

How can data, research and evidence support policy and practice?

Insights from Birmingham

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Improving meaningful participation in post-16 education and training: UK Insights, Nuffield Foundation, 19 March 2025



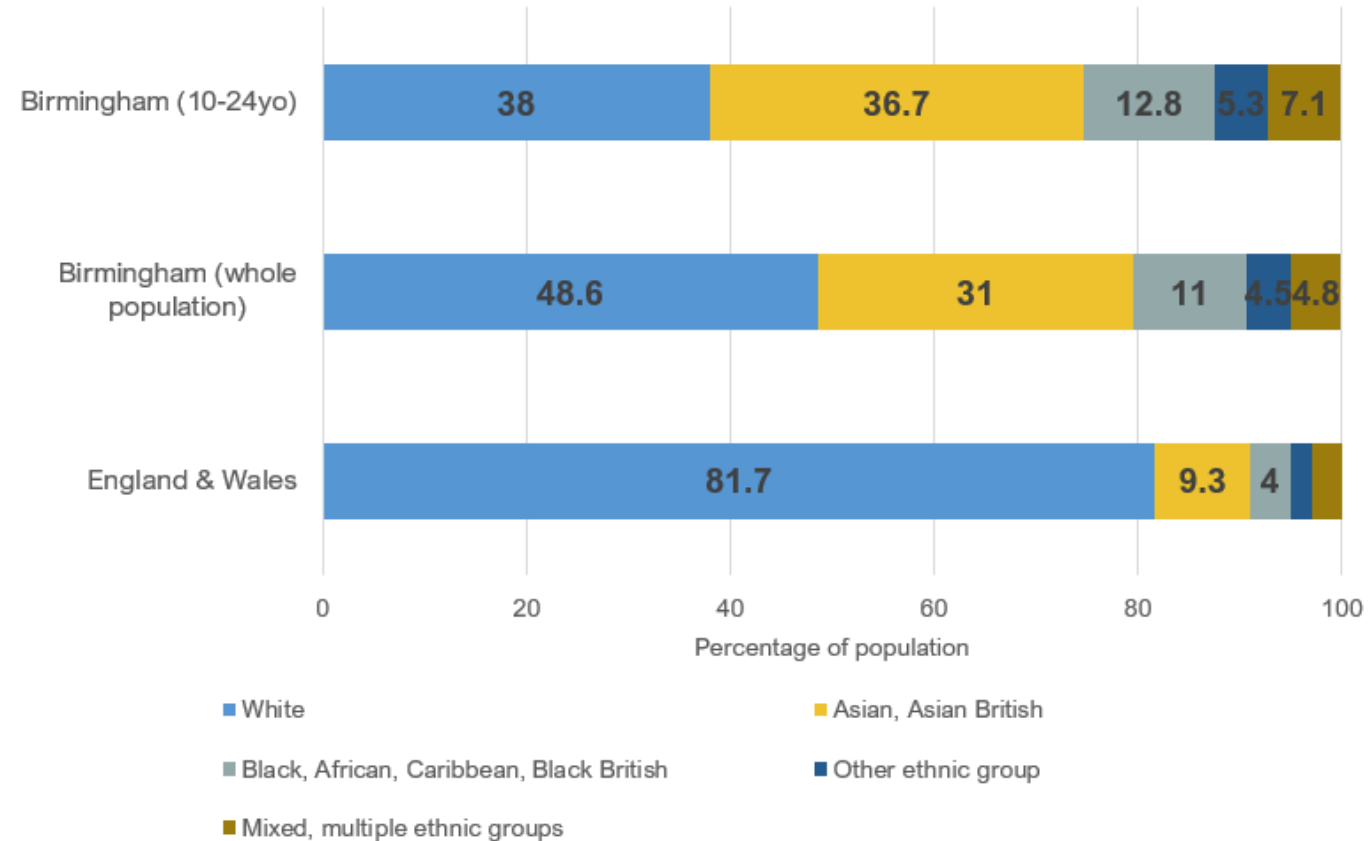
Local Context – Birmingham’s key features

- *Birmingham* is the largest local authority in England
- Section 104: financial pressures and service cuts
- High levels of deprivation
- High levels of employment and non-employment
- Young and diverse population
- Significant labour market challenges to meet if growth is to benefit local young people and address existing inequalities
- Part of *West Midlands Combined Authority* – forefront of devolution, Integrated Settlement
- *East Birmingham and North Solihull* – Strategy for long-term change



Birmingham: Ethnicity

- Birmingham has one of the highest proportions of ethnic minority populations of all local authorities in England & Wales.
- The proportion of Birmingham's population that are of BAME groups has increased since 2011.
- In 2019-20, the largest net inflow of international migrants into Birmingham was for 20-24yo.

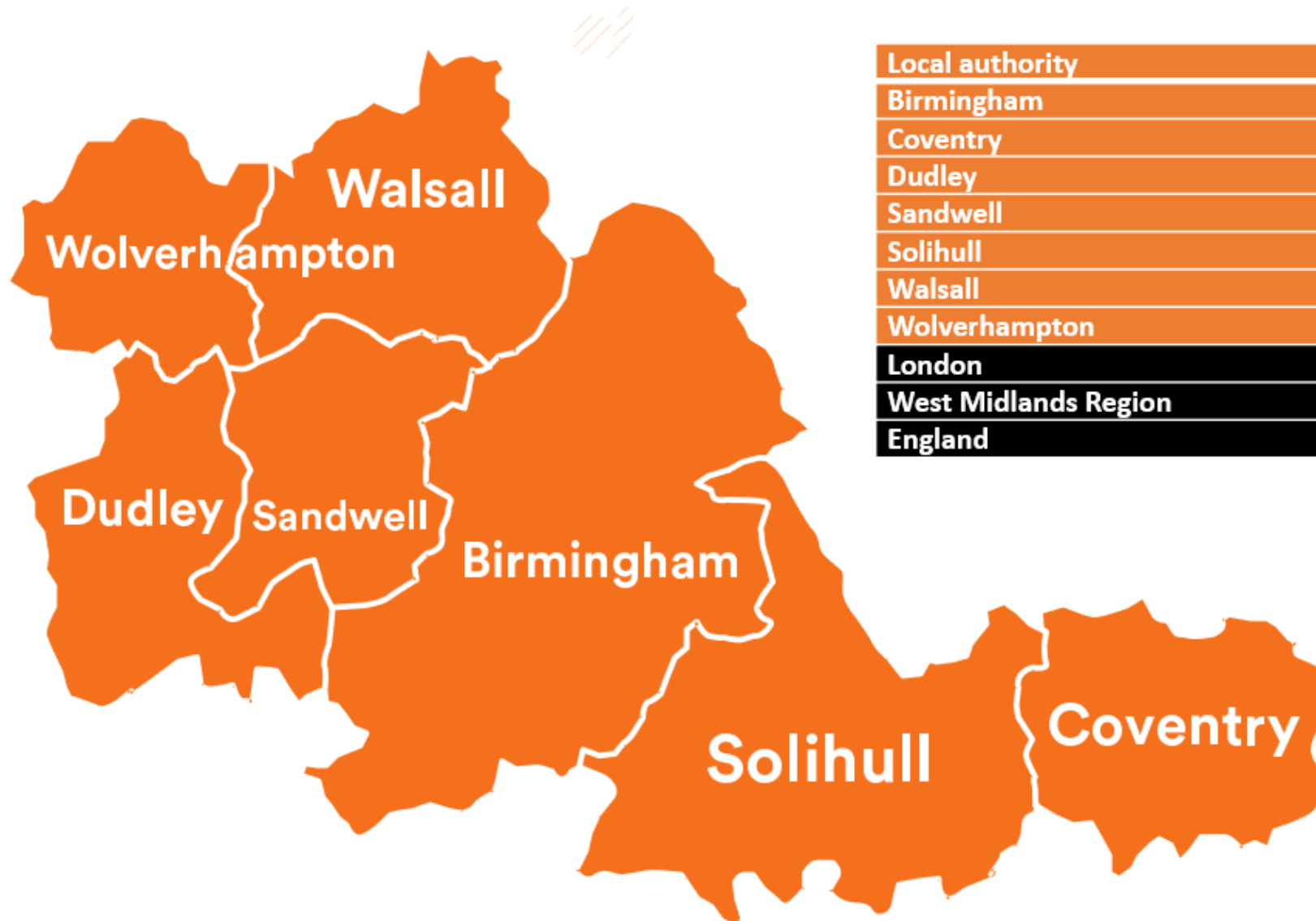


Data source: Census 2021



Broader WMCA Context

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Local authority	GDP per capita (2022)
Birmingham	£30,552
Coventry	£33,117
Dudley	£21,145
Sandwell	£22,691
Solihull	£48,712
Walsall	£20,665
Wolverhampton	£25,595
London	£63,407
West Midlands Region	£30,117
England	£37,076



Selected Strategies



City Vision – Shaping Birmingham’s Future Together for 2035

- Ten-year vision, setting out priorities for the city – strategic planning framework for partners; for BCC to shape corporate plan and other strategies
- The document highlights:
 - Birmingham’s youth and diversity as an opportunity/ strength of the city
 - High rate of youth unemployment; high proportion of YP renting; transport and links to poor economic growth, as key challenges (relevant to YP)
 - Inequalities in school years (NEET 16-18, attainment 8) and working life (unemployment 18-24) between different parts of the city
- Part of Vision is **‘By 2035 we want Birmingham to be the best city in Europe for young people, and a world-leading Anti-Racist city, in recognition of its youth and diversity’**

Economic Place Strategy

Employment & Skills Strategy

WMCA Youth employment plan

- Offer advice, support services and pathways for young people to have the best start to their working lives
 - Pre-employment training with guaranteed interview
 - Dedicated work coach support for YP out of work
 - Fully-funded skills training up to level 3
 - Access to mental and physical health support including talking therapies
 - Build on existing youth hubs to provide range of support and services, including debt and careers advice

West Midlands Youth Trailblazer

NEETs: Analyses from Birmingham City Observatory



NEETs by Ward

June 2024

Data Last Updated

NOTE: To maintain anonymity, counts of fewer than 10 young people have been suppressed. This will lead to some missing data on the map and charts. Blank wards = fewer than 10 NEETs recorded

Description

This data provides an overview of NEETs (those not in employment, education or training) who are aged 16-18 and living in Birmingham by: gender, ethnicity, special education needs and reason for being NEET). The data will be refreshed quarterly.

Descriptors

NALM - Not Available for Labour Market
 SEN – Special Educational Needs
 EHC – Education, Health and Care Plan

Key findings

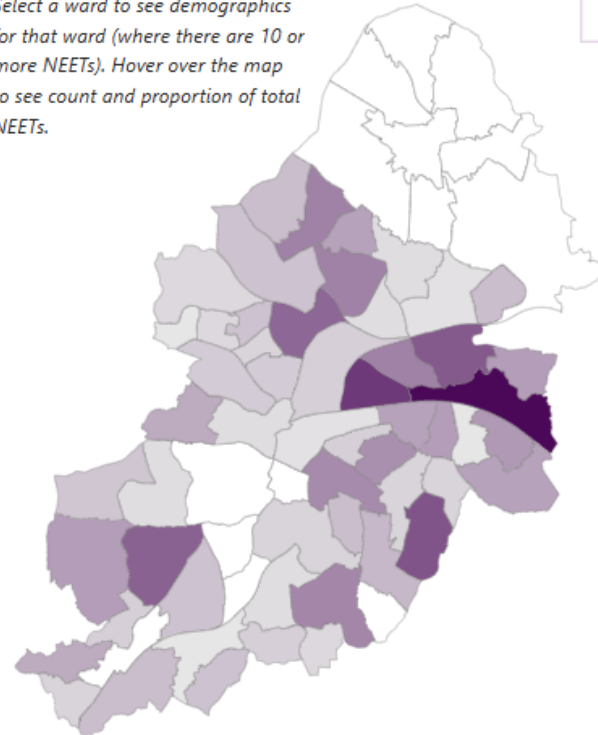
As of May 2024, there are 1316 NEETs in Birmingham aged 16-18 living in Birmingham. Over 20% of NEETs sit in just 6 wards: Glebe Farm and Tile Cross (4.6%), Acocks Green (3.3%), Aston (3.0%), Alum Rock (3.7%), Bromford and Hodge Hill (3.2%) and Weoley and Selly Park (3.0%). There also appears to be a higher concentration of NEETs in the East of the City. The majority of NEETs (86.9%) have provided their reason for being NEET due to 'Seeking Education, Employment or Training'.

Data source

Insight Database & LA Tables NCCIS

NEETs per Ward

Select a ward to see demographics for that ward (where there are 10 or more NEETs). Hover over the map to see count and proportion of total NEETs.



Total NEETs

1,316

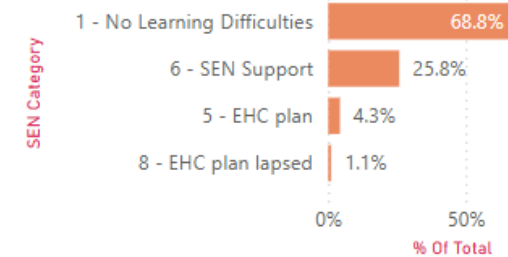
School Year	Total NEETs	% Of Total
12	580	44.1%
13	736	55.9%
Total	1,316	100.0%

Total NEETs by gender

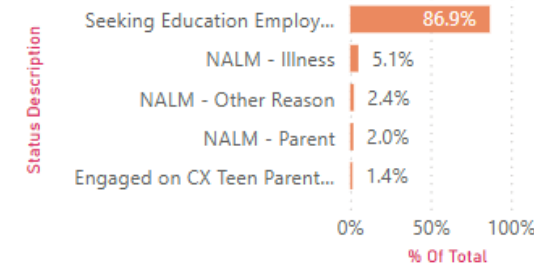
Female Male Other / No Infor...



Special Education Needs Category

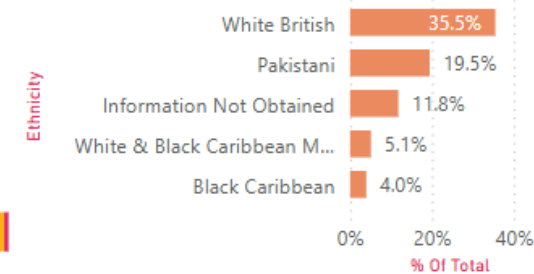


NEET Status



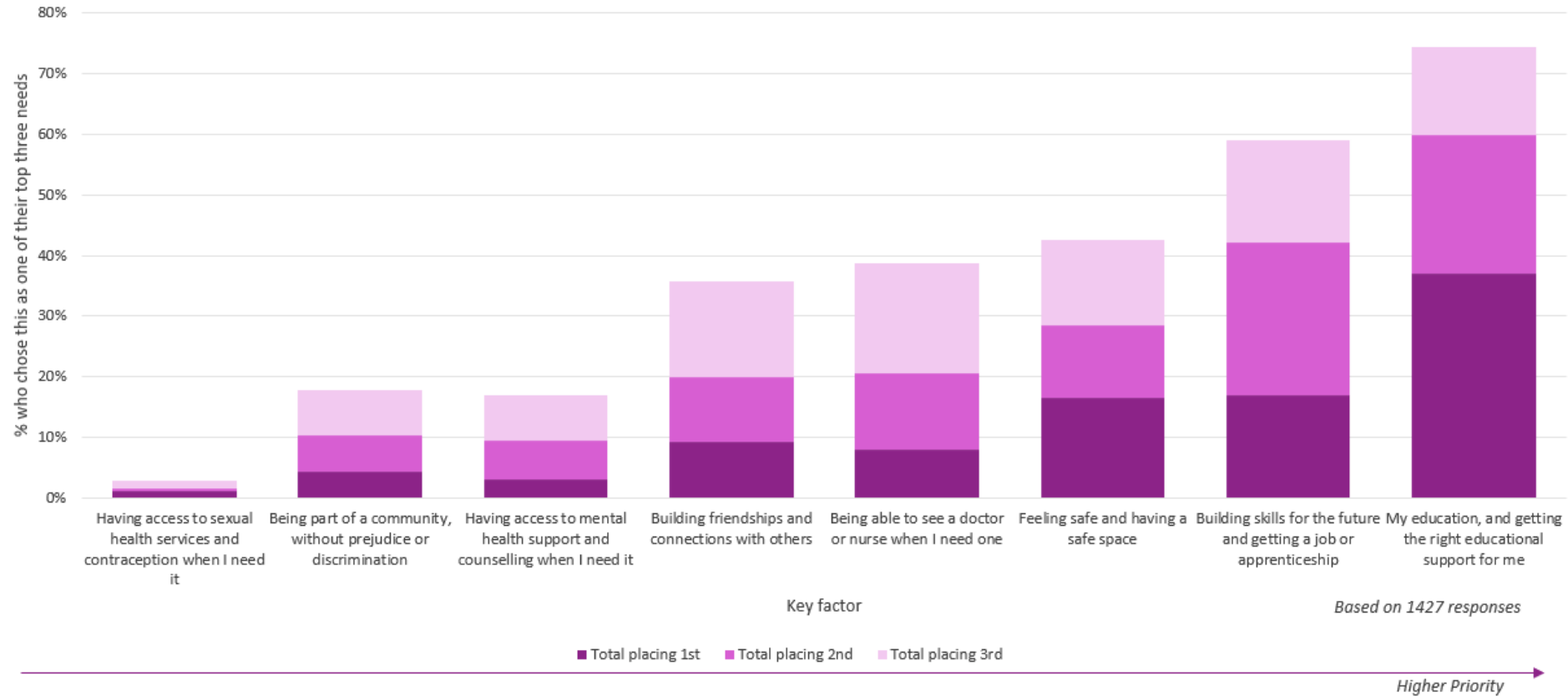
NEET Ethnicity

(Cannot be filtered by ward due to low numbers per category)



Youth Engagement

Across Birmingham, children and young people identified **education** and **skills development** as the most important things for them, with 74% and 59% respectively placing it in their top three priorities.



Partnerships for People and Place (PfPP): Birmingham

About PfPP

- Testing new approaches to raise awareness of employment opportunities for young people in selected schools in East Birmingham
- Highlighted a range of career pathways – including vocational career pathways – and aimed to reduce the risk of young people becoming NEET

Local data aims and *challenges*

- Investigate data which local stakeholders held that could be relevant to the aims of the project
- *Reluctance to share*
- *Lack of capacity to anonymise data*
- *Missing data*
- *Lack of markers about exposure to voluntary vocational initiatives, part-time employment, etc.*



NEW PROJECT - Youth transitions to good employment: East Birmingham and North Solihull

- Aim to explore the transitions of young people aged 16-24 into 'good employment' (characterised by quality jobs offering security and opportunities for progression) in East Birmingham and North Solihull (EBNS) and provide transferable insights into how to use place-based policymaking to achieve inclusive growth.
- Led by the University of Birmingham in collaboration with Birmingham City Council, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council and West Midlands Combined Authority
- We will map employment and skills services, undertake a comparative analysis of employment trajectories of young people from diverse communities within EBNS, and explore how young people's strategies for navigating transitions to employment are influenced by place.



RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What does the evidence on employment and skills trajectories and outcomes tell us about the accessibility and effectiveness of support for different young people?
2. What do future employment opportunities look like and what are employers' perspectives on prospects for integrating young people from EBNS into the workforce?
3. How far are different young people from good employment and how do they navigate that journey?
4. What insights and policy learning does the experience of young people's journeys towards good employment in EBNS yield at local, regional and national scales for public, private and third sectors?
5. How can we use the evidence from the research to co-design an employment and skills intervention to be implemented in EBNS?

