old**. This recognised the different motivations of the age cohorts in terms of training and learning and employment (and self-employment). **The importance of embedding easy to access mental health and debt/financial advice** alongside employability and training provision is also **critical**.

HLC successfully led the Hull Youth Hub for DWP between late 2020-2022, supporting 770 mainly long-term unemployed young people during a crucial time. It housed Job Centre Work Coaches, Local Authority Key Workers and mental health therapists and delivery partners, alongside other specialist support. The reason for its success - the co-location of services under one roof to triage referrals AND importantly, the Springboard employment and training programme was in full delivery, enabling an easy transition to dedicated, high-quality training and support via community-rooted partners.

As we enter the new landscape of policy and skills devolution (Adult Skills Fund, Connect to Work, Mayoral Investment Fund, Get Britain Working local plans, Local Growth Plans, LSIP2, etc.) there is a proven and successful VCSE "neighbourhood front door" model that the HEY Combined Authority can utilise

immediately to get significant numbers of Hull & East Yorkshire's young people into good jobs.

[1] Currently 6 areas - Birmingham and Solihull, the East Midlands, Greater Manchester, Hertfordshire and Essex, Central and East Scotland and South West and South East Wales, from Spring 2026.



EO PARTNER CAB'S INFOGRAPHIC SHOWCASES THE IMPACT OF THEIR DEBT AND FINANCE SUPPORT IN HULL DURING 2025.

HAPPY NEW PEER!...

As part of the Independent People 2.0 Erasmus+ project, a team from HLC have been working with colleagues from Sweden, Belgium and Germany to build portable education escape rooms, or PEERs.



Erasmus group developing a PEER..



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HAPPY NEW PEER!

A PEER is an escape room in a box or bag. It's a really fun and hands-on way to engage learners with difficult topics, through story, problem-solving and reflection.

We have just returned from Germany where we showcased the latest PEER creation, developed with local employers and the Careers Hub, which aims to teach students in years 7 and 8 about working in the manufacturing sector.

We are excited to be bringing these innovative and exciting learning methods to a wider audience.

For the next stage in the project we will be running a series of workshops in the new year to train more people how to develop and build their own PEERs. Watch this space for more information....



**HLC WILL BE CLOSING FOR
THE CHRISTMAS BREAK
FROM TUESDAY 23RD
DECEMBER (4.30PM) AND
WILL RE-OPEN ON
MONDAY 5TH JANUARY
2026.**



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