



# Youth Voice Census Report 2018

@YEUK2012

THE CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE  
COMPANY



Pearson

## FOREWARD

Youth Employment UK has been built on the foundation of young people's voices. Since 2012 we have been working to reduce youth unemployment by empowering young people to be better prepared for the world of work, supporting employers to be Youth Friendly and ensuring that government policy is geared towards the real needs of young people.

We have long heard that the transition from education to employment is becoming more challenging for young people to navigate. The Youth Voice Census is critical to helping decision makers and practitioners understand where young people are today, what experiences they are having and how effective they have been. Equipped with this knowledge, we can track the impacts of policy and society on this generation and establish how we can make these transitions more successful.

The results in this census serve as a reminder that we aren't as far ahead as we thought. Young women in particular are facing significant disadvantage - and your age will also impact the services you are receiving. We have a responsibility not just to fix these issues in education but also to ensure they are not carried through into employment or training programmes.

Despite 'good news' in employment figures, overall youth employment remains significantly and statistically higher than any other age group. If we are to start tackling these numbers, we have to make things fair for all young people. There are too many inconsistencies in the educational choices, training and employment opportunities offered to young people.

We are failing in our duty to prepare young people with the skills and information they need to confidently navigate a changing landscape both in and out of education.

Significant investment has been made in a range of programmes, policies and pathways but this report tells us there is still more work to do. We need to bring together the excellent work that exists, recognise and amplify it to scale up the opportunity and reach more young people.

Our thanks go to The Careers & Enterprise Company and Pearson for partnering with us on this report and to the numerous organisations that helped to shape and share the census. A final thank you to all the young people who took part, and to our Youth Ambassadors for their support.

**Laura-Jane Rawlings, CEO, Youth Employment UK**

*Laura-Jane Rawlings*



Our mission is to prepare and inspire young people for the fast-changing world of work. We can only do that by ensuring that the voice of young people informs everything we do.

Too often public discourse is dominated by politicians, businesses and commentators telling us what young people need to do to get ahead in the modern workplace. The voice of young people themselves is often missing.

That's why this first Youth Voice Census is so valuable. If we want to make sure all young people have the best possible start to their working lives, we need to know about young people's needs, opinions and experiences. And just as importantly, what young people respond to and what turns them off.

The Youth Voice Census allows us to hear directly from young people. It puts their voices centre stage and puts the onus on us to respond and shape our work accordingly.

The Youth Voice Census is full of insightful and thought-provoking content. But what really struck me was the inequity in careers support experienced by young women and girls. At every stage of their education journey, young women are being offered less careers support and opportunities. And when they are offered support, it's often a narrower range of options than their male peers.

The findings support what we found in our *Closing the gender gap* report, written together with WorldSkillsUK: outdated stereotypes affect both the support young men and women are offered, and the choices they make. We need to make sure that we're supporting every single young person to fulfil their aspirations, regardless of their background.

Over the last two decades, young women have made enormous strides in breaking down barriers in the worlds of work and education. But through championing the voices of young women and girls themselves, this report provides us with a wake-up call.

We still have a long way to go before we smash the glass ceiling, and those of us working in the careers and education sector have a key role in supporting young people on that journey.

**Claudia Harris**



**Claudia Harris, Chief Executive of The Careers & Enterprise Company**

Student opinion is absolutely central to everything that Pearson does. That's why we are so delighted to sponsor this inaugural Youth Voice Census with our partners at Youth Employment UK and The Careers & Enterprise Company.

In a changing environment with increased technology, shifting job roles and career paths, it is more important than ever to include the youth voice in discussions on the design and delivery of our education system. We hope that this comprehensive snap-shot of how this vital cohort thinks and feels about education and learning and the impact on their futures will be informative as we all work to consider how we foster a system that helps individuals make progress in their lives.

From this inaugural census it is clear there are some challenging trends which need to be addressed. There is a disparity between the levels of careers advice given to boys compared to that given to girls. The census also highlights the long-standing tendency for learners to be disproportionately directed to academic pathways, rather than presenting technical and vocational education on an equal footing. All of us involved in shaping our education system should be working to see positive change in these trends in future versions of the census.

I hope that the Youth Voice Census will become a major barometer of opinion amongst learners and I look forward to watching, and supporting, its progress over the years ahead.

**Cindy Rampersaud**  
**Senior Vice-President**  
**BTEC & Apprenticeships**  
**Pearson UK**

*Cindy Rampersaud*





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## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our first-ever Youth Voice Census, a snapshot of the experiences and views of 14 - 25 year olds in our substantial network of young people across the UK. The aim of the census is to explore what young people are experiencing in education, training and employment and how they are feeling about their future. Taking a collaborative approach, we included partners from across the sector to guide the census and reach the widest groups of young people. Our objective is to use these findings to ensure the voices of young people are heard and their needs are championed. We believe that all young people should get access to the resources and support they need to progress to the next stage of their journey.

This marks the beginning of an annual census, enabling us to track and measure which information and services young people are being given access to, as well as studying how existing support systems help them to navigate the transition from education and training to employment and beyond.

This report will cover key headlines and insights before exploring findings from apprentices, graduates, those in work, and young people who have spent time NEET (not in education, employment and training). The report will cover educational experience for all respondents.



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2011 we saw youth unemployment hit a record high of 1 million young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Today that figure sits at just under 800,000. The last 7 years have seen significant policy reform, social investment and research into our young generation and the challenge of unemployment. But just what kind of impact has all that work had on our young people? How much progress has been made? What are our young people really experiencing and feeling about their transition from education to employment?

Young people today are arguably the most talked about of any generation. We are seeing disturbing figures around mental health, loneliness, intergenerational inequality, social mobility, and rise in poverty. As a young person you are still more likely to be unemployed than any other age group. As a society we have attributed restrictive and negative stereotypes to our young generation: 'hoodies', 'unemployable', 'millennials', 'NEETs' and so many more. We make sweeping statements about an entire generation - their use of mobile phones, social media and their perceived lack of social skills or work ethic.

Youth Employment UK are in the fortunate position of being able to witness, experience and share the great things young people do through our youth network. They are more than the headlines. Young people are invested in their present and future. They face multiple barriers, but can add huge value to anywhere they live, learn and work. Young people are very individual, so classifying all young people as a single type is not the answer. The lack of personalised support is a key issue that shines through the data in the Youth Employment UK Youth Census Report for 2018.

Since the launch of Youth Employment UK in 2012 we have seen vast changes in almost every aspect of a young person's life. Updates and reviews of the education, apprenticeship and welfare systems - coupled with an unstable political climate, the reduction of funding for key youth services, rising living costs and a continuing change in technology and the types of jobs available - have led to some unsettling information on the mental health, work readiness and future prospects of young people being reported.

The Youth Voice Census explores the views of 14 - 25 year olds with a wide range of abilities and backgrounds within our network. Respondents gave insights on careers advice, work experience, apprenticeships, graduates, finding work and unemployment. This census allows young people to share their voice and serves as a temperature check on how they feel about a range of services. We will use this annual census as a way of checking the impact of policy and society on young people, and ensuring that young people's views are embedded into the youth employment narrative.

## KEY FINDINGS

Our sample consisted of 1,498 UK based young people.

For 53.87% of respondents, the highest level of education they received was GCSE.

16% of respondents indicated that they had additional needs (31% of those had social, emotional mental health needs, 21% had specific learning difficulty and 14% had behaviour, emotional or social difficulties)

1

### Young women are not getting their fair share of careers support:

At every stage of education young women, are getting less access to careers support than young men. They are also less likely to have work experience opportunities.



### Careers education:

We asked young people to highlight which careers interactions they had received whilst in education, and how often they had received those interactions. For almost every type of experience, at every education stage - from secondary school to university - girls were less likely to have received or been offered employment and enterprise activities.

Surprisingly, the data revealed that a high proportion of young women had never received these experiences at all. Young women were 20% less likely to have ever received experiences like CV workshops and visits to university in comparison to young men. This divide in receiving interactions was evident in every age group from 14 – 25. Young women were also less likely to have had one-to-one interactions with careers advisors and mentors.

Young men were 20% more likely to be offered careers interactions in education than young women, and were also more likely to receive these interactions more than once. Young men were more likely to have received mentoring and careers lessons at least twice and to have

#### Gender



67.76% Girls



29.37% Boys

2.88% Other/prefer not to say

#### Age groups

14 to 16 : 56.67%

17 to 19 : 24.03%

20+ : 19.51%



received careers talks by employers, visits to and from training providers and have visited a careers show and careers fair at least 3 times. Young men were more likely to have received enterprise lessons 5 times or more whilst at college or sixth form.

## Choices:

Young women are less likely to receive information on the full range of educational options open to them at every stage of education.

In secondary school, young men were more likely to have had vocational and apprenticeship options discussed. In contrast, GCSEs were the main route discussed with young women.

In secondary education, more young women (11%) than young men (5%) had not had any education options discussed with them at all.

In college and sixth form, it was again most common for young women to have had traditional academic routes discussed with them. Young women were significantly less likely to have traineeships or apprenticeships discussed with them than young men. Young women were also significantly more likely to have going to university discussed with them in college or sixth form; 69% of girls had had this discussed with them five times or more, whereas only 20% of young women had been told about apprenticeships five times or more. 75% of young women had never had the option of starting their own business discussed with them, and 89% had never been told about accessing Job Centre provision.



## Work experience:

More young men (55%) than young women (49%) have had work experience in secondary school.

Young men were more likely to have had the school find work placements for them (43% vs 29%) and girls were more likely (25%) to have found a placement for themselves.

Whilst genders were fairly split and favourable in terms of the value work experience can have, young women were more likely to indicate that work experience had not helped them to develop contacts and networks.



## Confidence and opportunity:

Young men were statistically more confident that they knew the skills employers are looking for (54%) in comparison to young women (38%).

Young men were also more confident (57%) that they would be able to progress into meaningful employment than young women (44%).

Young women were more likely to not have a CV, or to not have had an interview.



## 2 Age is a factor:

Your age impacts what forms of careers-based support and services you have received throughout education and how you feel about it. The youngest and oldest census respondents were most likely not to have received any careers interactions, or to have had an incomplete range of education options discussed with them. For ease of analysis and journey mapping, we have coupled age ranges together in the following way: 14 - 16, 17 - 18, 19 - 22 and 23 - 25 year olds.



### Careers education:

The youngest (14-16) and oldest (23 - 25) age groups often are not receiving or have not received education and enterprise activities. This is particularly true in the case of CV workshops, careers lessons and access to mentoring.

74% of 23 - 25 year olds had never received careers lessons or enterprise activities during their time in secondary school.



### Choices:

The youngest (14-16) and oldest (20+) age groups were much more likely to have had no options discussed with them, at 14% and 10% respectively compared to 3% in the middle age groups. The data shows that there were no significant differences between the educational choices being offered to young people across the age ranges.



### Work experience:

Older age groups were more likely to have had work experience. Nearly 50% of the youngest census respondents (aged 14-16) had not had work experience.

Young people recognised that volunteering and extracurricular activities could help boost their CV and help build skills. However, cost, range and awareness were barriers to participation.





## Confidence:

The oldest group (aged 23 - 25) had more confidence that they knew which skills employers are looking for. Of this age group, 65% indicated their confidence in knowing these skills, in comparison to only 33% of 14 - 16 year olds.



## Getting support

Younger respondents aged 14-16 were most likely to seek advice from parents, at 23%. The second most likely group to ask parents for advice, at 13%, was the oldest group (aged 23-25).

12% of 23-25 year olds had sought advice from a career advisor, compared to 5-7 % in other age groups.





### **3 Academic choices are still pushed more than any others :**

Over 61% of those in sixth form or college had had five or more instances of being spoken to about university, but only 20% had been spoken to about apprenticeships.

Academic options, further study and university were consistently more likely to be discussed with all age groups and genders.

### **4 Young people want personalised services and information**

Where the census survey included free text boxes allowing respondents to provide feedback in their own words, young people indicated that careers support needs to be more personalised. School/university students and those in apprenticeships and work all said they would like to feel as though they were getting support to work out their aspirations and achieve them.

Young people's view of current provision is that:

1. They're not getting the help they need
2. Advice and support received is generic
3. Advice and support is focused on a certain route

### **5 Barriers**

Young people felt their biggest barriers to employment were lack of work experience, anxiety and not having the right skills. Finance remained one of the biggest challenges as young people faced choices about apprenticeship or university pathways. For university students in particular, debt accumulation, finance and value for money were highlighted as being 'extremely challenging'.

## **6** Young people need a better understanding of what careers/education support they could and should be receiving

Most age groups will rely on parents and teachers for education choices, careers support and employability skills development but how useful this is varies widely.







## METHODOLOGY

We recognise that this Youth Voice Census is not statistically representative for every young person in the UK. However, it gives us a good indication of how young people in our network are feeling on a number of issues surrounding employability, education and careers.

The Youth Voice Census has received support from the Careers and Enterprise Company and been widely shared across their network as well as through a number of other key partners.

The Youth Voice Census has been devised to assimilate information on the experiences young people have in school, college, university, and in and out of work. It has set out to determine how much careers education, support and work experience they receive and how they are feeling about skills, careers and their future. Information and insight on the survey build was fed into by young people, AELP, the Department for Education, the Careers and Enterprise Company, Collab Group, The Edge Foundation, Education and Employers, Impetus PEF,

NYA, SLQ, WorldSkills UK and Dr Emily Rainsford from Newcastle University.

The survey was designed to engage 14 – 25 year olds, asking all young people the same set of questions around careers education and work experience in school, employability skills and social action, as well as additional questions for young people depending on their journey to date. Subsections investigated college and sixth form, university, traineeships, apprenticeships, those in work, those who were currently or had spent time NEET (not in education, employment or training), and those who had set up their own business.

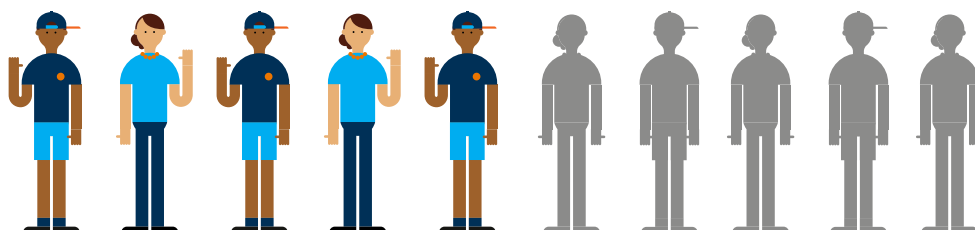
We recognise the challenges of using surveys as a research method; fatigue in survey filling and repetitiveness has to be recognised. In practice we noted a high rate of young people voluntarily including non-required comments and suggestions, indicating their willingness to engage with issues explored in the survey.

Whilst surveys allow for qualitative data to shine through, they are not best-placed for getting under the skin of past and continuing challenges that might have led young people to their current situation. We have been open to supplementing the quantitative survey data with qualitative focus groups where required. However for this data set we are comfortable that the responses are, alongside existing evidence and research, justified. They are a fair reflection of the experiences of young people today. We intend to include the option of running focus groups, particularly in future years where we examine reasons for shifts or stagnation in progression routes.

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## WORK EXPERIENCE IN SCHOOL



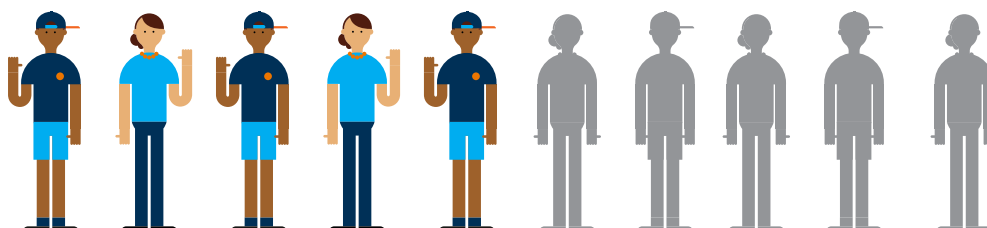
51%

of young people had access to work experience when they were in secondary school. 56% of young men had had the opportunity of work experience compared to 50% of young women



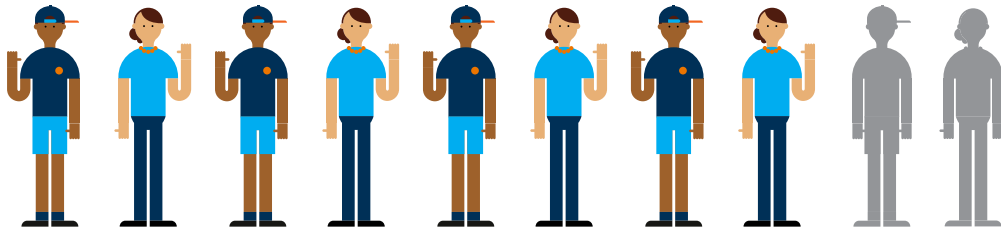
76%

of young people agreed or strongly agreed that work experience helps to develop relevant work skills



57%

57% agreed or strongly agreed that work experience helps develop relevant contacts



77%

agreed or strongly agreed that work experience helps them understand what it means to be at work



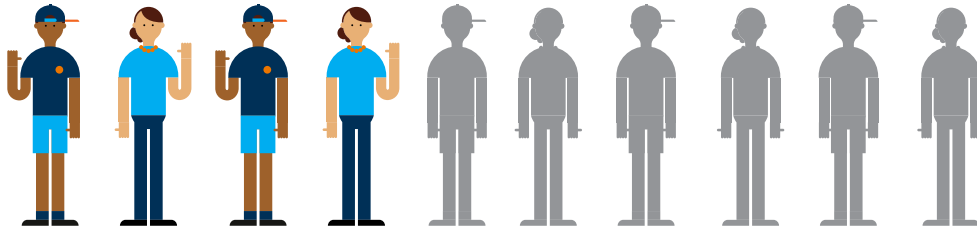
76%

agreed or strongly agreed that work experience helps to give experience that can help get a job



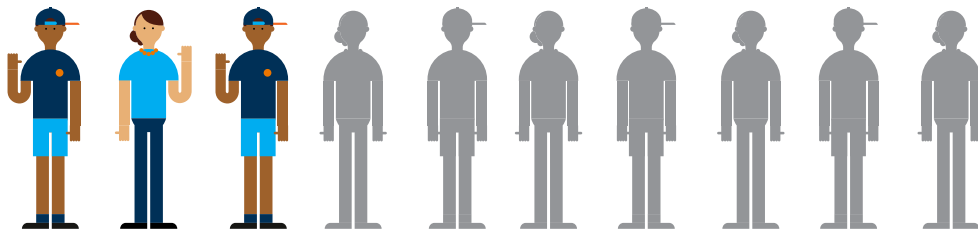
72%

agreed or strongly agreed that work experience helps to make decisions about choices and the future



36%

of respondents thought work experience should start at 15



26%

of respondents thought work experience should start at 14



84%

of those offered work experience undertook it



64%

of young people rated their work experience as good or excellent

Only 51% of the young people surveyed were offered work experience in secondary school but the value and importance of work experience was not lost on respondents, with many recognising the benefits and skills good work experience can bring. 84% of young people offered work experience took up the offer, and only a small percentage of young people (10%) rated their work experience as poor or very poor.

Young men were more likely to have placements found for them (43% vs 29%), whereas young women were more likely (25%) to have found a placement for themselves.

The data shows that young people recognised the importance of work experience, with many students undertaking it if they had been offered the opportunity at school, college/sixth form and university. The majority of young people surveyed had also looked for or planned to look for a job at college or sixth form and at university.

### There were clear asks from young people:

- Work experience should start earlier - young women were more likely to think that work experience should start earlier in particular at ages 13 and 14.
- There should be more choice - where work experience was set by schools there was a recognition that there were one or two employers or industries available with little done to explore what a young person might want from the experience.
- Variety - there was agreement across gender and age that there could be more flexibility in work experience. More work experience at different stages, more opportunity to explore many different areas of a business and suggestions that young people could go once and week for a term to really build up skills.

*“Schools should offer more varied options for work experience e.g. not just in nurseries etc. but also in other areas such as engineering-related placements”*

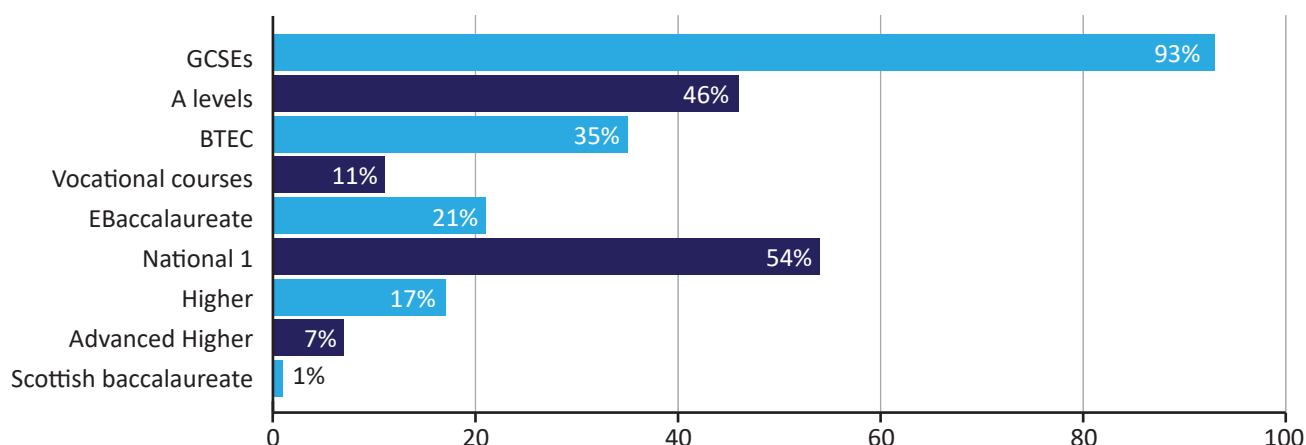
*“Work experience could be improved by allowing students to be more involved with the process of finding the work experience and also to cater it to more of the student’s personality and career requests”*



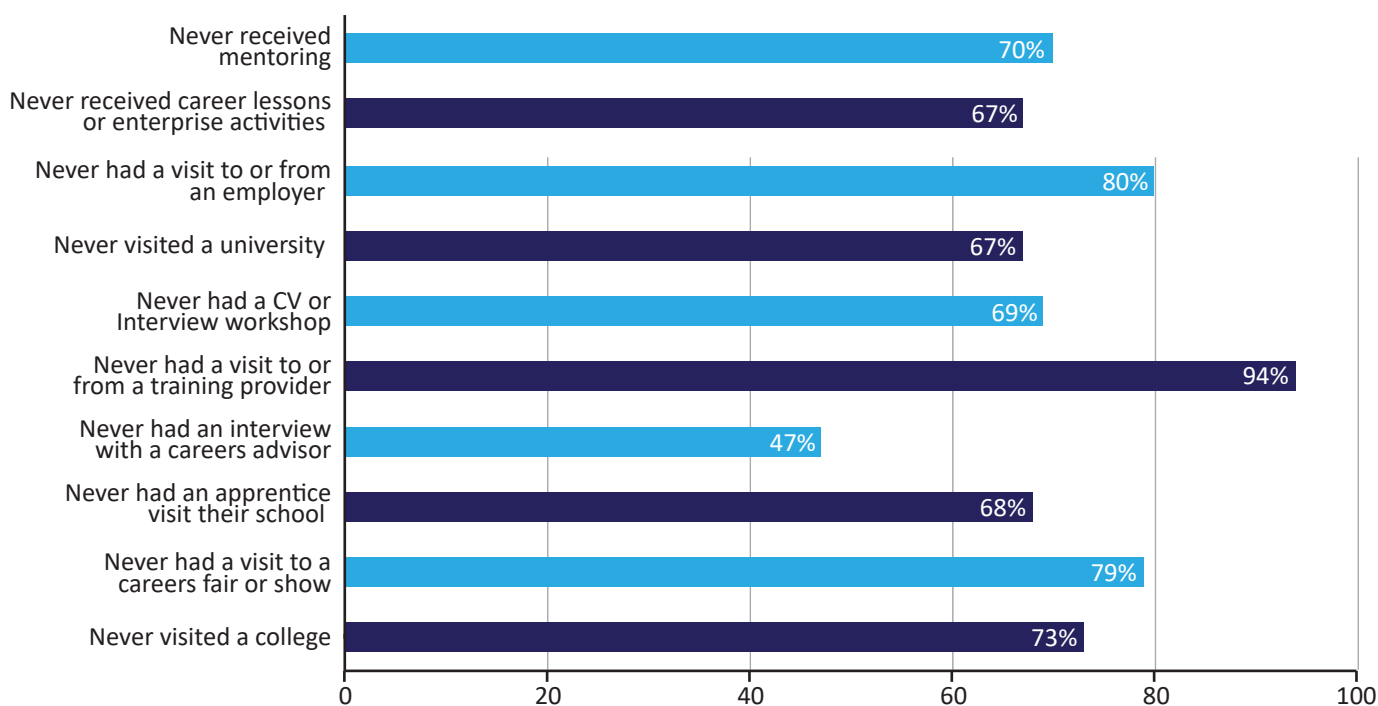
## CHOICES, CAREERS AND EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT

We wanted to understand from young people what choices were offered and discussed with them whilst in secondary school, as well as what careers and employability information they were receiving.

**In years 9 and 10 young people were spoken to about:**



**In secondary school:**



We wanted to understand from young people what choices were offered and discussed with them whilst they were in secondary school, as well as what careers and employability information they were receiving.

The data shows us that a full range of academic and vocational options was not being discussed with young people and that this is not changing for those aged 14 - 16 today. This, coupled with young people being likely not to have had any careers activities discussed with them prior to key decision-making periods in their lives, indicates that we are failing to give young people all the tools they need to navigate their skills and employment journeys.

54% of young people thought that the educational choices their school offered suited their learning style. Around 50% of each age group agreed that the learning style offered matched their choice, although 16 and 17 year olds were more likely (67% and 66%) to agree that what was offered to them suited their style. It would be too soon to suggest that more public promotion of alternative routes such as apprenticeships was playing a part in this, but this is a topic we look forward to exploring each year as educational change continues.

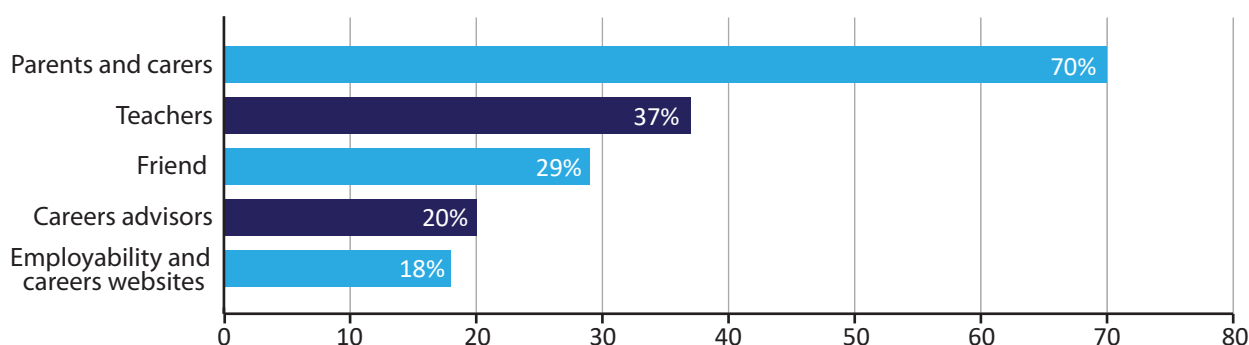
## **Influencers**

We asked young people who influenced them the most in making decisions regarding their educational choices. The biggest influencers were their own choices, parents and carers, and their future career aspirations. Whilst the data does not highlight major differences between genders it does show us that our oldest cohort were more likely (27%) to rely on their parents as their biggest influencers than other groups who rated this at around 16%. Our youngest cohort of 14 - 16 year olds were most likely to state that educational choices are their own (51%), an increase from 34-37% of young people in other age groups sharing this opinion.

## **Who and what is useful?**

We asked young people where they went for careers support, and how useful the careers and employability support from different sources had been.

## Who/where do you go to for careers support? (Top five)



As we consider how useful each of the sources have been and are careful not to make wide assumptions, it is important to remember that the number of young people who had received numerous careers interactions is relatively low in this case study.

Parents were generally considered as very useful by all genders and age groups, but older groups were more sceptical, with 13% of 23-25 year olds regarding parents and carers as not at all useful.

Teachers overall were seen to be average or generally useful, although young women and older age groups were more likely to be sceptical of their usefulness in supporting careers and employability decisions.

Young women were more likely to be critical of the support offered by careers advisors than young men.

17-18 year olds were most positive about careers advisors, with 17% saying they were extremely useful.

Many respondents said that their friends were a source of careers support, but only a few of them said their friends were useful or really useful. Young men and our youngest and oldest cohorts were most likely to label friends as “completely useless”.

Careers and employability websites were viewed as useful overall, with no clear differences in opinion between genders, although age was a factor in responses. 20% of our oldest age group (23 - 25 year olds) branded them as completely useless but 40% of 19 - 22 year olds said that they were useful or extremely useful.

This question covered a number of sources including online, face to face, traditional and non-traditional networks. The

data available shows us that different sources work well for different young people. It is worth considering that no single source will work completely in silo. Parents and teachers, for example, may use advice and resources from careers websites, advisors and the National Careers Service.

### There were clear asks from young people:

- **More information on pathways and routes:** Whilst most young people indicated that they were choosing their educational pathway themselves, the data and commentary provided showed that very few young people were exploring all the options available. You can only choose what you know exists.
- **One size does not fit all:** Different groups will engage with careers and employability support in different ways. An important consideration is *quality*. How do we ensure that every young person gets access to high quality, up to date information on educational routes, employability skills and careers options?

### What would have improved your career education in secondary school?:

*“Not focus so much on university. I don’t want to go to uni, yet I’m still having to make a UCAS account and write a personal statement about something I don’t even want to study”*

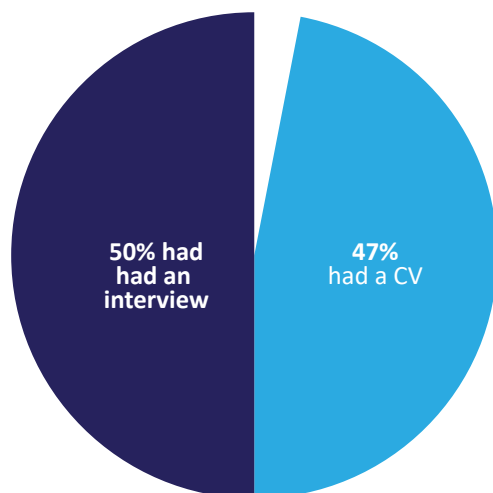
*“Spent time with you one on one, felt rushed when you were in class doing it with everyone else!”*

*“Offered more subject choice and flexibility of subjects. They are not choices now but pathways that push you down a certain path depending on how clever you are. I think that is really wrong, you should be free to choose-it’s our life it should be our choices on what we like to do and our strengths”*

*“I got virtually no support from the school in what my options could be when I decided I didn’t want to go to university yet”*

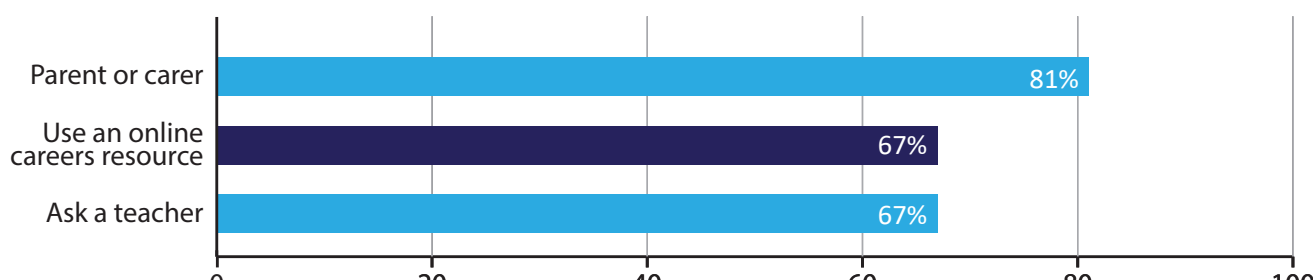


## CVs AND EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

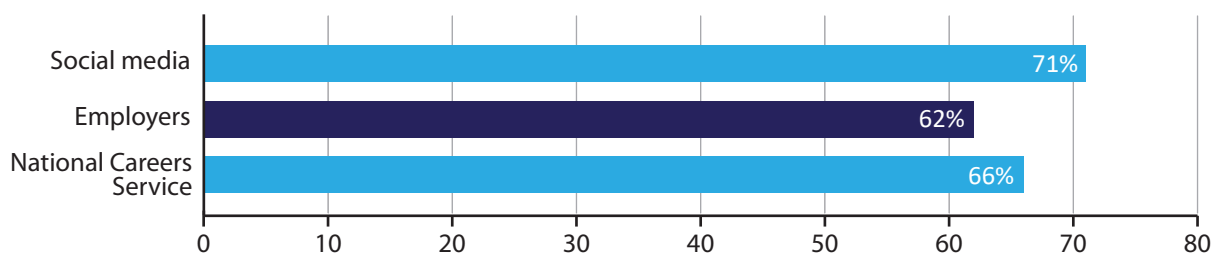


### Would you or did you ask for help in creating your CV from the following people?

The most popular sources to ask were:



### Young people said they did or would not ask:



We asked young people who they found most useful in providing CV support. Parents/carers, careers websites and careers advisors were deemed the most useful by those who had used them, but very few respondents labelled any of the services they had used as unhelpful or really unhelpful. The majority of services were labelled as "OK".



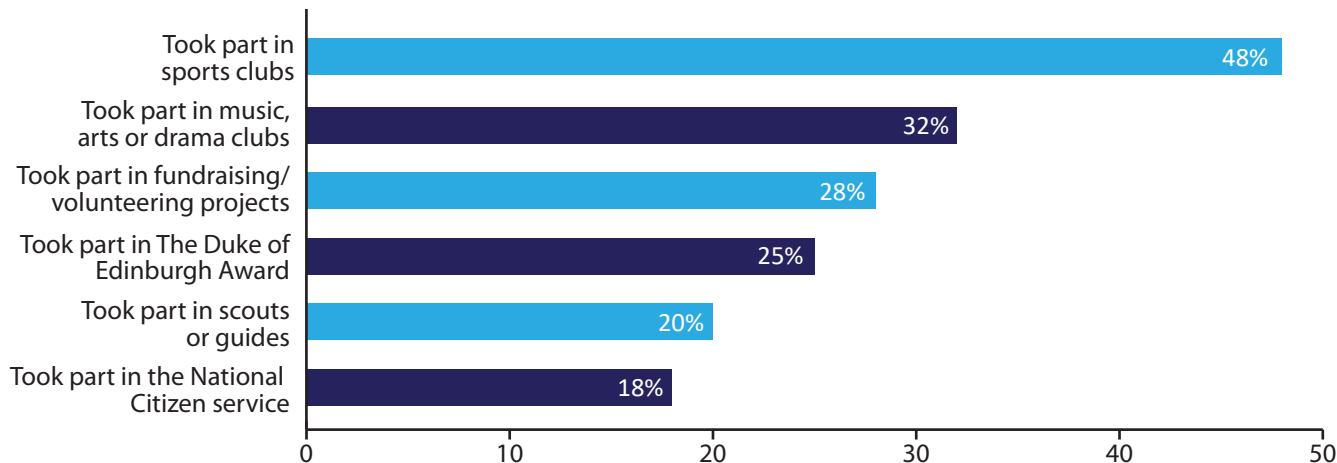
When young people were asked to indicate which services they had used or would use to look for a job, the most popular choices were online job boards (54%), employer websites (64%) and social media (46%). Respondents in this survey were least likely to use or have used LinkedIn (78%), newspapers (77%) or Find an Apprenticeship (63%). Young people indicated that the most useful services were employers' own websites, with LinkedIn and Find an Apprenticeship the most likely to be labelled as "really unhelpful".



## SOCIAL ACTION, VOLUNTEERING AND EXTRA-CURRICULAR

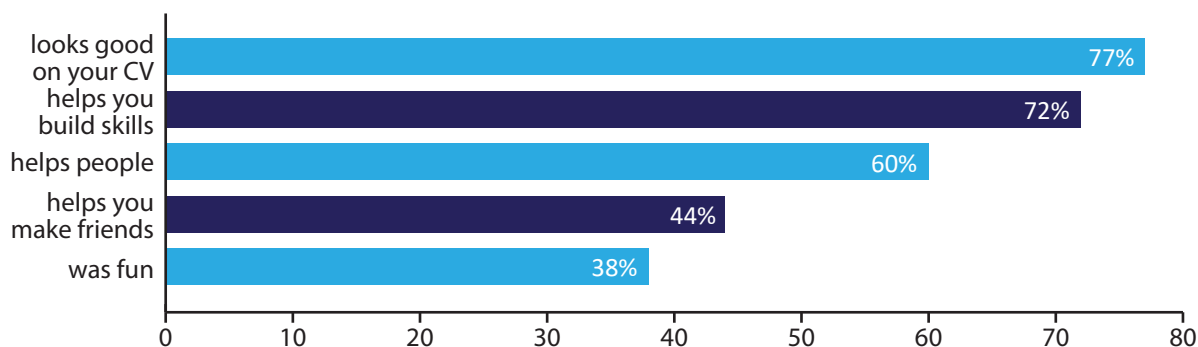
28% of respondents knew what social action was

**At school, college or sixth form young people:**

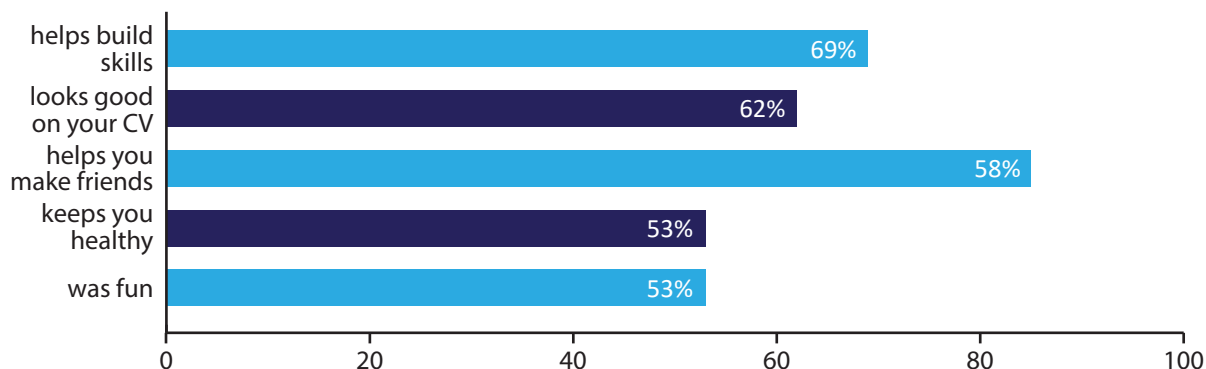


When given a definition of social action to include volunteering and fundraising, 59% of respondents stated that they had taken part in social action outside of school. For those who hadn't undertaken any social action projects, 41% said they would consider it.

**When asked what the biggest benefits of social action were:**



**When asked what the biggest benefit of extra-curricular activities were:**





Young women were more likely to have been involved in social action, and were most likely to consider doing it if they had not already.

Young men were more likely to not consider social action at all.

Young women were less likely to have engaged in sport or cadet activities than young men, but were more likely to have engaged with music, arts and drama activities and guiding.

When given the option to talk about other activities they had been involved in, a high number of young women mentioned that they had mentored young students in their spare time. Young men were more likely to mention that they had been involved in debate teams and joining the school council when asked the same question.

**What more could be done to engage you in social action and extra curricular projects?**

*“I’d love to see more time invested by schools in setting up relevant extra-curricular projects”*

*“More publicity and advertising”*

*“More options”*

*“Have more free activities students in general don’t have much money & to use sports facilities are expensive”*

*“Have a wider range of extra curricular projects and types of social action to engage people of all backgrounds”*

## CONFIDENCE AND BARRIERS

We asked all respondents a series of questions designed to explore their level of confidence in transitioning into work and what barriers they might face. In this section, barriers are referenced in terms of what might stop a young person progressing. For those in work or who had spent time NEET (not in education, employment or training) we asked this question with more specific outcomes which we will explore later.



Young people thought employers were “unsupportive” or “very unsupportive” of hiring young people.



Young people thought employers were “supportive” or “very supportive” of hiring young people



Young people were confident that they would be able to progress into meaningful employment

**When thinking about work and finding a job what, if anything do you think your barriers might be?**

“Not having enough experience and not being confident in an interview due to not being told/ taught good practice”

“I don’t know all my options so i’ll be stuck with something I don’t enjoy”

“My degree wasn’t in a subject helpful to what I want to do. I am too anxious to apply for jobs that are out of my usual comfort zone of retail since I have worked in it since 15”

“Employers expecting unrealistic levels of experience for entry level jobs: it seems to be who you know, not what you know”

“Financial freedom to pursue jobs and work experience”

“I only have one week of work experience”

“Low employment and confidence”

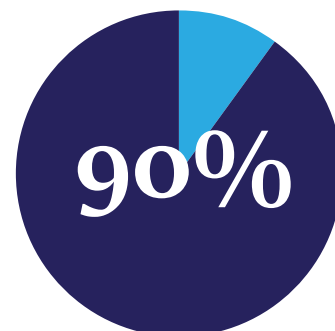




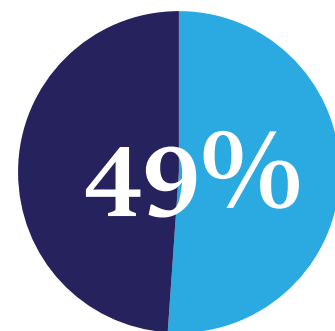
## COLLEGE AND SIXTH FORM

We asked respondents which careers activities they had received at college or sixth form. Young women were statistically more likely to have never had any of these interactions. Not only was the number of young men who had received any careers activity higher, but young men were also more likely to have received the activities more than once. Young men were more likely to have had mentoring, careers lessons, careers talks by employers, and visits to and from training providers more than twice. They were more likely to have visited a careers show and careers fair 3 times or more. They were also more likely to have received enterprise lessons 5 times or more whilst at College or sixth form.

When asked what they enjoyed most about studying at sixth form or college, respondents were mostly positive, with young women more likely to enjoy the choice of subjects than young men. When we asked about the biggest challenges or adjustment respondents faced, young men were more likely to find the independent learning and the change of teachers a struggle, rating it as extremely challenging.



Respondents rated their experience of college and sixth form as average or above



Respondents were offered work experience in college or sixth form

### **Work experience**

Young men were statistically more likely (61%) to receive work experience in college or sixth form than young women (42%).

66% of young people undertook work experience offered to them in college or sixth form.

61% of respondents indicated that they had or planned to undertake a job whilst at college and sixth form.

Young women were significantly less likely to have traineeships or apprenticeships discussed with them during their time in college and sixth form. They were also significantly more likely to have university discussed with them in college or sixth form - 69% of girls had university discussed with them 5 times or more. Young women were also more likely to have never had any options discussed with them, with the majority never being told how to access the job centre or information on starting their own business.

### **Knowing whats next**

60% of respondents knew what they would like to do after sixth form or college. Young women were more likely to opt for further study with young men more likely to choose getting a job.

When asked to rate how helpful college or sixth form was in preparing them for their next steps in life, the majority of respondents rated the experience as average, while around 20% of young men and women thought it was unhelpful or very unhelpful.

### **What could college have done to better prepare you?**

*“There was no promotion of vocational higher education options or apprenticeships or mention of being self-employed, this needs to change”*

*“Organise more personalised career placements and opportunities”*

*“More information provided, one-to-one interviews, visits to universities, more information about traineeships, visits from apprentices and university students”*

*“Focus more on specific people’s careers and not just doing an overview of everything”*

## TRAINEESHIPS\*

*\*We have included this data to show a fair reflection of routes but please be aware that the number of young people who had undertaken or were undertaking a traineeship was 1% of total respondents.*

Most respondents found out about their traineeship through youth workers, Jobcentre Plus or a recommendation from a youth programme.

We asked young people to indicate what they enjoyed most about their traineeship from “really disliked” to “really enjoyed”. Young men tended to really like the routine, work experience and new ways of working more than young women, but it is worth noting that no respondents indicated that they ‘really disliked’ anything about their traineeship.

When asked whether they found any areas of the traineeship challenging, young men found the most challenging aspects to be adjustment to the routine and getting support with maths and english. Young women rated all areas as not challenging at all.

75% of young women rated their traineeship experience as average or lower (with 50% saying that the experience was very poor) compared to 100% of boys rating their traineeship experience as average or higher.

Young women were most likely to be unsure of their next step after their traineeship. Whilst some said they would be looking for a job, none planned to explore an apprenticeship. Young men were most likely to be looking for an apprenticeship or a job as their next route.

**What else could your traineeship have done to prepare you for your next steps?**

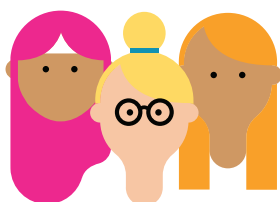
*“Put me in a placement with a company who were interested in helping to progress a young person. Find a placement that I was interested in not just put me in one to tick a box so they get paid”*





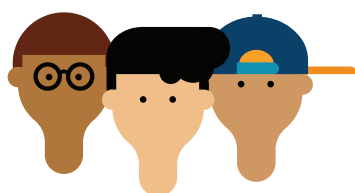
## APPRENTICESHIPS

The majority of respondents to these questions were on or had completed a Level 3 apprenticeship



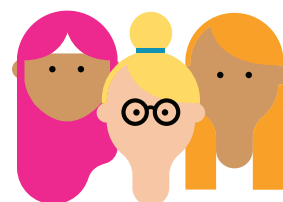
64%

Respondents to these questions were young women.



60%

Young men were in year one.



44%

Female respondents had completed their apprenticeship or were in year 1.



77%

Respondents were offered off the job training.



9%

Unsure whether they had been offered off the job training.



59%

thought they'd stay with their current employer at the end of the apprenticeship

*Most young people found their apprenticeship with Find an Apprenticeship, not parents or teachers*

We asked respondents how they had found out about their apprenticeships. Respondents were most likely to have found their apprenticeship through the Find an Apprenticeship website. Parents and teachers were the least likely to have highlighted apprenticeships, with young women half as likely to be recommended an apprenticeship by their parents as young men.

The biggest motivation for all respondents to starting an apprenticeship was earning and learning at the same time (66%). The commentary provided alongside this was the need for young people to start earning for financial reasons, and apprenticeships being the best option to do that.

When asked what they enjoyed most about their apprenticeships, all responded positively to every category. Travel was the only category that had a slightly less positive, with 26% indicating that they disliked or really disliked this about their

apprenticeship.

When asked what their biggest challenge was on starting an apprenticeship, if any, all respondents were positive overall. Travel, working with new people and adjusting to new ways of working were highlighted as 'really challenging' for a small group of respondents.

We asked young people to rate their apprenticeship for a number of factors including overall satisfaction, salary, progression and support received. Apprentices responded positively and rated every factor highly. Young women were slightly more likely than young men to think that apprenticeship progression and salaries were 'very poor'.

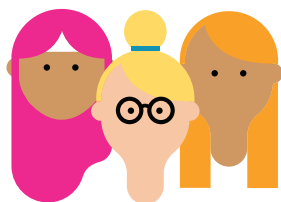
We asked young people to what extent their apprenticeship had helped them prepare for the next step. 73% rated their apprenticeship as 'helpful' or 'very helpful', and 24% rated it as 'average' with 3% rating 'unhelpful' or 'very unhelpful'.

### **What more could be done during your apprenticeship to prepare you for your next step?**

*“I have had amazing support from my manager who has acted like a mentor - I really feel as though I have learnt a lot from him that will help me in future jobs. I am gaining new skills everyday that will all help me to get me to where I want to be”*

*“Been more specific in the sector i'd like to progress within. Be more focused on the individual rather than the speed of completion”*  
*“Been more specific in the sector i'd like to progress within. Be more focused on the individual rather than the speed of completion”*

## UNIVERSITY



75%

Respondents to this question were female



54%

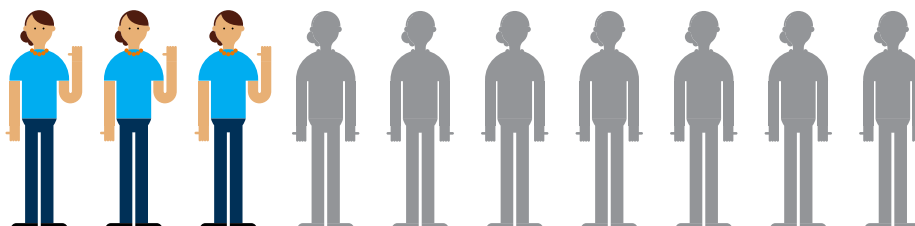
Rated financial issues as the biggest challenge they face/d at university



68%

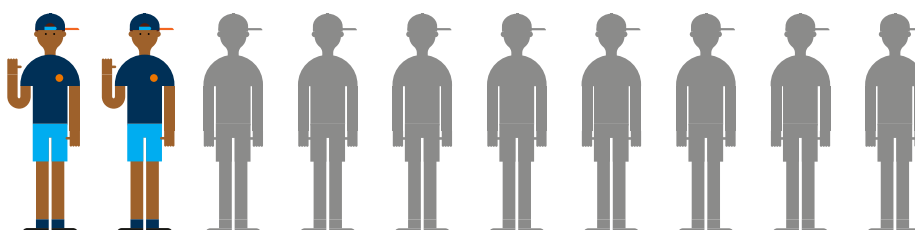
Planned to undertake a job whilst at university

Young people's biggest motivations for attending university were parents, and 'always knowing' that they'd wanted to take that route. There were some gender differences with...



31%

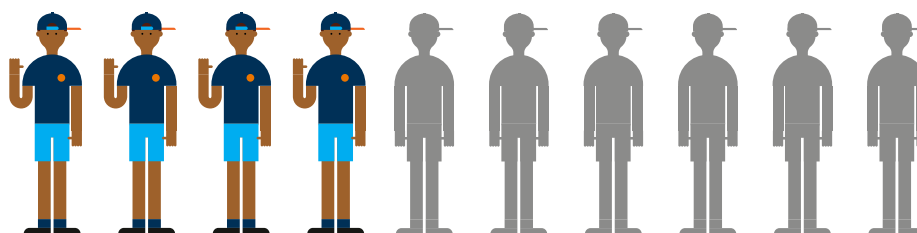
young women always knowing university was right for them versus...



26%

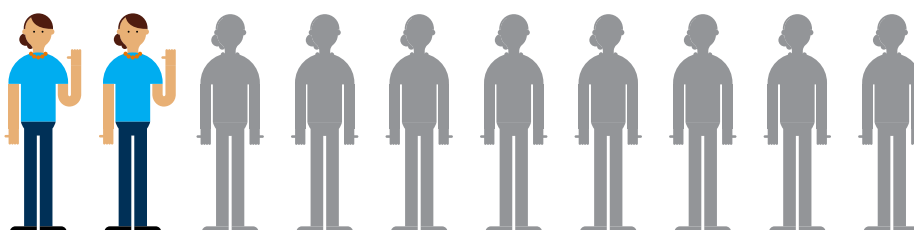
26% of young men





43%

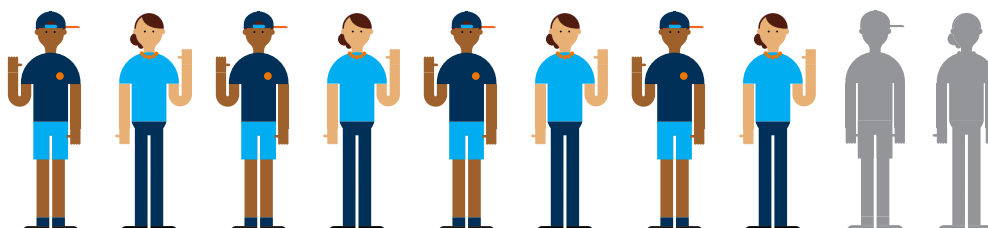
Young men stated that parents/carers were the biggest influence, compared to...



24%

of young women

When asked what they enjoyed about university and what their biggest challenges were, young people were most likely to enjoy studying subjects they had chosen and having more ownership of their study. The biggest challenges were around finance and value for money. We asked respondents which careers interactions they had had whilst at university. The census revealed that...



82%

Never had a visit to an employer



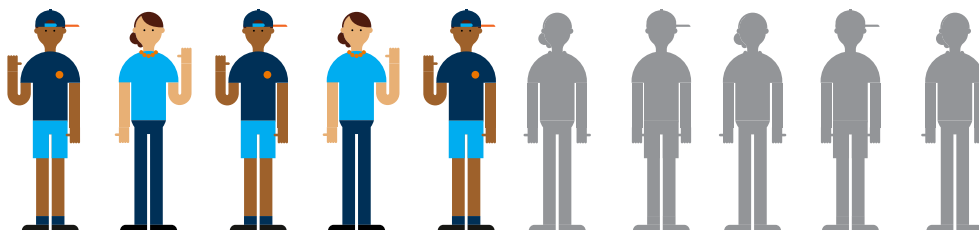
59%

Never had a placement



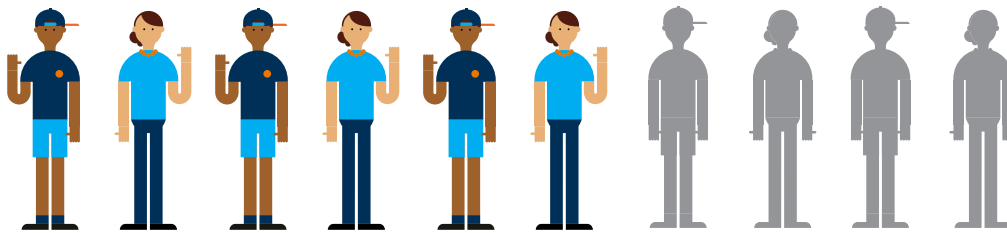
56%

Never had a one-on-one careers session



46%

Never received access to online careers and employability support



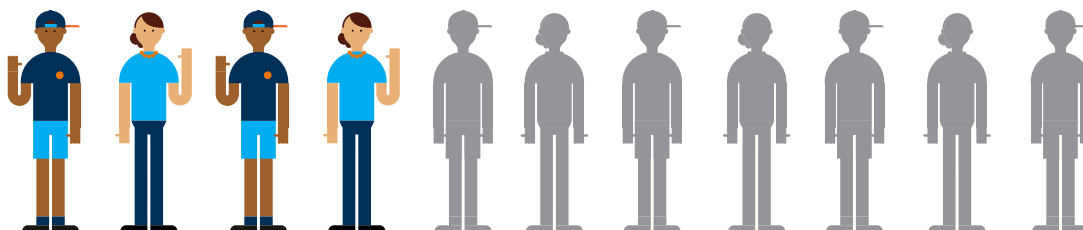
61%

had received a careers lecture



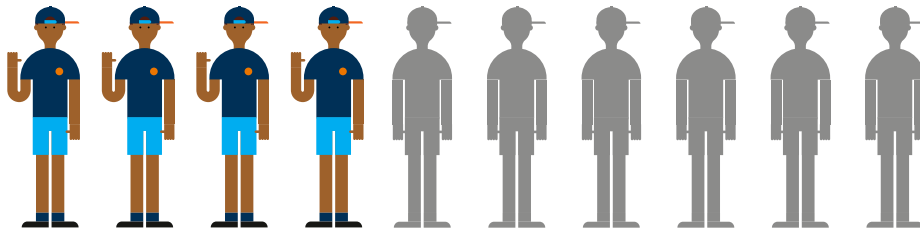
64%

Had attended a careers fair



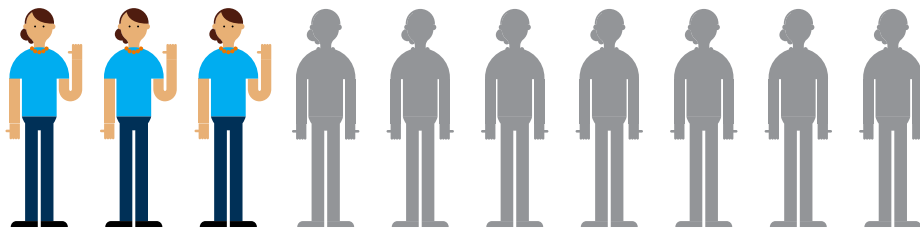
43%

had had work experience made available to them at university



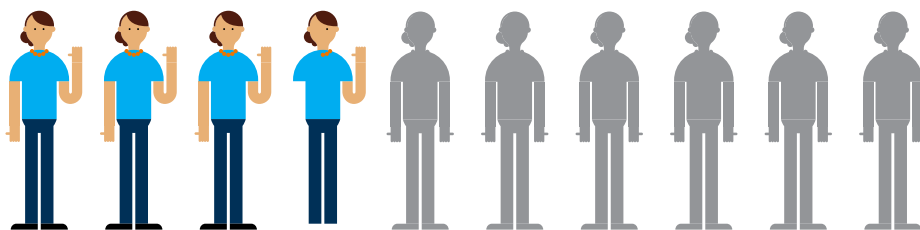
43%

of young men and...



26%

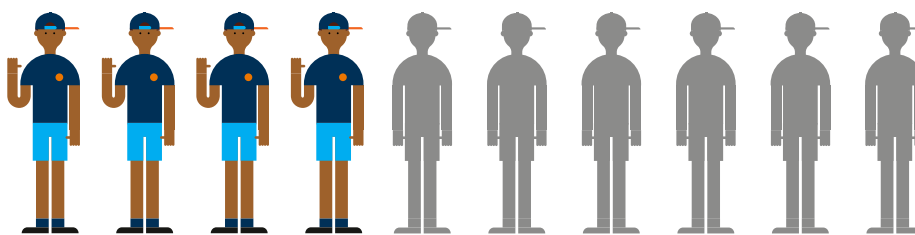
of young women had work experience as a requirement of their course



38%

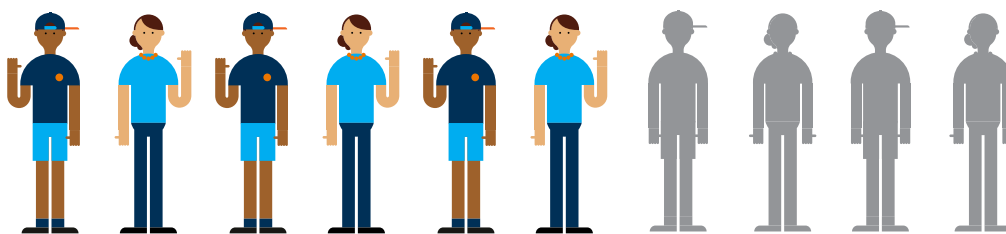
Young women initiated work experience themselves, in comparison to...





**20%** of young men doing the same

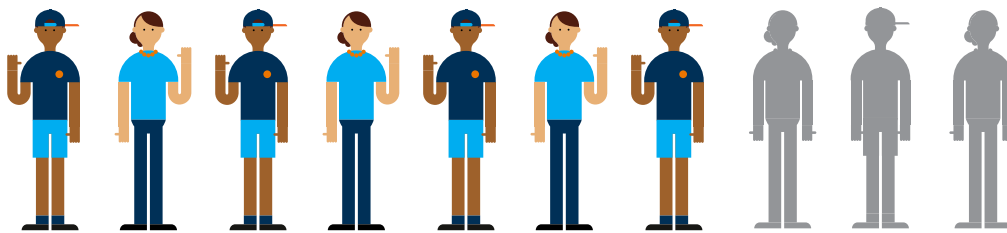
### Knowing what's next



**65%** Young people rated university as “average” or “good” when asked how it was helping them prepare for their next step



**54%** Young people knew what they wanted to do after university



70%

of young men knew what they wanted to do next, compared to 54% of young women

**What else could your university have done to prepare you for your next step?**

*“Better career guidance. Every time I go to speak to someone they ask me what I want but I feel that it is there job to help me to figure that out :ask me questions, give me tests (skills/personality), talk about my life to gauge more about me and what I am interested in/good at and provide suggestions. They should suggest other topics that may be suited (after 1st year it is possible to change so to give students advice in case they want to and provide suggestions of what may be suited if applicable would be great)”*



## IN WORK:



Respondents had been offered a zero hour contract.



Respondents had undertaken a zero hour contract role.



Respondents had been offered a short term contract.



Respondents had undertaken a short term contract.



Respondents had been offered cash in hand work



Respondents had undertaken cash in hand work.





Respondents had been offered a black market job.



Undertaken a black market job.



60%

Respondents were happy or very happy in their current role.

We asked respondents to indicate how much they agreed or disagreed to a series of statements regarding work. Overall responses to work were neutral to positive.



52%

Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were paid fairly for the work that they do.



29%

Respondents thought they were overqualified for their role.



55%

Respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the job they do and that they were given enough training to do their job.



## LOOKING FOR WORK



35%

Those who had spent time NEET had been so for 6 months or less



81%

Those who had spent time NEET had not claimed Job seekers allowance or Universal Credit



29%

Those choosing not to engage with Job Centre services believed they could find a job themselves with 21% not believing that the Job Centre could help them

Young men were statistically more likely to have spent time NEET than young women. Of those respondents who had spent time NEET, young women were statistically more likely to think mental health issues would stop them from getting a job. The biggest barriers highlighted were lack of experience, anxiety and not having the right skills.

Only 38% of those looking for work believed that they understood the skills employers are looking for. For those in employment this rose to 66% but for those on a training programme this rose to 72% - higher than those in university (54%) and those in college (48%).

Confidence in progressing to meaningful employment was higher again for those undertaking a training scheme. 41% of respondents who were on a training scheme said they were very confident of progressing. Only 6% of those looking for work were very confident they would progress into meaningful employment.

What more could be done to help you in to employment:

**More awareness of training courses available.**

*“Job Centre Plus isn’t suited for graduates who can’t find work. There should be a separate institution or part of Job Centre Plus that specialises in getting graduates into work”*

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is fundamental that all young people are given equal opportunity to progress and fulfill their potential, and currently there is too much inconsistency. The systems preparing and supporting young people through important transitions are not being received by or working for everyone. Yet the future of our economy - and, indeed our country - will soon come to rely on them.

We need to have a cross-government, long-term youth strategy that brings together education, business and civil society to work together and ensure the journey of every young person is supported.

In our recommendations we have highlighted three key areas: Addressing gender discrepancies in confidence levels and aspirations, learning about careers, employability and skills, and supporting employers to better understand quality, provision and targeting. Whilst we understand that there has been a lot of focus on these areas, this initial census tells us there is much more to do.

### **Addressing gender differences in confidence levels and aspirations**

We have to put more time and effort into understanding what does and does not work for young women. This is unlikely to be a one a one size fits all solution but we must do more to bring parity of esteem, experience and confidence to young women.

Young women appear to face a number of barriers to fulfilling their potential; gender stereotypes, aspirations, confidence, external influences and experiences are just some of them. We cannot assume that because young women are often perceived to be academically ahead of young men, that they do not need the same amount of careers support and exposure to all opportunities.



**We recommend that the government invest in further research to understand the barriers currently facing young women and what interventions and support will have the most positive effect on raising young women's aspirations and their confidence to enter the world of work.**



## Learning about careers, employability and skills

### Academic vs vocational

Young people should be given all the information they need at key stages of their lives to make informed choices about their pathways. Holding back information on vocational or apprenticeship routes for students takes away freedom of choice.

All young people should be taught how to navigate the options available to them and have access to experiences of each pathway. We need to support young people to understand key data such as LMI when making decisions. We need to empower young people with the tools to make their own decisions and to navigate change when it comes their way.



**We recommend that Ofsted be given wider powers to ensure that impartial careers advice is available to every student and that girls and boys have had equal access to every careers education opportunity.**

### Personalised careers support at all stages

(young people, colleges, university, apprentices, NEETs)

Young people at every education, training and employment stage, call for more personalised support. General information and resources have a role to play, but young people also need someone to understand their personal goals, aspirations and barriers, and then work with them to set out a plan. It needs to be recognised that this is not always a one off intervention; some young people will need this guidance at key transition points and others may require ongoing support.

This is a critical requirement for all young people and cannot be achieved without putting in place proper funding and quality measures.



**We recommend that the government researches what personalised support is most beneficial, who should be delivering it and for how long. It must then invest in a joined-up programme that ensures all young people have access to good quality, impartial personalised support.**

### Experiences

(work experience, extracurricular)

This report tells us that young people know that there are significant benefits to work experience and extracurricular

activities. What is clear is that there are not enough varied, relevant, quality and affordable opportunities for all young people. In addition, not all young people know how to use the skills, experiences and networks they create to help them access employment opportunities.



**We recommend that the government make work experience a statutory requirement of key stage 3, 4 and 5.**

**We recommend that the government endorses a national skills framework to which all work experience and extracurricular activities can be mapped to this. This will ensure that young people understand and can identify the skills they are learning or have learnt.**

### Influencers

Parents and teachers are two of the most significant 'influencers' of young people when it comes to careers advice. However as new careers and pathways emerge all the time, they may not be up to date with the range of opportunities available. In addition some young people do not have access to family/parent support therefore widening the social mobility gap. There is no quick fix for this but having access to a wide range of quality, impartial resources will help. In addition, employers must recognise that not all young people start from the same place or have access to a network able to provide advice and guidance.



**We recommend that the government signpost impartial careers and skills resources alongside the National Careers Service that parents, carers and teachers to use with young people to navigate the options available.**

**We recommend that careers learning is embedded into all curriculum subjects and evidence of effectiveness should be present at Ofsted inspections.**

### Support employers to better understand quality, provision, targeting (where, who they prioritise support to)

Employers play a key role in supporting young people to transition into employment. We know that many employers have invested heavily in early careers, experience and employment pathways for young people. What is now needed is the assurance that there are enough opportunities for every young person, and that those opportunities are of high quality.



**We recommend that the government supports the Youth Friendly Employer Award, the kitemark that supports companies to develop and gain recognition for a high quality youth employment strategy across three critical engagement points; early careers exploration, work experience and employment.**



**We recommend that businesses have access to the Careers and Enterprise Company compass data to identify where there are schools without adequate provision and ensure that targeted support is offered in these areas.**

**We recommend that businesses are encouraged to release young apprentices and graduates to work with local schools as peer role models.**



