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# NEWSLETTER 3

## September 2021



## Focus on: IO3 ITER Transitions Management Handbook



The handbook is available for download on the ITER Partnership Website:

<https://www.iter-project.info/results/>

## Developing the ITER Transitions Management Handbook

Whilst we have not been able to meet face-to-face so far in 2021 (we are hoping to meet in Portugal in January 2022) we have not let this affect our project workplan. We all know that face-to-face meetings are better, but we have made up for this lack of being able to be in the same physical space together by holding monthly ITER partnership meetings and additional development workshops for IO3 and also set up an IO4 discussion platform for our ITER mentors who are working with NEET-experienced young people in the pilot programme.

## Planning the Research and Analysis required to inform the handbook content...

**Professor Robin Simmons** our partner from University of Huddersfield UK helped the partnership to develop our terms of reference for the research that partners needed to undertake in each partner country and supported us to analyse and present the findings.

**Overall aim: to develop a handbook which will provide guidance to enable NEET support and mainstream VET organisations to:**

- Establish effective communications
- Develop partnership arrangements
- Identify vulnerable young people
- Builds bridges to allow transitions from customised assistance to mainstream VET

## Outcomes and Goals

- Increase in methods available to VET organisations to support NEET-experienced young people
- Reduction in dropout from mainstream VET by NEET-experienced young people
- Increase in completion of mainstream VET programmes by NEET-experienced young people

## Requirement: the ITER Transitions Management Handbook should

- Offer step-by-step guidance for practitioners and organisations working with NEET-experienced young people
- But also 'set the scene' in which 'best practice' can be located

## In order to do this the handbook

- needs to draw on skills and experience from the 'front line', and broader research findings



## We identified an initial 3 sections...

1. Issues and challenges that can occur transitioning to mainstream VET
2. Benefits of partnership working in addressing issues which may lead to dropout/withdrawal
3. Information sharing protocols

## We established protocols for...

- Our desk research in each partner country
- Our Field work in each partner country
- Interviews with NEET-experienced young people in each partner country
- Interviews with key stakeholders in each partner country

## We undertook research in...

- England
- Hungary
- Italy
- Northern Ireland
- Portugal
- Romania

## We reported on our partner country findings...

- Young people
- Practitioner/mentors
- Policy Makers/stakeholders

We developed our initial findings report including an overview of 7 research themes and findings arising from our research and highlighted some context-specific data.





## Research Themes



### Individual Barriers to participation

- Qualifications; vocational skills and knowledge
- Motivation; Commitment, flexibility, confidence, and soft skills
- Mental health; social, emotional, and dispositional factors, physical disabilities
- In some cases, unrealistic or unclear goals, short-termism, and reluctance to seek help



### Environmental Barriers to participation

- Negative influence of family and peers (cultures of worklessness?)
- Accessibility and/or quality of advice & guidance
- Availability of appropriate provision
- Negative previous experiences of education
- In some contexts, travel seen as a barrier. In terms of logistics and/or cultural factors
- Financial problems also seen as a problem in many instances
- In some cases, discrimination/labelling seen as barrier (gender, disability, ethnicity etc.)



## Enabling Successful Transitions

- Importance of personal and practical support from the mentor a strong theme
- Mentor as a 'bridge' into mainstream provision
- Match between young person's abilities and interests and mainstream provision
- Financial incentives often mentioned
- In some contexts, the use of diagnostic tools and IT alongside face-to-face support was mentioned
- Recognising the strengths of young people (rather than just deficits)
- Role of work experience at school and/or voluntary work



## Preventing Dropout

- Being on the right sort of provision is important
- The role of the mentor again a key theme – a bridge between young people, training providers and (where appropriate) families. Continuing support once on mainstream provision often mentioned
- Nurture and care, but also various forms of practical support



## How Partnerships Might Help

- Generally, participants positive about the potential of partnership working in terms, for example, of pooling expertise, resources, information, standards
- Potential links between national and regional policy and the local level
- Some mentors were sceptical about formal partnerships and described forming informal partnerships at the local level to benefit young people
- Perhaps understandably, young people were less well-informed about partnership working, although they were generally positive about the potential of partnership working if it was associated with tangible benefits for them



## How Partnerships can be Built

- Some discussion about making existing partnerships work more effectively – in terms of depth, quality, and focus
- Role of business and other employers
- Some mentors talked about being proactive in building partnerships at the local level, alongside or outside formal partnerships
- Some discussion of how young people might be included in partnership working
- Some stakeholders talked about the need for partnerships to become self-sustaining rather than dependent of specific funding





### Information Sharing

- Young people generally positive about information sharing if it can benefit them – in terms, for example, of information about training, employment, availability of support. But some reservations about the nature of personal information shared
- Mentors and stakeholders generally positive but stressed the need to put the young person at the centre of the process. Some talked about involving schools and employers
- Constraints of GDPR recognised by mentors and stakeholders
- Different ways of sharing information were discussed in some settings – digital portfolios, digital IDs, resources banks, and so on

## Other Key Takeaways...

- Understandably, mentors, key stakeholders and young people spoke largely from their own perspective – perhaps understandably so. But Some general points underpinned the data:
- Interaction between different factors is important in enabling or constraining young people's transitions
- We must remember that financial matters are often important – both in terms of motivation and the practicalities of sustaining day-to-day life
- The role of the mentor as facilitator and enabler should not be underestimated. Trust and relationships are important! Putting the young person at the centre of everything

## Putting the ITER Transitions Management Handbook Together...

*“We need a practical guide that we can integrate into our practice, not a heavy report that sits on a shelf and gathers dust until it becomes out of date”* Mentor working with NEET Young People

With this comment ‘ringing in our ears’ we set out to develop a handbook that was interesting, informative and above all practical.





The ITER Transitions Management Handbook is presented in 3 parts ...

1. Research and analysis
2. Partnership and planning for successful transitions
3. Young Person's Transitions Plan Template



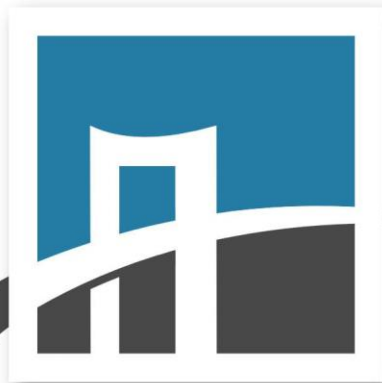
We are confident that the ITER Transitions Management Handbook is a useful resource for practitioners/mentors and VET organisations. It will help with the planning and preparation with a NEET-experienced young person as they move forward in their employability and future careers. While not quite gathering dust we hope it becomes a well-thumbed go to guide for anyone working to support NEET-experienced young people to successful transitions.

Coming soon....



In our next issue we will focus on IO4, the ITER Pilot Programme  
We look forward to sharing this next part of our project journey when we will report on the experience of young people and mentors participating in the pilot programme which adds the additional tool of the ITER Game/Platform to the Mentor toolkit

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