

FWW Prayer Guide: June 2026 – Young People, especially Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

A report commissioned by the Government written by Alan Milburn, a former government minister, says that one in eight young people in the UK are NEETs, and the number is increasing each year. The total number has passed the one million mark, the highest level in 12 years. Six in 10 have never had a job, but 84% of 'NEET' young people surveyed want a job or training.

The number of entry-level jobs has sharply declined with the number of mid- and lower-skilled jobs in the economy falling by 1.6 million over the past 20 years. Vacancies in the hospitality sector have halved in the last four years.

As well as the human cost, the cumulative financial cost to the UK economy has been estimated at £125bn per year. This includes £38bn a year in lost economic potential and 63bn a year due to economic 'scarring' as the young people affected are less likely to work in the future. This also includes losses in tax revenue, and increased health and benefits spending.

But that human cost is very concerning. As Milburn puts it, 'Across the country, people can see something has gone wrong. Parents see children struggling to get started. Grandparents see grandchildren unable to afford the lives they hoped for them. Teachers see pupils losing confidence. Employers see young applicants who want work but lack experience. Communities see young people drifting at the very age when they should be gaining independence and purpose'.

Many of us as parents or grandparents, or who know young people in other ways, will be aware of them struggling to find work or to progress as they might have hoped, struggling in time to afford to rent or buy a home, struggling to find the support and stability to build a life and a future with those they may love.

The report has laid out the situation and more work is to be done to propose responses and to suggest what could be done. This will not be something just for government but will require a willingness on the part of all of us to support action, not just for younger people to participate in whatever is proposed, but for those of us who are older to be supportive, and where required, to make sacrifices towards the cost of what will need to be done.

A prayer for those who are unemployed:

O God who rejoices in both our work and our play,

**I come before you
unemployed,
afraid,
shaken in my trust.**

**When I lose courage and hope while searching for work,
be my rock of safety.**

**When I find it hard to believe my talents,
revive in me an appreciation of the gifts you have given me.**

**When I begin to doubt my worth,
help me to remember that I do not need to earn your love.**

**When my fears take hold and start to overwhelm me,
let me find comfort in your care for me and those I love, and in their love for me.**

Thank you for all those who continue to support and encourage me during this difficult time.

May it somehow bring us closer to one another and to you.

- As we pray for individual young people looking for work, training and continuing education, we pray too for the wider economic landscape that makes this so difficult for them.
- We pray for Alan Milburn and those working with him to discern the way forward and for the recommendations they will make
- That government ministers and those in positions of power and responsibility may make the changes necessary and devise the means to make work and training more accessible to young people
- For schools, colleges and training providers
- For employers and all who work in recruitment and HR
- For Jobcentre and DWP staff and those who work for recruitment agencies for discernment and encouragement that they may strive to help young people
- For those taking exams at this time and young people who will be leaving school, college or university this year
- For all young people with their adult lives ahead of them, for a caring and just society that values them for who they are, made in God's image, for all that they might be and all that they might contribute if we make it possible for them to do so
- We pray for ourselves, especially those of us who are older, that we may be understanding of those who find themselves in a different world to the one we grew up in
- In all these things we pray that we and our country may discern and live out God's love, compassion and justice.