Exploring uses of technologies and whether these relate to certain specific characteristics of young people who are NEET

Report

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1. SUMMARY FINDINGS

Background to this study

From existing research, we know little about possible relationships between individual characteristics of young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) and how they interact with specific technologies to communicate and interact with support agencies. This key issue was the main focus of this study. The study was supported by Prospects and Connexions Bradford. At the time the study was undertaken, Connexions Bradford supported uses of mobile telephone, texting, email and Facebook to maintain contacts between their personal assistants (PAs) and their clients.

Evidence for the study

For the study, a data set was identified and provided by Connexions Bradford from their data (CCIS) service. Agreed background characteristics of young people were identified, detailed and provided anonymously. Details of technologies used to communicate with these young people were also gathered. The data records detailed features of 763 young people who were categorised as NEET on the day the data were produced. Of these, 81 were 16 years of age, 360 were 17 years of age, and 322 were 18 years of age, 345 were female, 418 were male, and the ethnic origin of the majority was White British, but with a significant number of Pakistani ethnic origin. Although many of the young people had no qualifications at all, more had achieved level 2 and level 1 qualifications. Their first choice occupations varied widely, but the most common first choices were: childcare, teaching assistant and nursery nursing; sales, retail and customer service; motor mechanics (cars, buses and lorries); and clerical, secretarial and business administration. Eligibility for free school meals, risk of under achievement, having learning difficulties and disabilities, home-life issues, emotional well-being issues and housing issues existed in some 12.5% or more of this population.

Findings from the study

The study identified a range of trends and associations, both in how PAs used digital technologies, and in the responses from their clients when using these different technologies. Across a sample of 10 Connexions Bradford PAs, telephones were the most ubiquitous form of technology used to maintain communication. Texts, either via the CCIS or via a personal mobile telephone, were popular, email was used infrequently, but Facebook was already used a great deal by half of these PAs.

Levels and effectiveness of forms of communication

Texts not sent through the CCIS and telephone contacts were by far the most effective communication media in terms of response ratios (comparing responses from clients to messages sent). Comparing the response ratios of young people who were NEET with young people who were in non-employed training, it was notable that although the response ratios for some forms of communication were at the same level, there were also certain differences: email contact not through CCIS was higher; text not through CCIS was higher; the telephone response rate was higher; and email contact through CCIS was lower.

- In terms of text messages received from clients who were NEET: more were received from 17 and 18 year old young people, but more were also sent to these age groups; more were received from females, yet more were sent to males; more were received from those with the lowest academic levels, and from those achieving level 2 qualifications, with again more being sent to these groups; and more were received from those interested in childcare, teaching assistant work and nursery nursing, and clerical, secretarial and business administration.

- In terms of successful telephone contacts: more arose with the 17 and 18 year old young people, but more were also made with these age groups; more were gained with males, but more were made with this group; most were gained with those achieving level 2

qualifications, but also those with no qualifications, those achieving level 1 qualifications, and those likely to achieve level 1 and level 2 qualifications; and more were gained with those interested in hairdressing, motor mechanics (cars, buses and lorries), as well as sales, retail and customer service.

- In terms of emails received from clients: more were received from the 18 year old age group; more were received from females, but the numbers were very small; more were received from those with no qualifications, and those with level 1 qualifications and those with level 2 qualifications, but the numbers in all cases were small; and there were no discernible patterns for messages received according to occupational interest.

- Receipts from Facebook contacts were not automatically recorded in the CCIS data base, so evidence of this form of communication medium could not be explored in the same way.

Forms of communication and specific characteristics of the young people
Certain groups of young people responded more commonly by text messaging. Particularly, those young people: with learning difficulties or disabilities; with home-life issues; with housing issues; supported by the youth offending team (YOT); those who were care leavers; not attending school; who were school disruptive; and who were looked after children. Two interesting indicators relating to uses by PAs emerged: PAs appeared to send more text messages as the age of the young people increased; and Facebook contacts appeared to be made often with young people who had learning difficulties or disabilities.

Support categories and uses of digital technologies
PAs were asked to use a support categorisation to place their clients into four different groups: education and employment ready (EER); nearly education and employment ready (NEER); those with multiple long-term problems (MULP); and those choosing alternative lifestyles (ALT). From correlation analyses applied to these data, some associations emerged: PAs communicated most using texts via CCIS, Facebook, and email via CCIS with young people who were categorised as EER; and least using these mechanisms for young people who were categorised as ALT (choosing alternative lifestyles). Overall, PAs used texts via the CCIS and Facebook to maintain contact with those clients in the EER category; texts via the CCIS and texts via a personal mobile telephone to maintain contact with the NEER category; texts via a personal mobile telephone to maintain contact with the MULP category; and texts via the CCIS and Facebook to maintain contact with the ALT category.

- For the EER category: 16 year old young people tended to fall into this category; most were predicted to achieve at level 1; common first choice jobs were childcare, teaching assistants and nursery nursing as well as plumbing, heating and ventilating and sales, retail and customer service; some were substance misusers; a very small number were travellers; a very small number had health problems; about a third were at risk of drop-out; and a very small number were a parent not caring for their own child. They were likely to use texts a lot and Facebook a lot.

- For the NEER category: they were mostly male; most had achieved level 1; common first choice jobs were catering, cooking, food preparation as well as construction at an operative level; a good number were supported by the YOT; a few had home-life issues; and a very small number were at risk of drop-out. They were likely to use texts a lot, and some might use email.

- For the MULP category: many had no qualifications at all; common first choice jobs were motor mechanics; a good number were care leavers; a good number had housing issues; very many had learning disabilities or disorders; many had home-life issues; many were at risk of

under-achievement; a good number had health problems; a few were supported by the probation service; a good number were eligible for free school meals; a few were European Union (EU) migrants; and many had emotional well-being health issues. They were likely to use texts from personal mobile telephones.

- For the ALT category: most were 17 years of age; they were female; their qualifications ranged from predicted level 1 to achieved at level 2; common first choice jobs were childcare, teaching assistants and nursery nursing; none were care leavers; some received English language support; some were refugees; none were substance misusers; a few had housing issues; none were supported by the YOT; none had learning disabilities or disorders; none were school non-attenders, or intermittent attenders, or had an alternative curriculum; some were at risk of under-achievement; none were supported by School Action; none were eligible for free school meals; a few were EU migrants; a few had emotional well-being issues; and none had a common assessment framework (CAF) at the confirmed stage. They were likely to use texts, and some might use email.

Implications

A range of implications arose from the findings.

- It would be of value to know if different samples and wider populations of young people would produce the same or different outcomes.

- The support categorisation provided was able to be used and applied by PAs. This model could be used to gather wider evidence that could lead to more detailed outcomes.

- It is important to establish the reasons for email and texts being linked to and arising from the CCIS more or less frequently than through a personal mobile telephone or email. It would be useful to clarify whether this was due to the ease with which PAs were able to initiate these, or whether it was due to other factors such as past experience with using the facilities in a particular way, or how it related to records within the CCIS, or whether it was due to past experiences of effective outcomes. Additionally, it would be useful to clarify whether such use related to qualities of contact details, such as personal mobile numbers being more up to date than email addresses for some clients, and how easy it was for contact through the CCIS to be maintained if texts or emails were sent from a remote rather than an office location.

- There are potential implications for the future design and improvement of the CCIS system. It would be helpful to know more about the ways in which Facebook is linked to the CCIS, and how this might be achieved further in the future. The ways in which a CCIS might be able to target vacancy information for young people, offer bulk messaging, and link to polling or surveys, are all issues worth exploring further.

- Many of the young people are clearly using different digital technology devices. It would be useful for planning effective communications in the future to have up-to-date details about the types of communication devices that young people who are NEET have and what they use them for.

- Many young people use text messaging for communication purposes. In developing mobile telephone applications for supporting communications in the future, one implication is that application development needs to accommodate wide inclusivity; standard text alerts might be potentially more useful to young people who do not have smartphones or are without internet access from their mobile telephone.

- The effect of choice of communication medium by young people on the quality of communication is potentially important. This being the case, PAs need to be both familiar with and willing to use all of the possible devices accessible to them and to young people. There are implications for professional development and how to identify key needs.

- In this study effectiveness was concerned with communication. It was measured by levels of communication between PAs and clients, and the ratio of these to levels of responses received. Another useful outcome to measure effectiveness would be the level of movement from young people who are NEET to the status of being in education, employment or training. Whether those with more frequent interaction using particular technologies remain NEET for a shorter period of time would be worthy of further study.

- Those young people in the NEER category were largely male, and evidence suggests that they are likely to need support with the development of certain skills (most achieved level 1, but some had no qualifications), and these are likely to include communication skills. There are implications for the curriculum in schools, and particularly for the non-formal curriculum, where schools might provide additional opportunities to develop teamwork through project-based activities to support and engage this group (such as *Little Big Planet 2 Video-games Challenges*, *First Lego League*, or *BBC News School Report* for example).

- Those young people in the ALT group were mainly female. There are implications for how these young women might be engaged through voluntary work and work involving creativity and enterprise. Appropriate activities should allow participants the autonomy and control they seek, allowing individual expression but involving aspects of social responsibility, matching the social jobs that feature prominently in their preferred careers.

Recommendations

From the findings of this study the following recommendations are offered.

- Initiate discussions with those responsible locally for the CCIS and with the development team to consider future needs and how to maximise support effectiveness. Consider the ways in which Facebook is linked to the CCIS, how this might be achieved further in the future, and the ways in which a CCIS might be able to target vacancy information for young people, or offer bulk messaging, or link to polling or surveys.

- Explore the reasons for email and texts from the CCIS arising more or less frequently than those through a personal mobile telephone or email account. Clarify whether certain types of contact details such as personal mobile numbers are more up to date than email addresses for some clients, and how easy it is for contact through the CCIS to be maintained if texts or emails are sent from a remote rather than from an office location.

- Gather up-to-date evidence about how young people currently use different digital technology devices. Update the survey questionnaire used in previous research, and seek cooperation of Bradford Connexions offices and personnel to gather evidence from a sample of young people over a limited given period of time.

- Consider implications for developing mobile telephone applications for supporting communications in the future. Consider how standard text alerts might be provided for young people who do not have smartphones or who are without internet access from their mobile telephones.

- Consider professional development implications. Identify the extent to which PAs are using the width of digital technologies that are available to them and the levels and forms of professional development that will assist them in moving towards a pattern of use that is determined as much by the young people's choices as it is by their own experiences.

- Undertake a follow-up study that looks at a measure of effectiveness that identifies levels of movement of young people who are NEET to a status of being in education, employment or training. These levels should be related to forms of communication used by PAs and the young people. Look at the status of each individual on the last day of each month for a period of between 6 to 9 months. Identify whether those with more frequent interaction using particular technologies remain NEET for a shorter period of time.

- Consider ways to target and enhance effective communication skills for the NEER group of young people. Discuss with school curriculum managers how this might be achieved through the non-formal curriculum, offering teamwork and project work activities to support and engage this group (such as *Little Big Planet 2 Video-games Challenges*, *First Lego League,* and *BBC News School Report,* for example).

- Consider ways to target and engage young women who are ALT through voluntary work and work involving creativity and enterprise.

- Considering undertaking this form of study in different contexts, to gather wider evidence that would allow a wider generalisation of such findings to be validated.

2. PLACING THE STUDY IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT

2.1 Understanding uses of digital technologies by young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)

There have been increasing concerns raised about the high proportion of the current population of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET) in the United Kingdom (UK) and calls for action that this group should be supported more, sometimes in particular ways. Some of those ways have focused on uses of web-sites and digital access to increase engagement with information, advice and guidance (IAG); such uses have been explored and discussed by Bimrose, Barnes and Attwell (2010), Bimrose, Hughes and Barnes (2011), Howieson (2011) and Vuorinen and Kettunen (2011). However, the research literature that focuses on the potential range of uses of technologies by young people who are NEET is slim. From that literature there are some ideas of the levels of access and types of uses of digital technologies with this group of young people (Passey, Williams and Rogers, 2008). We know something of their uses of web-sites and specific online services to gain access to career and employment information (Bimrose, Barnes and Attwell, 2010). We know how some careers services and advisors are using and developing digital technologies to engage this group of young people (Passey and Davies, 2010). But one aspect that we know little about currently is whether there is any relationship between individual characteristics of those young people who are NEET and how they interact with specific technologies for communication and engagement purposes. This latter key issue is the main focus of the study reported here.

2.2 Levels of access and uses of digital technologies by young people who are NEET

While current concerns are being raised about youth unemployment and those who are NEET, as well as approaches to address current issues, there has not been a focus on, or indeed a focus currently raised about, the specific roles and involvement of digital technologies in these respects. Yet it is clear that digital technologies play major roles in the lives of young people, and could be integrated to help to address some of the current needs raised, and to potentially support the career and employment directions of young people. For example, the Office of National Statistics (2011) reported that in August 2011 some 71% of young people 16 to 24 years of age were accessing the internet via their mobile telephones. Clearly there is potential opportunity to use such links to support a more on-going and interactive engagement with training and work; indeed, in Bradford, the focal region for this study, the careers service, Connexions Bradford, uses a range of digital communication facilities including Twitter to engage with young people with respect to IAG.

From research evidence, it appears that levels of access and types of uses of digital technologies by young people who are NEET are not necessarily specific to this group of young people, or indeed lower or higher than groups of young people who are in education, employment and training (EET). Young people who are NEET are likely to access and use technologies widely, as shown by Passey, Williams and Rogers (2008). That report showed that technology access and use by young people who were NEET was generally (and perhaps surprisingly) high. From a survey of 305 young people in one geographical region, on average, each young person used between four and five different ICT devices (305 young people reported access to 1,444 devices, 404 used for learning purposes, 1,077 for accessing music, and 376 for texting). On the whole, information and communications technologies (ICT) were used for communication purposes (texting, talking and emailing) more than for information purposes (although uses for research and playing music both scored highly). While the young people's uses of specific technologies tended to be for particular purposes (computers and laptops rather than mobile telephones being used for emailing, for example), some were used for purposes concerned with learning (largely computers and laptops), but it was also noted that computers and laptops tended to be seen as workplace or education tools rather than personal tools. The current situation about levels and uses by young people who are NEET is, however, not known in any detail.

2.3 Current and future developments in this area

Clearly, to engage with young people's current uses of technologies (including uses of social media such as Twitter and Facebook), and to support mediators and support workers in enabling and enhancing their interactions with those young people who are vulnerable, there are potential and emerging roles for effective technologies. Two reports (Bimrose, Barnes and Attwell, 2010; Passey and Davies, 2010) looked at how some groups of support workers across England (which included youth and social workers as well as careers advisors) use digital technologies in their mediation interactions with young people at risk, and indicated that certain technologies were not at that time used routinely (such as those involving communication or social engagement), while other technologies (such as data records on management information systems) were used to a far greater extent, but were not necessarily fully focused to match mediator needs or purposes in terms of identifying possible support mechanisms or actions. Even the ways that data were gathered (from a variety of different sources) or used (to apply to an individual's learning needs and approaches) were focused at that time for effective uses by some stakeholders (policy makers needing particular presentations of data from front-line support workers, for example), but not for all stakeholders (as careers advisors accessed much more limited ranges of data).

This current small-scale study is focused in Bradford, involving Connexions Bradford in a more specific exploration of aspects of some of these issues. At the time this study was undertaken, Connexions Bradford were supporting uses of mobile telephone, texting, email and Facebook facilities to maintain contacts with young people.

3. THE STUDY – ITS APPROACH AND DESIGN

3.1 The subjects of this study

The Department of Educational Research at Lancaster University has completed a number of studies exploring ways that young people who are NEET learn and engage with others (Passey, 2010a; 2010b), how they use technologies (Passey, Davies and Rogers, 2010), and how technologies might be used to support their needs further (Passey and Davies, 2010). This current study follows on from those previous studies, and focuses more specifically on uses of technologies to maintain communication with young people for IAG purposes.

The study has been supported by Prospects, and Connexions Bradford. Prospects is described on their web-site (2012) as "a leading education, employment and training services company. The organisation helps more than one million people each year, through an extensive range of services. It is one of the first and largest new public sector mutuals, with shares allocated to managers and staff, as an employee-owned company." It provides: " Careers services for adults and young people, including the face-to-face element of the National Careers Service in three regions; Advice and guidance for offenders in Greater London and Yorkshire & Humber; The Work Programme, the government's major initiative to help long term unemployed back to work, in the South West and London; Ofsted Early Years Inspection Services in the Midlands and North of England; Youth Contract, targeted support for NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) young people in the West Midlands and Yorkshire and Humber; Education consultancy and school improvement services." Both Prospects and Connexions Bradford are well placed to support the study, and have provided invaluable access to data that has enabled a number of avenues to be explored at deeper levels than has been possible previously.

3.2 Approaches to the study of uses of digital technologies for communication purposes

Uses of digital technologies in Connexions Bradford have involved a variety of facilities and approaches to support engagement of young people (their clients) with their personal advisers (PAs) – uses of social media, Twitter, Facebook, texting and messaging, for example. Records of use and their outcomes are retained within a Client Management System (CCIS) in Connexions Bradford, which holds certain details or background characteristics of the young people, types of intervention used and found to be successful, and forms of technologies deployed. Using these data, captured from the data system, the uses and outcomes of different forms of technologies has been explored, to see if these relate in any ways to background characteristics of young people, and to the support categories of these young people.

To undertake the study, a data set was identified and provided by the Connexions Bradford CCIS service, and was further collated into a format to meet the needs of this study. For each young person, agreed background characteristics and their support categories were identified, detailed and provided anonymously. Details of technologies used, and how successful these had been found to be, were also gathered. Having this data set across the range of young people being supported, it was possible to analyse these data in terms of possible correlations and relationships. The correlations or relationships found were considered in terms of on-going work and practices, and the ways that careers advisors might use these within their work practices.

3.3 Design features of the study

To undertake this study, approaches initially involved contact with a key manager in Connexions Bradford, to gain background details, and to understand what forms of data were available, and how they could be gathered and collected together. Further discussions led to agreement with the key manager on the forms of data that could be collected, from possibly different sources, to allow analysis to occur. Subsequently, the data were analysed, using correlation and other appropriate statistical analyses. Those analyses are reported here, in forms for use by Prospects and other audiences.

4. KEY FEATURES OF THE CONNEXIONS BRADFORD CAREERS SERVICE AND ITS CLIENT GROUPS

4.1 Clients recorded in the Connexions Bradford data base

Connexions Bradford, like all careers advisory services, are required to use a data base (CCIS) that maintains records of certain essential features of young people who are supported by the service. The data base at the end of March 2012 recorded the numbers of young people who were being supported by Connexions Bradford; the number comprised those who were school-based (see Table 1), and those in the post-school group (see Table 2).

Table 1: School-based clients

Compulsory school year group	Number on record
Year 8	6043
Year 9	5861
Year 10	5850
Year 11	5861
Total	23615

Table 2: Post-school clients

16-19 cohort group	Number on record
In education	16542
In employment (including apprenticeships)	2465
In non-employed training	817
NEET	1178
Current situation not known	1371
Custodial sentence	59
Refugees/asylum seekers (not in EET)	2
16-19 Cohort Total	22434

It is clear from these data that substantial numbers of young people are being supported by this careers service. The groups that are of particular interest at this stage in this study are those within the non-employed training group (817 in total), and those in the NEET group (1,178 in total).

4.2 Data structure and client features held in the Connexions Bradford data base

The Connexions Bradford data base holds a wide range of features relating to its clients. The features that are held routinely for all clients are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: List of client features held in the Connexions Bradford data base

Client feature
Client Number
Forename
Surname
Date of Birth
Age
Address 1
Address 2
Address 3
Address 4
Town
County
Postcode
Telephone Number
Mobile Telephone Number
Email
Caseload PA

Client feature
Caseload PA Name
Ethnicity
Gender
Unique Personal Identification Number (UPIN)
Unique Learner Number (ULN)
Client Ward
School Attended
Destination Code
Destination Description
Current Educational Establishment
Establishment Name
Organisation Number
Organisation Name
Course Code
Course Description
Job Code
Job Description
Intended Destination Code
Intended Destination Description
September Guarantee Code
September Guarantee Description
Academic Level Code
Academic Level Description
First Choice Job Code
First Choice Job Description
Target Group
Target Recorded Date
Support Groups
Assessment: Statemented
Assessment: Care Leaver
Assessment: Looked After Child (LAC)
English Language Support Needed
Refugee/Asylum Seeker
Substance Misuse
Parent and Caring for Own Child
Carer (not own Child)
Housing Issues
Assessment: Youth Offending Team (YOT)
Traveller
Pregnant
Learning Difficulties or Disabilities (LDD) - Other/Post Year 11
Home-life Issues
School: Non Attender
School: Intermittent Attender
School: Alternative Curriculum
At Risk of Underachievement
History of Health Problems
Supervised by Probation Service
Unclear about Career Route
At Risk of Dropout from Post-16
LDD - School Action Plus
LDD - School Action
Eligible for Free School Meals (FSM)
European Union (EU) Migrant
Non-EU Migrant
Parent but Not Caring for Own Child
Emotional Well-being Issues

Client feature
In Care but other LA is responsible
School: Disrupted Education
Assessment: Common Assessment Framework (CAF) at Potential Stage
Assessment: CAF at Confirmed Stage
Assessment: Closed CAF
Assessment: Stepped Up CAF
Assessment: Child In Need (CIN)

The data structure for Year 11 students includes some different features, described in the report of the Raising Participation Age (RPA) Planning Group Meeting within Bradford Confederations (dated 14th December 2011). This report describes the use of data indicators to identify in advance young people who might be at greater risk of becoming NEET. This risk indicator is called the Bradford Risk of NEET Indicator (BRONI). The full range of features of Year 11 students that are held within the CCIS are listed in Table 4.

Table 4: List of Year 11 client features held in the Connexions Bradford data base

Client feature
Identification Data (ID) Young Person
Age
Lead PA
School/College
Broni (the Bradford Risk of NEET Indicator) - based on crystal reports from CCIS, the score shows the risk of individual young people or groups of young people becoming NEET. Those with an indicator score over 100 are considered at higher risk
Ethnicity
Gender
Postcode
Ward
Intended Destination
Statement
School Action Plus
LDD Other
LAC/Care
Parent
Pregnant
YOT
Disrupted Education
Non Attender
Alternative Curriculum
Unclear Route to Education, Training or Employment
FSM
Housing issues

From the lists in Tables 3 and 4, it was important to identify the features that would be of potential value to the analyses to be undertaken in this study. The list chosen is described in the following section.

4.3 Personal advisers in Bradford

Key front-line personnel in any careers service are its PAs. In April 2012, there were 85 people locally qualified to be Connexions Bradford careers advisers. Four were senior managers without caseloads, so in total 81PAs provided direct IAG, but not all of this number was employed full-time.

The PAs worked within three main groups:

- Those advisers working in a school or college. The caseload of these PAs included more or less everyone in a school or college (apart from those receiving intensive support); the average caseload for each of these PAs was in the region of 1,500 young people.
- Intensive support PAs, with caseloads in the region of 30 or 40 young people.
- PAs who worked with young people who were NEET, but not requiring intensive support; they had between 50 and 120 clients as a caseload.

4.4 PA contacts with clients that are held on the Connexions Bradford data base

The features reported by PAs for recording in the CCIS data base can change at certain times, but as of 15th March 2012, the forms of contact that were categorised, and the features recorded by PAs in the CCIS fell into eleven main groups. For statistical returns, where interventions need to be reported, the details within these eleven groups are usually drawn into three broader groups: one-to-one personal contacts; telephone contacts; and letters, texts and emails.

PAs report the following eleven categories of details from their interventions with clients:

1. PA interviews with clients. PA interviews with clients detail contacts where PAs provide advice and guidance that is exchanged on a one-to-one basis. These records list all one-to-one contacts, whether they are formal careers interviews, or where these occur within a drop-in session, at a careers or options event, and within a group work session. Additionally, different forms of interview are reported:
   - Interview with client only.
   - Interview for formal learning or work-based learning (FL/WBL) review.
   - Interview with client, with another agency worker present.
   - Interview with client, and parent or guardian present.
   - Interview for FL/WBL 6-week review (with ‘passport’ signed or checked).
   - Interview for career coaching.

2. Multi-agency meetings and reviews. These detail substantial contacts involving PAs, their clients and other colleagues. A review would normally be between half an hour and two hours in duration. Additionally, different forms of interview are reported:
   - Review for LDD 14 year and above transition.
   - Review for LDD other.
   - Review for LAC.
   - Review for other multi-agency meeting.

3. Meetings with parents or guardians. These detail contacts involving a PA and at least one parent or guardian, but not the young person.

4. Telephone contacts (that have been successful). These records show telephone contacts where the PA succeeds in speaking to a client or a member of his or her family. (This option is counted by the Department for Education (DFE) as a telephone contact.) The forms of contact recorded are:
   - Telephone contact with client.
   - Telephone contact with client’s parent or family.

5. Telephone contacts (that have been unsuccessful). This record is used when the PA has not been able to speak to anyone. It is also used if a message is left on an answer phone.

6. Emails, texts, Facebook and correspondence with clients. These records detail contacts using emails, messages, texts and letters that are sent between PAs and clients. Some (marked below

with an asterisk *) are automatically created by the CCIS software itself (when emails and texts are sent from the 'Basic Details' page, and when such texts are directly replied to). The forms of contacts recorded are:

- Email sent, but not from the CCIS.
- Email sent from the CCIS*.
- Email received from the client.
- Email to or from a parent or guardian.
- Text sent from 'My Mobile'.
- Text sent from the CCIS*.
- Text received from the client.
- Text reply from the client*.
- Letter sent to the client regarding a specific issue.
- Letter or information sent regarding matching job opportunities.
- Letter or card sent regarding chase-up or follow-up.
- Facebook contact.
- Facebook friend request accepted.
- Facebook friend request sent or received.

7. Group sessions. This record details instances when a PA sees clients in a pre-arranged group session. The forms of contact recorded are:
   - Group (large) or assembly.
   - Group (small) or class.

8. Brief contacts. This record details a non-substantial contact, for example, when a PA briefly meets a young person and obtains some information worth recording. The forms of contact recorded are:
   - A brief face-to-face contact with the client.
   - Emergency expenses issued.

9. Accompanied visits. This record details instances when a PA accompanies a young person to the premises of another agency such as a learning provider.

10. Home visit (that is not successful). This record details an unsuccessful home visit.

11. Information recording (house-keeping). These records detail instances that are purely informational, to record useful pieces of information about the young person but without necessarily any direct contact with him or her. The forms of information recorded are:
    - Information about the client.
    - Information about assessments and CAFs.
    - Information from Jobcentre Plus.
    - Information from a contact with another agency.
    - Information about not attending an appointment.
    - Information about an appointment being re-arranged.
    - Information about additional work done (with the client not present).
    - Information about a lapsed or expired checklist completed.
    - Information shared with another agency.
    - Information about SatNav IAG completed.

5. CLIENT DATA AND CONTACT DETAILS CHOSEN FOR ANALYSIS

5.1 Client records chosen for analysis

From the full list of records about young people that are retained within the Connexions Bradford CCIS data base (shown in Tables 3 and 4), a selected list was requested for analysis in this study. The list selected for analysis is shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Client record details chosen for analysis

Client feature
ID (a code that Prospects would recognise, so that any queries might be related to individuals, but for the purposes of the study all clients would remain totally anonymous)
Age
Ethnicity
Gender
Current Educational Establishment
Academic Level Code
Academic Level Description
First Choice Job Code
First Choice Job Description
Assessment: Statemented
Assessment: Care Leaver
Assessment: LAC
English Language Support Needed
Refugee/Asylum Seeker
Substance Misuse
Parent and Caring for Own Child
Carer (but not own Child)
Housing Issues
Assessment: YOT
Traveller
Pregnant
LDD – Other or Post-Year 11
Home-life Issues
School: Non Attender
School: Intermittent Attender
School: Alternative Curriculum
At Risk of Underachievement
History of Health Problems
Supervised by Probation Service
Unclear about Career Route
At Risk of Dropout from Post-16
LDD - School Action Plus
LDD - School Action
Eligible for Free School Meals
EU Migrant
Non-EU Migrant
Parent but Not Caring for Own Child
Emotional Well-being Issues
In Care but other LA is responsible
School: Disrupted Education
Assessment: Common Assessment Framework (CAF) at Potential Stage
Assessment: CAF at Confirmed Stage
Assessment: Closed CAF
Assessment: Stepped Up CAF
Assessment: Child in Need (CIN)

5.2 Client contact features chosen for analysis

From the details retained within the Connexions Bradford CCIS data base about contacts between PAs and their clients, listed in the section above, a selected list was identified for subsequent analysis in this study. The list for analysis is shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Client contact details chosen for analysis

Client contact detail
Successful telephone contacts
Unsuccessful telephone contacts
Emails sent from CCIS
Emails sent from other sources
Emails received from client
Texts sent from mobile
Texts sent from CCIS
Texts received from client
Texts reply from client to CCIS
Letter sent to client
Facebook contact from PA
Facebook friend request sent by client

5.3 Client details requested for analysis

The coded records requested were provided by Connexions Bradford both anonymously and ethically. It should be noted that the records held by Connexions Bradford in their data base are considerable; the vast majority of young people supported by Connexions Bradford have had details recorded in their data base from when they were in Year 8 (age 12 years upwards). Some of them (aged 16 to 19 years) are now in non-employed training, and some are NEET.

For subsequent analysis in the study, Connexions Bradford provided two MS Excel spreadsheets of selected data, detailing features of those young people in the non-employed training category, and those in the NEET category. The period covered by these MS Excel spreadsheet records was from 1st January 2012 to 30th April 2012 (a period of four months). The young people concerned were aged 16, 17 and 18 years, they were all resident in the Bradford district and in the non-employed training and NEET categories at the date the reports were run (as some young people move in and out of those categories at different times).

6. THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND USES OF TECHNOLOGIES

6.1 Features for analysis

The features provided by Connexions Bradford in the two separate MS Excel spreadsheets gave details about those young people in non-employed training (totalling 817 from March 2012 records), and NEET (totalling 1,178 in March 2012 records). The list of features provided is shown in Table 7. This table also provides notes about each feature, to clarify or define further the details that are held and how these were coded for subsequent analysis.

Table 7: Features provided about young people in selected categories

Feature of young people	Notes
ID	This numeric code was provided so that Connexions Bradford staff could recognise the individual, to address any queries that might be asked about individuals, but to retain total anonymity for all clients
Age	Ranges between 16 and 18 years, and is given in years
Ethnicity	Sixteen different ethnic origin categories are defined for this population. For data coding purposes, codes used are 1=Any Other Ethnic Origin; 2=Bangladeshi; 3=Black - Caribbean; 4=Black – Other; 5=Gypsy/Roma; 6=Indian; 7=Irish Traveller; 8=Other Asian Origin; 9=Other European Origin; 10=Other Shared Heritage; 11=Pakistani; 12=White Other; 13=White and Asian; 14=White and Black African; 15=White and Black Caribbean; 16=White British
Gender	This is given as either male or female. For data coding purposes, codes used are 1=male; 2=female
Academic Level Description	Nine different level categories are used to describe this population group. For data coding purposes, codes used are 1=Has No Qualifications at all; 2=Predicted Entry Level: e.g. via Basic Skills, SEN, ESOL course; 3=Achieved Entry Level: e.g. Basic Skills, SEN, ESOL course; 4=Predicted Level 1: e.g. GCSEs D-G, BTEC intro, Foundation Dip, NVQ1; 5=Achieved Level 1: e.g. GCSEs D-G, BTEC intro, Foundation Dip, NVQ1; 6=Predicted Level 2: e.g. 4/4+ GCSEs A-C, BTEC 1st, Higher Dip, NVQ2; 7=Achieved Level 2: e.g. 4/4+ GCSEs A-C, BTEC 1st, Higher Dip, NVQ2; 8=Predicted Level 3: e.g. A levels, Art Foundation, Advanced Dip, BTEC national, NVQ3; 9=Achieved Level 3: e.g. A levels, Art Foundation, Advanced Dip, BTEC national, NVQ3
First Choice Job Description	Fifty-seven different categories were chosen across this population group. For data coding purposes, codes used are 1=Agriculture/forestry/fishing; 2=Animal care; 3=Armed forces; 4=Beauty Therapy; 5=Body repair (motor vehicles); 6=Bricklaying and stonemasonry; 7=Business and finance (professional level); 8=Care assistants; 9=Catering: bar work; 10=Catering: cooking/food prep/chef; 11=Catering: kitchen assistant level; 12=Catering: waiting/serving; 13=Childcare, teaching assistant and nursery nursing; 14=Cleaning; 15=Clerical, secretarial and business admin; 16=Computer installation and support; 17=Computer programming/designing; 18=Construction (operative level); 19=Dental (assistant level); 20=Design and art; 21=Electrical/electronic (craft level); 22=Employability skills; 23=Engineering and technology (professional level); 24=Finance and banking admin; 25=Gardening and horticulture (craft level); 26=Hairdressing; 27=Health (professional level); 28=Induction and course choice; 29=Industry/production (operative level); 30=Labouring/basic practical; 31=Law (professional level); 32=Legal/business/finance (technician level); 33=Leisure & recreation; 34=Motor mechanics 1 (cars/buses/lorries); 35=Motor mechanics 2 (bikes); 36=Nursing and health technician level; 37=Packing and warehouse (operative level); 38=Painting and decorating; 39=Part-Time Work; 40=Performing arts (theatre, film, music, dance) and

Feature of young people	Notes
	photography; 41=Personal, social and communication skills; 42=Plastering; 43=Plumbing, heating and ventilating; 44=Police, security and protection; 45=Printing and related trades; 46=Sales, retail and customer service; 47=Science and engineering (technician level); 48=Science (professional level); 49=Social science, religion and social work (professional level); 50=Sports and coaching; 51=Storekeeping, parts and warehouse admin; 52=Teaching (professional level); 53=Travel agency; 54=Welding; 55=Window making and fitting; 56=Woodworking (including carpentry and joinery); 57=Youth, community and welfare
Assessment: Statemented	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Assessment: Care Leaver	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Assessment: LAC	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
English Language Support Needed	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Refugee/Asylum Seeker	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Substance Misuse	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Parent and Caring for Own Child	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Carer (not own Child)	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Housing Issues	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Assessment: YOT	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Traveller	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Pregnant	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
LDD - Other/Post Year 11	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Home-life Issues	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
School: Non Attender	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
School: Intermittent Attender	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
School: Alternative Curriculum	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
At Risk of Underachievement	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised

Feature of young people	Notes
History of Health Problems	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Supervised by Probation Service	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Unclear about Career Route	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
At Risk of Dropout from Post-16	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
LDD - School Action Plus	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
LDD - School Action	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Eligible for Free School Meals	This is a common indicator of social deprivation used for educational policy. Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
EU Migrant	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Non-EU Migrant	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Parent but Not Caring for Own Child	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Emotional Wellbeing Issues	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
In Care but other LA is responsible	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
School: Disrupted Education	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Assessment: Common Assessment Framework (CAF) at Potential Stage	A CAF is a document and a process, agreed locally, which allows agencies (working below the level of social care, child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) and YOT) to consistently and accurately record the multi-agency assessment, action planning and support that is being delivered to vulnerable young people. Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Assessment: CAF at Confirmed Stage	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Assessment: Closed CAF	Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Assessment: Stepped Up CAF	Assessment: Stepped Up CAF refers to a CAF that has existed but has been suspended and the support processes have been 'stepped up' to a 'tier 3' agency (such as Children's Social Care, CAMHS or YOT). Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised
Assessment: Child in Need (CIN)	Assessment: CIN indicates that Children's Social Care has flagged this client as a Child in Need and are running assessments or delivering support. Indicated as a 'yes' in the data set where this feature is recognised

Feature of young people	Notes
Successful telephone contacts	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Unsuccessful telephone contacts	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Emails sent from CCIS	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Emails sent from other sources	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Emails received from client	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Texts sent from mobile	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Texts sent from CCIS	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Texts received from client	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Texts reply from client to CCIS	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Letter sent to client	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Facebook contact from PA	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded
Facebook friend request sent by client	Numbers of contacts of this form are recorded

6.2 Features of young people who are NEET within the sample population

From the data provided, records detailed features of 763 young people who were categorised as NEET on the day the data were produced. Of these young people, 81 were 16 years of age, 360 were 17 years of age, and 322 were 18 years of age. In terms of gender, 345 were female, and 418 were male. The ethnic origin of the majority of this population of young people was White British, but with a significant number of young people of Pakistani ethnic origin. The entire distribution of this population by ethnic origin is shown, in alphabetical order, in Table 8.

Table 8: Population of young people who are NEET by ethnic origin

Ethnic origin	Frequency
Any Other Ethnic Origin	14
Bangladeshi	13
Black - Caribbean	1
Black - Other	2
Gypsy/Roma	2
Indian	4
Irish Traveller	2

Ethnic origin	Frequency
Other Asian Origin	5
Other European Origin	15
Other Shared Heritage	5
Pakistani	165
White Other	12
White and Asian	10
White and Black African	1
White and Black Caribbean	13
White British	499

Although many young people in this population had no qualifications at all, more had achieved level 2 and level 1 qualifications. The full profile of the academic level of this population of young people is shown in ranked level, from lowest to highest level, in Table 9. It should be noted that some records were left blank in the data records for this feature.

Table 9: Academic levels of this population of young people who are NEET

Academic level	Frequency
Has No Qualifications at all	114
Predicted Entry Level: e.g. via Basic Skills, SEN, ESOL course	23
Achieved Entry Level: e.g. Basic Skills, SEN, ESOL course	19
Predicted Level 1: e.g. GCSEs D-G, BTEC intro, Foundation Dip, NVQ1	77
Achieved Level 1: e.g. GCSEs D-G, BTEC intro, Foundation Dip, NVQ1	124
Predicted Level 2: e.g. 4/4+ GCSEs A-C, BTEC 1st, Higher Dip, NVQ2	74
Achieved Level 2: e.g. 4/4+ GCSEs A-C, BTEC 1st, Higher Dip, NVQ2	174
Predicted Level 3: e.g. A levels, Art Foundation, Advanced Dip, BTEC national, NVQ3	2
Achieved Level 3: e.g. A levels, Art Foundation, Advanced Dip, BTEC national, NVQ3	8

The first choice occupation of the young people varied widely. The most common first choices were: childcare, teaching assistant and nursery nursing; sales, retail and customer service; motor mechanics (cars, buses and lorries); and clerical, secretarial and business administration. The full first choice occupation of this population of young people is shown, in alphabetical order, in Table 10. It should be noted that some records were left blank in the data records for this feature.

Table 10: First choice occupations of this population of young people who are NEET

First choice occupation	Frequency
Agriculture/forestry/fishing	1
Animal care	13
Armed forces	6
Beauty Therapy	19
Body repair (motor vehicles)	9
Bricklaying and stonemasonry	9
Business and finance (professional level)	1
Care assistants	16
Catering: bar work	2
Catering: cooking/food preparation/chef	24
Catering: kitchen assistant level	2
Catering: waiting/serving	5
Childcare, teaching assistant and nursery nursing	71
Cleaning	3
Clerical, secretarial and business admin	47
Computer installation and support	11
Computer programming/designing	5
Construction (operative level)	18
Dental (assistant level)	1
Design and art	1

First choice occupation	Frequency
Electrical/electronic (craft level)	16
Employability skills	10
Engineering and technology (professional level)	1
Finance and banking admin	1
Gardening and horticulture (craft level)	9
Hairdressing	38
Health (professional level)	3
Induction and course choice	7
Industry/production (operative level)	1
Labouring/basic practical	10
Law (professional level)	1
Legal/business/finance (technician level)	4
Leisure and recreation	3
Motor mechanics 1 (cars/buses/lorries)	57
Motor mechanics 2 (bikes)	2
Nursing and health technician level	4
Packing and warehouse (operative level)	16
Painting and decorating	8
Part-Time Work	15
Performing arts (theatre, film, music, dance) and photography	7
Personal, social and communication skills	10
Plastering	2
Plumbing, heating and ventilating	16
Police, security and protection	10
Printing and related trades	1
Sales, retail and customer service	66
Science and engineering (technician level)	2
Science (professional level)	1
Social science, religion and social work (professional level)	1
Sports and coaching	22
Storekeeping, parts and warehouse admin	2
Teaching (professional level)	1
Travel agency	5
Welding	1
Window making and fitting	1
Woodworking (including carpentry and joinery)	16
Youth, community and welfare	1

The data detailed a range of other features for this population. Frequencies of additional features are shown in order of highest to lowest frequencies in Table11. It should be noted that eligibility for free school meals, risk of under achievement, other learning difficulties and disabilities, home-life issues, emotional well-being issues, and housing issues existed in some 12.5% or more of this population.

Table 11: Frequencies of features of the population of young people who are NEET

Feature	Frequency (n=763)
Eligible for free school meals	175
Risk of Under Achievement	172
LDD - Other	150
Home-life issues	127
Emotional Well-being issues	117
Housing issues	102
Risk of Drop out	91
Unclear career routes	74
School Alternative Curriculum	66
YOT support	64
Care Leaver	56

Feature	Frequency (n=763)
School Non Attender	46
School Intermittent Attender	44
School Action support	44
Parent	35
Pregnant	35
School Disruptive	35
Substance Misuser	32
Health Problems	30
CAF Confirmed	23
CAF Closed	23
Refugee	22
CAF Potential	21
EU Migrant	18
Looked After Child	15
English Support	10
Assessment: CIN	7
Parent Not Caring for own Child	5
Traveller	4
Probation support	4
Statemented	2
Carer	2
Non-EU Migrant	2
CAF Stepped up	2
In Care Other	1
School Action Plus support	0

6.3 Contacts with young people who are NEET

From the records provided by PAs about their contacts with these young people, overall totals of contacts were collated. These are shown in Table 12.

Table 12: Contacts between PAs and young people who were NEET

Texts through CCIS		Texts not through CCIS		Telephone			Emails through CCIS		Emails not through CCIS		Facebook		Letter	
Sent	Received	Sent	Received	Client contact	Parent/family contact	No contact	Sent	Received	Sent	Received	Contact	No contact	Sent	Received
2927	0	205	151	882	402	1250	24	1	86	5	69	0	1011	0

From these data it is clear that levels of making contact and levels of receiving contact are quite different for the different forms of communication employed. Response level can be viewed by using a simple ratio of items received to items sent. These ratios are shown in Table 13.

Table 13: Ratios of items received to items sent for each form of communication employed

Form of communication	Ratio of items received to items sent
Texts not through CCIS	0.74
Telephone	0.51
Emails not through CCIS	0.06
Emails through CCIS	0.04
Texts through CCIS	0
Facebook	0
Letter	0

These ratios indicate that texts not sent through the CCIS, and telephone, are by far the most effective media in terms of response ratios. However, this assumes that all the responses sent by young people as replies to texts or emails sent through the CCIS are collected or reported through the CCIS, that young people have access to technologies to enable each of these forms of communication in order that they can receive and respond to messages at times appropriate to their and their PA's needs, and that PAs use the different forms of communication equally or in the same or similar ways. Using a ratio of this form also assumes that the form of media used to send a message also generates a response in the same form; it is perfectly feasible that this might not always be the case, although it would certainly be felt to be likely perhaps in the cases of telephone, email, text messaging and Facebook responses. But, as the Data Systems Manager in Connexions Bradford confirms, "young people may reply to a text in a non-text way – often the text is encouraging them to call in or ring someone". He also confirms that "Facebook is very new to Connexions; there is no way of automatically recording Facebook contacts so we're reliant on the advisers recording it after/separately to making contact on Facebook". This fact explains the ratio of items received compared to items sent being scored as a zero.

6.4 Contacts with young people who are in non-employed training

From the data set provided, records detailed features of 351 young people who were categorised as in non-employed training on the day the data were sent. From records provided by PAs about contacts with these young people, overall totals of contacts were collated. These are shown in Table 14.

Table 14: Contacts between PAs and young people who were unemployed

Texts through CCIS		Texts not through CCIS		Telephone			Emails through CCIS		Emails not through CCIS		Facebook		Letter	
Sent	Received	Sent	Received	Client contact	Parent/family contact	No contact	Sent	Received	Sent	Received	Contact	No contact	Sent	Received
874	0	100	94	392	151	350	4	0	24	9	39	0	294	0

From these data it is clear that levels of making contact and levels of receiving contact are again quite different for the different forms of communication employed. Response level can again be viewed by using a simple ratio of items received to items sent. These ratios are shown in Table 15.

Table 15: Ratios of items received to items sent for each form of communication employed

Form of communication	Ratio of items received to items sent
Texts not through CCIS	**0.94**
Telephone	**0.61**
Emails not through CCIS	**0.38**
Emails through CCIS	**0**
Texts through CCIS	**0**
Facebook	**0**
Letter	**0**

These ratios indicate that texts not sent through the CCIS, telephone, and emails not sent through the CCIS are by far the most effective media in terms of response ratios. The zero-rated ratio for Facebook contacts is explained by the lack of automatic records being set up in the CCIS. In terms of the zero-rated ratio for letters, as the Data Systems Manager in Connexions Bradford says, "Young people don't write letters". Overall, an interpretation of the results again assumes that all the response data are collected or reported through the CCIS, that young people have access to technologies to enable each

of these forms of communication, and that PAs use the different forms of communication equally or in the same or similar ways. This latter point will be picked up in the next section of this report.

Comparing the response ratios of young people who are NEET with young people who are in non-employed training, it is notable that although the response ratios for some forms of communication are at the same level, there are also certain differences for young people who are in non-employed training:

- Email contact not through CCIS is higher (by a value ratio of 0.32).
- Text not through CCIS is higher (by a ratio value of 0.2).
- Telephone response rate is higher (by a ratio value of 0.1).
- Email contact through CCIS is lower (by a ratio value of 0.04).

7. PERSONAL ASSISTANTS AND THEIR FORMS OF COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS

7.1 Exploring uses of digital technologies by personal assistants to maintain communication

Clearly an important element that needs to be taken into consideration when possible relationships between forms of communication and characteristics of young people are being explored is the way or ways that PAs communicate with their clients. If certain forms of communication are not used by PAs, then opportunities for using these forms by young people is limited. The survey sent to PAs in August 2012 asked them to indicate the forms of digital technologies that they used for communication, and how frequently or routinely they used these (the Appendix shows a copy of the survey instrument used and the specific questions asked).

In total 33 PAs were asked if they would complete a survey and 10 returned completed surveys. They were asked whether they used texts (via the CCIS), texts (not via the CCIS, but from their own mobile telephone), telephone, email (via the CCIS), email (not via the CCIS), and Facebook, and whether they used these 'a lot', 'sometimes', 'rarely', or 'never'. Their responses are shown in Table 16 following.

Table 15: Regularity of uses of digital technologies by PAs for communicating with clients (N=10)

Digital technology used	A lot	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Use texts (via CCIS)	6	1	2	1
Use texts (not via CCIS, but from your mobile)	6	0	1	2
Use telephone	10	0	0	0
Use email (via CCIS)	0	4	3	3
Use email (not via CCIS)	0	5	3	1
Use Facebook	4	1	0	5

These data show that, for this sample:

- The telephone is the most ubiquitous form of technology used to maintain communication.
- Texts, either via the CCIS or via a personal mobile telephone, are popular.
- Email is used infrequently.
- Facebook is already used a great deal by half of these respondents.

8. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE AND RELATED USES OF TECHNOLOGY

8.1 Exploring possible relationships between features of young people who are NEET and their uses of digital technologies to maintain communication

Using the forms of coded data of features for young people who are NEET, the data were analysed within the statistical package IBM SPSS. Data were analysed using crosstab analyses initially.

A simple way to consider relationship is to identify the number of communications received using different forms of technologies by each young person and comparing these to certain specific personal features. In drawing conclusions from this form of analysis, however, it should be noted that the figures generated need to be considered in the context of levels of communication used by PAs. Table 12 indicates that text messaging is used widely by PAs (3,132 texts were sent), telephone contacts were used widely (2,534 contacts were attempted), email was used far less (110 emails were sent), and Facebook was used least often (69 contacts were made).

From the crosstab analyses, in terms of text messages received:

- More were received from 17 and 18 year old young people, but more were also sent to these age groups.
- More were received from females, yet more were sent to males.
- More were received from those with the lowest academic levels, and from those achieving level 2 qualifications, with again more being sent to these groups.
- More were received from those interested in childcare, teaching assistant and nursery nursing, and clerical, secretarial and business administration.

In terms of successful telephone contacts:

- More arose with the 17 and 18 year old young people, but more were also made with these age groups.
- More were gained with males, but more were made with this group.
- Most were gained with those achieving level 2 qualifications, but also those with no qualifications, those achieving level 1 qualifications, and those likely to achieve level 1 and level 2 qualifications.
- More were gained with those interested in hairdressing, motor mechanics (cars, buses and lorries), as well as sales, retail and customer service.

In terms of emails received:

- More were received from the 18 year old age group.
- More were received from females, but the numbers were very small.
- More were received from those with no qualifications, and those with level 1 qualifications and those with level 2 qualifications, but the numbers in all cases were small.
- There were no discernible patterns for messages received according to occupational interest.

Patterns of communication responses from groups characterised through other features were also explored. Total numbers of young people from whom communications were received, and the total numbers in these groups, are shown in Table 17.

Table 17: Absolute levels of responses with different forms of digital communication related to personal features

Personal feature	Number in this category	Number where there were successful telephone contacts	Number where there were emails received	Number where there were texts received
Eligible for free school meals	175	-	-	-
Risk of Under Achievement	172	-	-	-
LDD Other	150	83	1	22
Home-life issues	127	81	1	22
Emotional Well-being issues	117	-	-	-
Housing issues	102	69	-	16
Risk of Drop out	91	-	-	-
Unclear career routes	74	-	-	-
School Alternative Curriculum	66	-	-	-
YOT support	64	36	-	10
Care Leaver	56	32	-	12
School Non Attender	46	30	-	7
School Intermittent Attender	44	21	-	4
School Action support	44	-	-	-
Parent	35	19	-	5
Pregnant	35	19	-	5
School Disruptive	35	15	1	8
Substance Misuser	32	17	-	5
Health Problems	30	-	-	-
CAF Confirmed	23	-	-	-
CAF Closed	23	-	-	-
Refugee	22	10	-	2
CAF Potential	21	-	-	-
EU Migrant	18	-	-	-
Looked After Child	15	11	-	4
English Support	10	4	-	1
Assessment: CIN	7	3	-	-
Parent Not Caring for own Child	5	-	-	-
Traveller	4	3	-	1
Probation support	4	-	-	-
Statemented	2	-	-	-
Carer	2	-	-	-
Non-EU Migrant	2	-	-	-
CAF Stepped up	2	-	-	-
In Care Other	1	-	-	-
School Action Plus support	0	-	-	-

From these data, it appears that certain groups are responding more commonly by text messaging. Particularly, these are those young people:

- With other learning difficulties or disabilities.
- With home-life issues.
- With housing issues.
- Supported by the youth offending team.
- Who are care leavers.
- Not attending school.
- Who are school disruptive.
- Who are looked after children.

8.2 Correlation analyses

Data were also analysed using correlation statistics within the IBM SPSS package. As the coded data were not continuous, a Spearman's correlation test was selected for undertaking the correlation analyses.

The analyses considered the relationship of numbers of responses of the different forms of communication compared to each of the other variables. Relationships with a coefficient of 0.4 or more, and statistically significant at a level of p=0.05 or less, would indicate a strong relationship. However, none of the findings produced outcomes at this level.

Nevertheless, two interesting indicators did emerge:

- PAs appear to send more text messages as the age of the young people increases.
- Facebook contacts appear to be made often with young people who have other learning difficulties or disabilities.

Analyses that attempt to relate individual characteristics to levels of communication are not, of course, considering the 'whole person', and are not considering the person from a 'readiness' or 'support' perspective. To do this, a different form of grouping is needed, which relies upon a way to categorise a young person within a more holistic context.

8.3 Grouping of young people into support categories

A key outcome of a study in 2008 identified four categories of young people who are NEET (Passey, Williams and Rogers, 2008), which relate to their background characteristics and to ways to support their needs:

- EERs: This group would include those who churn in and out of low level jobs and training courses of one kind or another but who need help finding more sustainable employment. It would also include those in periods of transition who have chosen or are mapping out a path (for example, waiting for a course to start, travelling before settling down to a job). Others might be job-ready but geographically isolated and living in locations where there is no work or public transport, temporarily sick, or unable to afford childcare. They are ready for employment or education but unable to achieve it for extrinsic reasons.

- NEERs: This group are nearly ready for employment or training and may need help with things like application forms, transport, finding a suitable opening, upgrading or improving their skills, gaining confidence, learning to relate to others, improving their behaviour and becoming better at managing relationships at work. It may also include immigrants with good employment skills but poor English language skills, or those with some kinds of disabilities.

- MULPs: This group have multiple long-term problems which will include several of the following: mental illness, criminality, drug and alcohol dependence, debt, poor housing, low basic skills, challenging behaviour, disadvantaged family backgrounds, poor neighbourhoods, low expectations, second or third generation unemployment, chronic illness and disability (including special learning needs), being a care-leaver, and homelessness. These young people need the intensive intervention of a number of agencies. For this group, lack of employment or education is not the key issue and their other problems need addressing before they will be ready to hold down a job or successfully complete a training course.

- ALTs: These are the young people who have chosen alternative lifestyles. It will include those who: are concentrating on developing self-employed careers in arts or music; are setting up a business which has not yet proved successful; have chosen motherhood as an option and intend to

stay at home while children are small; or are working in the family business and not seeking outside employment.

These categories were shared with Connexions Bradford PAs, who were asked to categorise young people in these ways for the clients they were supporting. From the 10 PAs completing and returning a survey, their responses to placing their clients in the four different support categories are shown in Table 18 following.

Table 18: Numbers of young people in each support category across a sample (N=109)

Support category	EER	NEER	MULP	ALT
Frequency	46	25	32	6

PAs identified the support categories on the basis of their experiences for these 109 young people. Of these, the greatest number was education and employment ready (EER), while the smallest number was those choosing alternative lifestyles (ALT).

An analysis was undertaken to explore possible relationships between the support category and methods of communication deployed. To undertake the analysis, a number of variables provided by the PAs were coded as follows:

- Use texts (via CCIS) (1=a lot; 2=sometimes; 3=rarely; 4=never).
- Use texts (not via CCIS, but from your mobile) (1=a lot; 2=sometimes; 3=rarely; 4=never).
- Use telephone (1=a lot; 2=sometimes; 3=rarely; 4=never).
- Use email (via CCIS) (1=a lot; 2=sometimes; 3=rarely; 4=never).
- Use email (not via CCIS) (1=a lot; 2=sometimes; 3=rarely; 4=never).
- Use Facebook (1=a lot; 2=sometimes; 3=rarely; 4=never).
- Support category (1=EER; 2=NEER; 3=MULP; 4=ALT).

Using these codes, the data were exported into the IBM package SPSS. A crosstabs analysis was run, together with a correlation test. The correlation test chosen was Spearman's Rank Correlation as the data were considered to be nearest to ordinals. This test looked at possible relationships between the support category and each of the other variables. Table 19 following shows the results.

Table 19: Correlation scores associated with forms of communication and support categories of young people

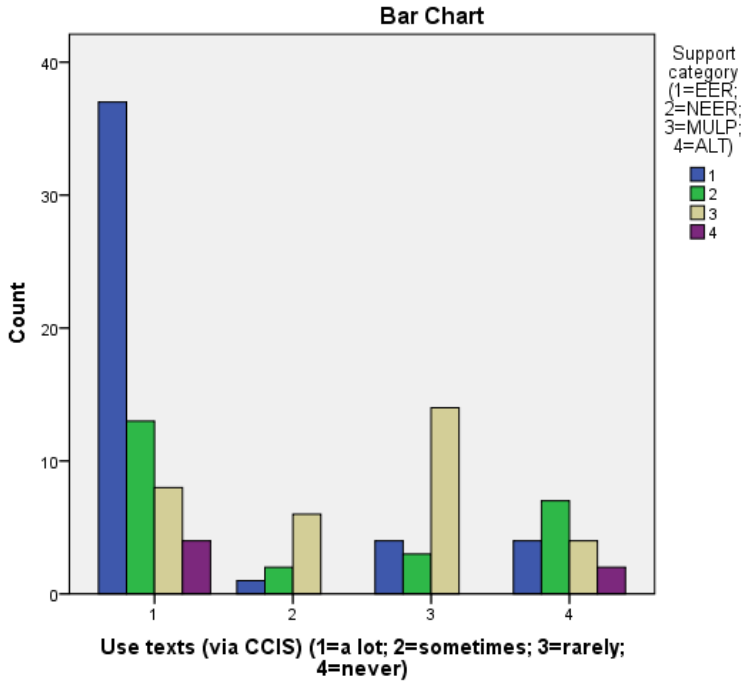
Correlation test	Spearman's Rank Correlation Score	Significance (*p*)
Use texts (via CCIS)	.359	.000
Use texts (not via CCIS, but from your mobile)	-.286	.003
Use telephone	-	-
Use email (via CCIS)	.452	.000
Use email (not via CCIS)	-.061	.530
Use Facebook	.419	.000

These data indicate that:

- The telephone is used widely by all PAs, so any possible relationship with support categories cannot be established using this form of analysis.
- There is no relationship indicated between email not used via CCIS and support categories.
- All other variables except the two listed directly above are associated with support categories in a statistically significant way (where p=0.05 or less).
- In three of these cases, the rank scoring is sufficiently high to indicate a fairly strong association (where the score is 0.35 or above).

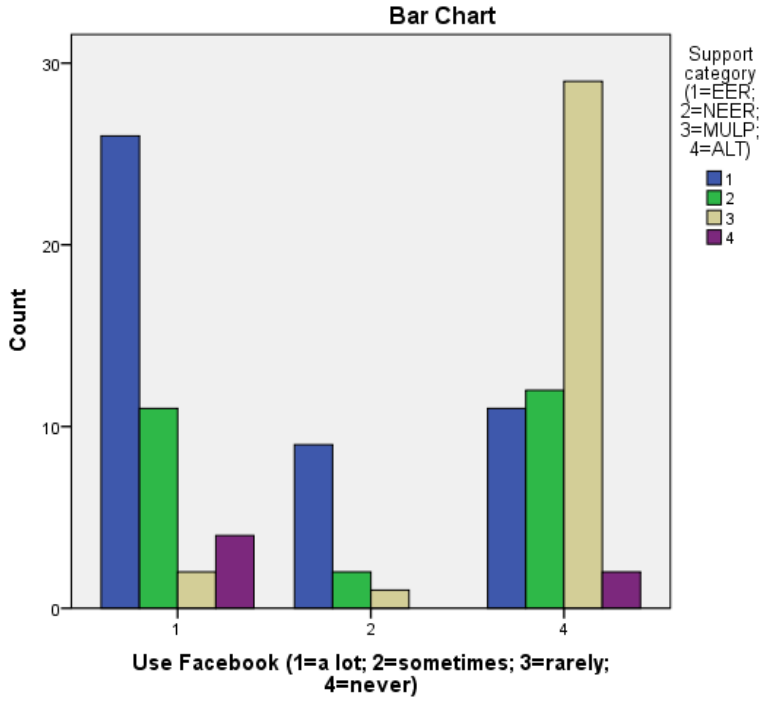
In the case of texts (via CCIS) against support category, the score indicates a positive association, where text via CCIS is used a lot with the EER category, and increasingly less as the support category moves to young people who are considered to be ALT. This is illustrated in Figure 1 following.

Figure 1: Frequency of uses of texts via the CCIS by support category



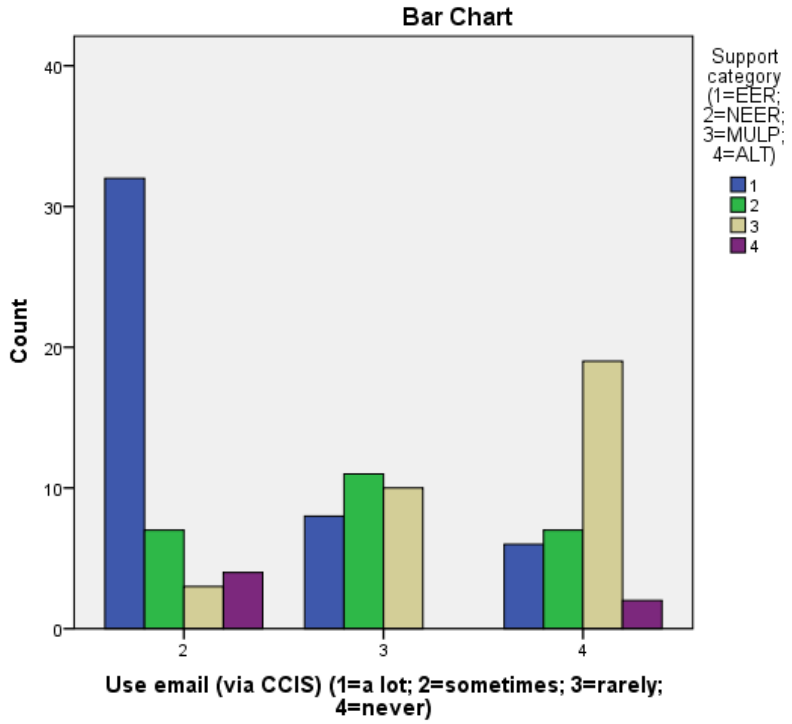
In the case of Facebook against support category, the score indicates again a positive association, where Facebook is used a lot with the EER category, and increasing less as the support category moves to young people who considered to be ALT. This is illustrated in Figure 2 following.

Figure 2: Frequency of uses of Facebook by support category



In the case of email (via CCIS) against support category, the score indicates yet again a positive association, where email via CCIS is used a lot with the EER category, and increasing less as the support category moves to young people who considered to be ALT. This is illustrated in Figure 3 following.

Figure 3: Frequency of uses of email via the CCIS by support category



These associations and results all indicate that PAs have communicated most using texts via CCIS, Facebook, and email via CCIS with young people who are categorised as EER, and least using these mechanisms for young people who are categorised as ALT.

So are there any communication mechanisms that are used more for the other three support categories – NEER, MULP and ALT? In Table 20 following, the modal value of use of each specific form of communication when it is 'a lot' or 'sometimes' is shown against each support category.

Table 20: Modal value (level) of uses of digital technologies by PAs for each support category

Communication method	EER	NEER	MULP	ALT
Use texts (via CCIS)	1	1	-	1
Use texts (not via CCIS, but from your mobile)	-	1	1	-
Use telephone	1	1	1	1
Use email (via CCIS)	2	-	-	2
Use email (not via CCIS)	-	2	-	-
Use Facebook	1	-	-	1

Apart from the use of the telephone, which is ubiquitous as a means of communication across this sample, these data indicate that PAs use:

- Texts via the CCIS and Facebook to maintain contact with the EER category.
- Texts via the CCIS and texts via a personal mobile telephone to maintain contact with the NEER category.
- Texts via a personal mobile telephone to maintain contact with the MULP category.
- Texts via the CCIS and Facebook to maintain contact with the ALT category.

8.4 Features of young people and how PAs have used the support categories

An interesting point here is to consider any possible match between features that PAs need to record about young people, and the support categories into which they have placed the young people. So, what might be shown to indicate features of young people associated with the selection made by the PAs in placing these young people into support categories? Matching the responses provided by PAs with data from the CCIS data set, frequencies of the various features and characteristics were identified for each of the four support categories. The results are shown in Table 21 following. In describing the elements in the table, certain general terms have been used – 'a very small number' indicates below about one-sixth, 'a few' indicates about one-sixth, 'many' indicates a common level of response, and 'most' indicates the majority by comparison to all responses.

Table 21: Features or characteristics associated with each support category

Feature or characteristic	Support category EER	Support category NEER	Support category MULP	Support category ALT
Age	Some are 16 years of age, but there are increasingly more in the 17 and 18 year age groups	Most are 17 or 18 years of age	Most are 17 or 18 years of age	Most are 17 years of age
Gender	Most are male, but about a third are female	Most are male, with about a quarter female	About half are male and half are female	All are female
Ethnicity	Most are White British	Most are White British	Most are White British	Most are White British
Academic Level	Most have a Predicted Level 1 or have Achieved Level 1	Most have Achieved Level 1, but some have no qualifications at all	Many have no qualifications at all, but some have a Predicted Level 1 or have Achieved Level 1	Qualifications range from Predicted Level 1, with most at Achieved Level 1, and some at Predicted Level 2, to Achieved Level 2
First Job Choice	The most common categories are Childcare, teaching assistant and nursery nursing, Plumbing, heating and ventilating or Sales, retail and customer service	The most common categories are Catering: cooking/food prep/chef, Construction (operative level), or Sales, retail and customer service	First choices are very varied, but the most common category is Motor mechanics 1 (cars/buses/lorries)	The most common category is Childcare, teaching assistant and nursery nursing
Care Leaver	Very few are care leavers	Some are care leavers	About a fifth are care leavers	None are care leavers
Looked After Child	None are looked after	A few are looked after	A few are looked after	None are looked after
English Support	None are receiving English support	None are receiving English support	A very small number are receiving English support	Some are receiving English support
Refugee	None are refugees	None are refugees	A very small number are refugees	Some are refugees
Substance Misuser	Some are substance misusers	A few are substance misusers	A few are substance misusers	None are substance misusers
Parent	Very few are parents	Very few are parents	A few are parents	A few are parents
Housing issues	About a quarter have housing issues	About a fifth have housing issues	About a third have housing issues	A few have housing issues
YOT support	A few are supported by the YOT	About a third are supported by the YOT	About a fifth are supported by the YOT	None are supported by the YOT

Feature or characteristic	Support category EER	Support category NEER	Support category MULP	Support category ALT
Traveller	A very small number are travellers	None are travellers	None are travellers	None are travellers
Pregnant	A few are pregnant	A few are pregnant	A few are pregnant	A few are pregnant
LDD Other	Many have learning disabilities or disorders	About a quarter have learning disabilities or disorders	Almost a half have learning disabilities or disorders	None have learning disabilities or disorders
Home-life issues	About a quarter have home-life issues	A few have home-life issues	About a half have home-life issues	Some have home-life issues
School Non Attender	A few are school non-attenders	A few are school non-attenders	A few are school non-attenders	None are school non-attenders
School Intermittent Attender	A very small number are school intermittent attenders	A few are school intermittent attenders	A few are school intermittent attenders	None are school intermittent attenders
School Disruptive	A few are school disruptive	A few are school disruptive	A few are school disruptive	None are school disruptive
School Alternative Curriculum	About a fifth have an alternative school curriculum	About a fifth have an alternative school curriculum	A few have an alternative school curriculum	None have an alternative school curriculum
Risk of Under Achievement	Over a quarter are at risk of under-achievement	About a quarter are at risk of under-achievement	Over a third are at risk of under-achievement	Some are at risk of under-achievement
Health Problems	A very small number have health problems	A few have health problems	About a fifth have health problems	A few have health problems
Probation support	None are on probation	None are on probation	A few are on probation	None are on probation
Risk of Dropout	About a third are at risk of drop-out	A very small number are at risk of drop-out	A few are at risk of drop-out	A few are at risk of drop-out
School Action support	A few are supported by School Action	A few are supported by School Action	A very small number are supported by School Action	None are supported by School Action
Free School Meals	About a quarter are eligible for free school meals	About a third are eligible for free school meals	Over a third are eligible for free school meals	None are eligible for free school meals
EU Migrant	None are EU migrants	None are EU migrants	A few are EU migrants	A few are EU migrants
Parent Not Caring for own Child	A very small number are a parent not caring for their own child	None are a parent not caring for their own child	None are a parent not caring for their own child	None are a parent not caring for their own child
Emotional Well-being issues	About a quarter have emotional well-being issues	About a quarter have emotional well-being issues	Nearly a half have emotional well-being issues	A few have emotional well-being issues
CAF Potential	A very small number have a CAF at the potential stage	None have a CAF at the potential stage	A few have a CAF at the potential stage	None have a CAF at the potential stage
CAF Confirmed	A very small number have a CAF at the confirmed stage	A very small number have a CAF at the confirmed stage	A few have a CAF at the confirmed stage	None have a CAF at the confirmed stage
CAF Closed	A very small number have a CAF at the closed stage	A few have a CAF at the closed stage	None have a CAF at the closed stage	None have a CAF at the closed stage
Use of texts (via CCIS)	Most are likely to use texts a lot (PAs	About half are likely to use texts	Some are likely to use texts via CCIS	Many are likely to use texts via CCIS

Feature or characteristic	Support category EER	Support category NEER	Support category MULP	Support category ALT
	have used CCIS for this)	via CCIS		
Use of texts (not via CCIS, but from your mobile)	Texts from personal mobile telephones have also been used	About half are likely to use texts from personal mobile telephones	Most are likely to use texts from personal mobile telephones	Some are likely to use texts from personal mobile telephones
Use of telephone	Contact via the telephone has been used a lot	Contact via the telephone has been used a lot	Contact via the telephone has been used a lot	Contact via the telephone has been used a lot
Use of email (via CCIS)	Likely to use email to some extent (PAs have used CCIS for this)	Some may use email via CCIS	Not likely to use email via CCIS	Some may use email via CCIS
Use of email (not via CCIS)	Other email has not been used a lot	Some use email that is not via CCIS on some occasions	Not likely to use email that is not via CCIS	Some use email that is not via CCIS on some occasions
Use of Facebook	Likely to use Facebook a lot	Some use Facebook on some occasions	Not likely to use Facebook	Many are likely to use Facebook
N	44	25	32	6

In the table above, highlighted cells or points within cells indicate key elements that vary from other descriptions in cells in that row. These may be pointers to features or characteristics that could be potential indicators. However, with relatively small numbers of individuals being studied, and with only a single sample to view, these potential indicators might vary from those arising from other samples. So, some caution needs to be taken, although experiences of PAs in viewing these potential indicators could be a useful way to further validate them. At the bottom of the table, experiences of PAs and the evidence drawn from response rates has been used to suggest likely ways that the different support groups would use digital technologies for communication purposes.

Using evidence in the table, it is possible to suggest potential indicators and pointers, as well as possible uses of digital technologies:

- The EER category: 16 year old young people tend to fall into this category; most are predicted to achieve at Level 1; common first choice jobs are childcare, teaching assistants and nursery nursing as well as plumbing, heating and ventilating and sales, retail and customer service; some are substance misusers; a very small number are travellers; a very small number have health problems; about a third are at risk of drop-out; and a very small number are a parent not caring for a child. They are likely to use texts a lot and Facebook a lot.
- The NEER category: are mostly male; most have achieved Level 1; common first choice jobs are catering, cooking, food preparation as well as construction at an operative level; a good number are supported by the YOT; a few have home-life issues; and a very small number are at risk of drop-out. They are likely to use texts a lot, and some may use email.
- The MULP category: many have no qualifications at all; common first choice jobs are motor mechanics; a good number are care leavers; a good number have housing issues; very many have learning disabilities or disorders; many have home-life issues; many are at risk of under-achievement; a good number have health problems; a few are supported by the probation service; a good number are eligible for free school meals; a few are EU migrants; and many have emotional well-being health issues. They are likely to use texts from personal mobile telephones.
- The ALT category: most are 17 years of age; they are female; their qualifications range from predicted Level 1 to Achieved Level 2; common first choice jobs are childcare, teaching assistants and nursery nursing; none are care leavers; some receive English support; some are refugees; none are substance misusers; a few have housing issues; none are supported by the YOT; none have learning disabilities or disorders; none are school non-attenders, or

intermittent attenders, or have an alternative curriculum; some are at risk of under-achievement; none are supported by School Action; none are eligible for free school meals; a few are EU migrants; a few have emotional well-being issues; and none have a CAF at the confirmed stage. They are likely to use texts, and some may use email.

9. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Conclusions

From existing research, we know little about possible relationships between individual characteristics of young people who are not in education, training or employment (NEET) and how they interact with specific technologies to communicate and interact with support agencies. This key issue was the main focus of the study reported here.

Using digital technologies to maintain contact with young people would appear to be potentially advantageous. Young people who are hard to reach or vulnerable often use digital technologies routinely for communication, so, for PAs, these digital technologies provide potential opportunities to engage with young people (including using social media such as Twitter and Facebook), to enhance the levels and qualities of their interactions.

This study has identified a range of trends and associations, in how PAs use digital technologies, and in the responses from their clients when using these different technologies. These associations focus on forms of digital technologies and individual characteristics and features of the young people, and how they relate to support categories (EER, NEER, ALT and MULP).

This report details findings from a small-scale study supported by Prospects and Connexions Bradford. At the time this study was undertaken, Connexions Bradford were supporting uses of mobile telephone, texting, email and Facebook facilities to maintain contacts with young people. To undertake the study, a data set was identified and provided by Connexions Bradford from their data (CCIS) service. Agreed background characteristics of young people were identified, detailed and provided anonymously. Details of technologies used were also gathered as a part of the study.

From data provided, records detailed features of 763 young people who were categorised as NEET on the day the data were produced. Of these young people, 81 were 16 years of age, 360 were 17 years of age, and 322 were 18 years of age. In terms of gender, 345 were female, and 418 were male. The ethnic origin of the majority of this population of young people was White British, but with a significant number of young people of Pakistani ethnic origin. Although many young people in this population had no qualifications at all, more had achieved level 2 and level 1 qualifications. The first choice occupation of the young people varied widely, but the most common first choices were: childcare, teaching assistant and nursery nursing; sales, retail and customer service; motor mechanics (cars, buses and lorries); and clerical, secretarial and business administration. Eligibility for free school meals, risk of under achievement, and having learning difficulties and disabilities, home-life issues, emotional well-being issues and housing issues existed in some 12.5% or more of this population.

Across a sample of 10 Connexions Bradford PAs, telephones were the most ubiquitous form of technology used to maintain communication. Texts, either via the CCIS or via a personal mobile telephone, were popular, email was used infrequently, but Facebook was already used a great deal by half of these PAs. It was not clear why some forms of communication were used more frequently than others, but this could have been affected by past use and PAs being more used to using certain digital technologies, or the ease with which this could be done and how it related to records and facilities within the CCIS, or past experiences of PAs of how effective these different forms were felt to be.

Texts not sent through the CCIS and telephone contacts were by far the most effective communication media in terms of response ratios (comparing responses from clients to messages sent). Comparing the response ratios of young people who were NEET with young people who were in non-employed training, it was notable that although the response ratios for some forms of communication were at the same level, there were also certain differences. For young people who were in non-employed training: email contact not through CCIS was higher (by a value ratio of 0.32); text not through CCIS was

higher (by a ratio value of 0.2); the telephone response rate was higher (by a ratio value of 0.1); and email contact through CCIS was lower (by a ratio value of 0.04).

In terms of text messages received from clients: more were received from 17 and 18 year old young people, but more were also sent to these age groups; more were received from females, yet more were sent to males; more were received from those with the lowest academic levels, and from those achieving level 2 qualifications, with again more being sent to these groups; and more were received from those interested in childcare, teaching assistant work and nursery nursing, and clerical, secretarial and business administration.

In terms of successful telephone contacts: more arose with the 17 and 18 year old young people, but more were also made with these age groups; more were gained with males, but more were made with this group; most were gained with those achieving level 2 qualifications, but also those with no qualifications, those achieving level 1 qualifications, and those likely to achieve level 1 and level 2 qualifications; and more were gained with those interested in hairdressing, motor mechanics (cars, buses and lorries), as well as sales, retail and customer service.

In terms of emails received from clients: more were received from the 18 year old age group; more were received from females, but the numbers were very small; more were received from those with no qualifications, and those with level 1 qualifications and those with level 2 qualifications, but the numbers in all cases were small; and there were no discernible patterns for messages received according to occupational interest.

Receipts from Facebook contacts were not automatically recorded in the CCIS data base, so evidence of this form of communication medium could not be explored in the same way.

It was clear that certain groups of clients were responding more commonly by text messaging. Particularly, these were those young people: with learning difficulties or disabilities; with home-life issues; with housing issues; supported by the youth offending team; those who were care leavers; not attending school; who were school disruptive; and who were looked after children.

When relationships between uses of digital technologies by PAs and characteristics of young people were explored, two interesting indicators emerged: PAs appeared to send more text messages as the age of the young people increased; and Facebook contacts appeared to be made often with young people who had learning difficulties or disabilities. The telephone was used widely by all PAs, so any possible relationship with specific features or characteristics could not be established using this form of analysis.

As a part of the study, PAs were asked to use a support categorisation to place their clients who were NEET into four different groups: education and employment ready (EER); nearly education and employment ready (NEER); those with multiple long-term problems (MULP); and those choosing alternative lifestyles (ALT). From correlation analyses applied to data against this categorisation, there was no relationship indicated between email not used via CCIS and these support categories. But some associations emerged: PAs communicated most using texts via CCIS, Facebook, and email via CCIS with young people who were categorised as EER; and least using these mechanisms for young people who were categorised as ALT (choosing alternative lifestyles).

Overall, PAs used texts via the CCIS and Facebook to maintain contact with those clients in the EER category; texts via the CCIS and texts via a personal mobile telephone to maintain contact with the NEER category; texts via a personal mobile telephone to maintain contact with the MULP category; and texts via the CCIS and Facebook to maintain contact with the ALT category.

From evidence across the study, a number of potential indicators and pointers, as well as possible uses of digital technologies according to client support categories were suggested:

- For the EER category: 16 year old young people tended to fall into this category; most were predicted to achieve at level 1; common first choice jobs were childcare, teaching assistants and nursery nursing as well as plumbing, heating and ventilating and sales, retail and customer service; some were substance misusers; a very small number were travellers; a very small number had health problems; about a third were at risk of drop-out; and a very small number were a parent not caring for their own child. They were likely to use texts a lot and Facebook a lot.
- For the NEER category: they were mostly male; most had achieved level 1; common first choice jobs were catering, cooking, food preparation as well as construction at an operative level; a good number were supported by the youth offending team (YOT); a few had home-life issues; and a very small number were at risk of drop-out. They were likely to use texts a lot, and some might use email.
- For the MULP category: many had no qualifications at all; common first choice jobs were motor mechanics; a good number were care leavers; a good number had housing issues; very many had learning disabilities or disorders; many had home-life issues; many were at risk of under-achievement; a good number had health problems; a few were supported by the probation service; a good number were eligible for free school meals; a few were EU migrants; and many had emotional well-being health issues. They were likely to use texts from personal mobile telephones.
- For the ALT category: most were 17 years of age; they were female; their qualifications ranged from predicted level 1 to achieved at level 2; common first choice jobs were childcare, teaching assistants and nursery nursing; none were care leavers; some received English language support; some were refugees; none were substance misusers; a few had housing issues; none were supported by the YOT; none had learning disabilities or disorders; none were school non-attenders, or intermittent attenders, or had an alternative curriculum; some were at risk of under-achievement; none were supported by School Action; none were eligible for free school meals; a few were EU migrants; a few had emotional well-being issues; and none had a common assessment framework (CAF) at the confirmed stage. They were likely to use texts, and some might use email.

9.2 Implications

While a number of trends and associations have been identified through this study, for developing wider and more effective practice, there is clearly scope to take a number of aspects to support the identification of further details. The findings in this report relate to a specific population. It would be of value to extend the study to see if different samples and wider populations would produce the same or different outcomes. Findings from this wider study would allow a much greater refinement of application to practice.

The study has demonstrated that the support categorisation provided is indeed a model that can be used and applied by PAs. While associations between uses of digital technologies by the young people and their positions on this support categorisation have been identified, there is clear scope for widening the use of the support categorisation model to gather wider evidence that would lead to more detailed outcomes.

A number of implications arise from the report that relate at a more detailed level. For example, it is likely to be important to establish whether the reasons for email and texts being linked to and arising from the CCIS more or less frequently than through a personal mobile telephone or email were due to the ease with which PAs were able to initiate these, or whether it was due to other factors such as past experience with using the facilities in a particular way, or how it related to records within the CCIS, or whether it was due to past experiences of effective outcomes. It could also relate to whether certain

types of contact details such as personal mobile numbers were more up to date than email addresses for some clients, and how easy it was for contact through the CCIS to be maintained if texts or emails were sent from a remote rather than an office location.

The research findings suggest that there could well be implications for the future design and potential improvement of the CCIS system. Some further exploration of these issues and implications would be worth considering further. It would be helpful to know more about, for example, the ways in which Facebook might be linked to the CCIS in the future. The ways in which a CCIS might be able to target vacancy information for young people, offer bulk messaging, and link to polling or surveys, are all issues worth exploring further.

It is clear that many of the young people are using different digital technology devices. However, it would be useful for planning effective communications in the future if there was an update of the original research (Passey, Williams and Rogers, 2008) that looked at types of communication device that young people who are NEET have and what they use them for. The survey questionnaires used in the original research could be brought up to date, and with the cooperation of Bradford Connexions offices and personnel, these could be issued and completed in similar ways to those in the original research.

Many young people are clearly using text messaging for communication purposes. In developing mobile telephone applications for supporting communications in the future, one implication is that application development needs to consider a widely inclusive approach, and that standard text alerts might be potentially more useful to young people without smartphones or without internet access from their mobile telephone.

The factor of choice of communication medium for young people is potentially important. If this is the case, then PAs need to be both familiar with and willing to use all of the possible devices that are accessible to them and to young people. Some of the findings in this study about patterns of use by both PAs and their clients might well be arising from PAs driving the choice of technologies by their own preferences rather than those of the young people. Across the 10 PAs involved in the study directly, there appeared to be differences in levels of use of different technologies, but uses across all forms of digital communication media were also common across this group.

In this study, effectiveness was concerned with communication. It was measured by the extent of communication from PAs and the ratio of responses received. It is possible for other forms of effectiveness to be explored in the future. A more useful outcome to measure effectiveness might be the level of movement from young people who are NEET to the status of being in education, employment or training. This could be achieved through a further longitudinal study, to identify NEET status over time and to relate it to forms of communication. This could be achieved by looking at the status of each individual on the last day of each month for a period of between 6 to 9 months. The hypothesis to be tested would be whether those with more frequent interaction using particular technologies remain NEET for a shorter period of time.

In terms of the findings relating to the four different support categories (EER, NEER, ALT and MULP), those in the NEER category were largely male and those in the ALT category were largely female (and this could possibly be culturally specific to Bradford, although most of this group were of White British ethnic background). Those in the NEER group are likely to need support with certain skills (most had achieved level 1, but some had no qualifications), and these were likely to include communication skills (shown in the findings of Passey, Williams and Rogers, 2008). Finding ways to support effective communication skills for this group of young people clearly has implications for the curriculum in schools, and particularly for the non-formal curriculum, where schools might provide additional opportunities to develop teamwork through project work activities to support and engage

this group (such as *Little Big Planet 2 video-games challenges*, *First Lego League*, or *BBC News School Report* for example).

Similarly there are implications arising from the findings about the ALT group. This group was found to be mainly female. Again, from previous research (Passey, Williams and Rogers, 2008), engaging these young women through voluntary work and work involving creativity could be a service response worthy of consideration. Supporting enterprise in the widest sense for this group could also be worthy of further exploration. Such activities would allow participants the autonomy and control they seek, allowing individual expression but involving aspects of social responsibility; this focus would match the social jobs that have featured prominently in the preferred careers of the ALT group.

9.3 Recommendations

From the findings of this study, and taking the implications highlighted into account, the following recommendations are suggested:

- Consider implications for future design and potential improvement of the CCIS system. Initiate discussions with those responsible locally and with the development team to consider future needs and how to maximise support effectiveness. In this respect, the ways in which Facebook might be linked to the CCIS in the future, the ways in which a CCIS might be able to target vacancy information for young people, or offer bulk messaging, or link to polling or surveys are issues worth discussing further.

- Explore further the reasons for email and texts from the CCIS arising more or less frequently than those through a personal mobile telephone or email account. In gaining evidence from PAs about this aspect of their work, whether this is due to ease with which PAs are able to initiate these, whether it is due to factors such as past experience with using the facilities in a particular way, or how it relates to records within the CCIS, or whether it is due to past experiences of effective outcomes, or to other causes should be established. Clarify also whether certain types of contact details such as personal mobile numbers are more up to date than email addresses for some clients, and how easy it is for contact through the CCIS to be maintained if texts or emails are sent from a remote rather than from an office location.

- Gather up-to-date evidence about how young people currently use different digital technology devices. Update the survey questionnaire used in previous research, and seek cooperation of Bradford Connexions offices and personnel to gather evidence from a sample of young people over a restricted period of time.

- Consider implications for developing mobile telephone applications for supporting communications in the future. Consider how standard text alerts might be provided for young people without smartphones or without internet access from their mobile telephones.

- Consider the professional development implications. Identify the extent to which PAs are using the width of digital technologies that are available to them and the levels and forms of professional development that will assist them in moving towards a pattern of use that is determined as much by the young people's choices as it is by their own experiences.

- Undertake a follow-up study that looks at a measure of effectiveness that identifies levels of movement from young people who are NEET to the status of being in education, employment or training. This further longitudinal study should identify NEET status over time and relate it to forms of communication. This can be achieved by looking at the status of each individual on the last day of each month for a period of between 6 to 9 months. The hypothesis to be

tested would be whether those with more frequent interaction using particular technologies remain NEET for a shorter period of time.

- In discussion with school managers, consider ways to enhance effective communication skills for the NEER group of young people. Discuss how this might be achieved through the non-formal curriculum, offering teamwork and project work activities to support and engage this group (such as *Little Big Planet 2 video-games challenges*, *First Lego League*, and *BBC News School Report*, for example).

- In discussion with PAs and school managers, consider ways to engage young women who are ALT through voluntary work and work involving creativity and enterprise. Such activities should allow participants the autonomy and control they seek, allowing individual expression but involving them in working in aspects of social responsibility, such as the social jobs that are featured prominently in preferred careers of the ALT group.

- Consider how to explore relationships further between support categories (EER, NEER, ALT and MULP) and uses of digital technologies, background characteristics of young people, and their life choices. To take the findings in this study further, and to identify findings in different contexts and to consider the wider generalisation of such findings, it would be advantageous to gather evidence from different samples and wider populations. This would allow a much greater refinement of findings and recommendations for practice.

APPENDIX: SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR PAS

Prospects research study - young people and their communication with digital technologies

How do Personal Assistants contact their clients and how do they view their overall training or employment readiness?

Lancaster University has previously undertaken research exploring areas concerned with careers and young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET). Prospects is currently supporting Lancaster University with a new research study, looking at ways that young people communicate with their PAs using different types of digital technologies.

We need your help with the research, and would like to ask you some questions about particular clients, as well as your own uses of technologies. The research is intended to inform and support your work.

Taking part is entirely voluntary. Any responses you give will be reported anonymously, and no data that can be linked to individuals will be reported.

Your responses will be used to support a number of analyses, and to produce a report that will initially be presented to Prospects, to check that it is suitable for any release more widely. Overview results may then be reported in a public research report or findings in a journal or article.

With many thanks in anticipation for your help.

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How do you use digital technologies?

1. Which of these digital technologies do you use to communicate with clients? Please highlight or make bold the response that you think applies in each case.

a. Texts (via CCIS)	a lot	sometimes	rarely	never
b. Texts (not via CCIS, but from your mobile)	a lot	sometimes	rarely	never
c. Telephone	a lot	sometimes	rarely	never
d. Email (via CCIS)	a lot	sometimes	rarely	never
e. Email (not via CCIS)	a lot	sometimes	rarely	never
f. Facebook	a lot	sometimes	rarely	never

Clients and their overall needs

2. We have created four broad categories to describe the readiness of young people for training and employment. We would like you to use these categories, and tell us how you would place each of your clients. The broad descriptions of each category are:

- EERs: This group would include those who churn in and out of low level jobs and training courses of one kind or another but who need help finding more sustainable employment. It would also include those in periods of transition who have chosen or are mapping out a path (for example, waiting for a course to start, travelling before settling down to a job). Others might be job-ready but geographically isolated and living in locations where there is no work or public transport, temporarily sick, or unable to afford childcare. They are ready for employment or education but unable to achieve it for extrinsic reasons.

- NEERs: This group are nearly ready for employment or training and may need help with things like application forms, transport, finding a suitable opening, upgrading or improving their skills, gaining confidence, learning to relate to others, improving their behaviour and becoming better at managing relationships at work. It may also include immigrants with good employment skills but poor English language skills, or those with some kinds of disabilities.

- MULPs: This group have multiple long-term problems which will include several of the following: mental illness, criminality, drug and alcohol dependence, debt, poor housing, low basic skills, challenging behaviour, disadvantaged family backgrounds, poor neighbourhoods, low expectations, second or third generation unemployment, chronic illness and disability (including special learning needs), being a care-leaver, homelessness. These young people need the intensive intervention of a number of agencies. For this group, lack of employment or education is not the key issue and their other problems need addressing before they will be ready to hold down a job or successfully complete a training course.

- ALTs: These are the young people who have chosen alternative lifestyles. It will include those who: are concentrating on developing self-employed careers in arts or music; are setting up a business which has not yet proved successful; have chosen motherhood as an option and intend to stay at home while children are small; or are working in the family business and not seeking outside employment.

The CCIS numbers of your clients are shown in the left-hand column in the table following. Using the categories described above, please tick or colour the box that you think applies to each of your clients.

CCIS no.	EER	NEER	MULP	ALT

Thank you for completing the survey. Please send your response by 15th August 2012 by email to: d.passey@lancaster.ac.uk

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About the author

Dr Don Passey is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Educational Research, and Co-director of the newly formed Centre for Technology Enhanced Learning. The focus of his work over more than 20 years has been concerned with four main areas:

- Forms of learning, and how technologies can be used to support learning within vulnerable and 'at-risk' populations (including those young people who are NEET).
- How technology can be used to support learning in non-formal and informal settings (in community and social settings, in small group interest group settings, and in homes).
- Research and evaluation of technology enhanced learning in educational settings (for learners in primary schools, secondary schools, special schools, and school stay schools predominantly).
- How research and evaluation studies can be focused and reported to support those who are involved in policy and practice.

Research and evaluation studies across these fields have been commissioned by a wide variety of funders including government departments for education, government agencies, regional and local authorities, charitable trusts, corporations and voluntary sector groups, and commercial groups in the UK as well as in Germany and Switzerland. His work has impacted on a variety of different policy and practice groups.

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