



Young People's Experience of Careers Education A Youth Employment UK Report January 2015

Future - Vital - Life - Little - University-Employment - Young - People - Degree -Career - Knowledge - Important - Understand - Options - World of Work - Job - Diploma University – Secondary School - Masters -Undergraduate - BTEC - Year 11 - Degree Hons - BSc - A-Level - College - GCSE -Postgraduate - Sixth Form - Year 12 - Better Career - Lots - Important - Compulsory - Young People - Able - Options - Local - Work Experience - Offered Jobs - Taxes -School - Apprenticeships - Advice - Fairs -Enterprise Days - Personalised Teach Life

Skills





Foreword by Laura-Jane Rawlings CEO of Youth Employment UK CIC



It is time for the voices of young people to be heard in the hotly debated topic of careers education. For too long it has been the sole preserve of adults in organisations and political parties without serious consideration of the views of the ultimate young consumers at the heart of the debate. This report is a snapshot of what some young people in our networks experience and the changes they would like to see.

A plethora of research has been conducted into the need of careers education, what good practice looks like and how many schools are delivering good quality Information Advice and Guidance. Reports and manifestos have been submitted by many organisations including The British Chamber of Commerce¹, National

Union of Students, ²The Sutton Trust, ³Association of Colleges, Association of Employment and Learning Providers, Confederation of British Industry, The Recruitment and Employment Confederation and others who unanimously have called for an improvement to careers education in our schools.

Youth Employment UK CIC understands that for young people the lack of quality careers education, advice and guidance is a barrier to education and employment. Since our formation in 2011 young people have shared with us their experiences and concerns about careers education. Our young people have a first-hand knowledge, a current account of what is happening in education and the impact of youth unemployment, and they also have some pretty smart ideas on fixing things for their generation.

Youth unemployment is often talked about as statistics and in depersonalised information. At Youth Employment UK we do not see young people as statistics but as individuals who all need to be listened to and supported. There must be genuine consultation with young people when putting forward recommendations on policy that have an impact on them. Qualifying as an adult does not qualify us to speak on behalf of, or in fact know what is best for, each young person in the UK. The world has changed since our own time and experience of education and life as a young person. We must put their voices first to understand what is needed for today's young people.

Young people have been talked about and had policy done to them. This does not work. The time to engage, empower and work with our young people is now and is the only recipe for success: let them be heard. We will continue to champion young people and ask you to do the same.

3Available from http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/advancing-ambitions/

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¹ Available from www.britishchambers.org.uk/J4108_Skills%20Manifesto_v4.pdf

² Available from http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/resources/open/adviceandguidance/When-IAG-Grow-Up/





Laura-Jane Rawlings Chief Executive officer

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Summary and key findings

Youth Employment UK CIC wanted to understand more about the current careers education experience of young people. A survey was conducted among 16-24 year olds who had a current or recent experience of careers education services (full results are in the Appendix).

The key findings of the survey of 131 young people are:

- 1. 58% were provided with an interview with a professional careers advisor whilst in school or college. However, only 1% received advice about all of their options.
- 2. Of those who had interviews, 22% disagreed that all options were covered, 24% strongly agreed that they were given sufficient information on university courses. 28% disagreed that the interviews were inspiring and of those 6% agreed that the interview helped them make decisions.
- 3. None of the young people who took part were advised about traineeships, 24% were given advice about university courses, 9% were advised on post-GCSE study placements outside their current institute. 11% were given CV and application advice, 7% were advised on apprenticeships, 2% were given labour market information.
- 4. Only one young person out of the 130 was undertaking an apprenticeship and that young person undertook A Levels first before seeking out their own apprenticeship.
- 5. 58% took part in careers events, 70% took part in work experience and 51% had visits from inspirational speakers in their college or school.
- 6. All 131 young people who took part in the survey felt that the education system needed to do more to support young people.
- 7. The recommendations from young people taking part in this survey include:
 - Making careers education and work experience compulsory;
 - Ensuring that all pathways are covered including apprenticeships and vocational learning;
 - Including enterprise education;
 - Providing more opportunities to meet with employers at school and in an employer setting.

These young people certainly feel the need for a greater understanding of the world of work and careers available, a realistic expectation of what to expect and job hunting skills.

The Youth Employment UK research indicates that young people are still not receiving adequate support despite the changes and revision to the statutory duty upon schools to provide careers education and inspiration. It suggests the wide range of options available are not being discussed with young people and so critical decisions are being made without a full understanding of the options and labour market.





Introduction

YEUK has attended events across the UK speaking with young people about their experience of careers education and what their biggest barrier is when transferring from education into the world of work.

What has become clear to YEUK is the lack of understanding young people have of the routes that are available post 16 such as apprenticeships, work based training, vocational study and traineeships. The advice young people are given in order to make important GCSE subject choices in years 9 and 10 is limited. Not all young people receive careers education at this critical juncture.

It is also apparent that not all young people know that they can step out of education into work based training and that if they wish, they could step back into education at any time during their working life.

In this report, we share the responses of a short survey we ran from October 2014 to January 2015 from some of our young members about their experiences of careers education while still in education.

Young people were asked questions based on the advice they had been given, what that advice was, employer engagement, work related learning and the importance of a good careers education.

The views, experiences and recommendations of the young people included here helps decision-makers to reflect on the impact and delivery of current policy. Our report makes vital reading as it takes account of the end user of this service and the direct impact the service has on outcomes.

Background to Youth Employment UK

Youth Employment UK CIC (YEUK) is a national campaigning and membership organisation. It is the only organisation solely campaigning on issues concerning youth employment. When we started as an organisation in 2011, the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) exceeded 1 million.

As a membership organisation YEUK invites all of the stakeholders invested or affected by youth employment to join us. Our membership includes employers, educators, youth organisations, charities and young people - the voices of youth employment.

On behalf of our members YEUK lobbies government to address the barriers to youth employment. Members also benefit from our events, webinars, networking and information services that focus on our core principles:

- Youth voice
- Creating opportunity
- Recognising talent
- Fair employment
- Developing people





YEUK is home to the Youth Friendly Badge, recognising UK employers who support young people in some way as part of our campaign to tackle youth unemployment.

Careers Education in the UK

Educating the UK's future workforce and ensuring that young people can transition from education into work has been on the political agenda for decades. The responsibility for that journey has been inconsistent.

The Connexions Service provided statutory careers education from 1999-2002. The service was primarily introduced to prevent social exclusion and was set up within education institutes. However, this was then withdrawn and became a body in its own right open to contract, creating a non-uniformed approached to careers education across local authorities.

In 2011 the coalition government removed funding support for the careers service model and placed the onus on schools to determine and provide a careers service based on their needs. This left schools with the choice of outsourcing the service or in-house delivery, and yet demanded little accountability for provision⁴.

An Ofsted thematic review of careers guidance in 2013 found that only 1 in 5 schools were ensuring that pupils were receiving the level of information, advice and guidance they needed to support decision-making⁵.

It is widely reported by the business community, including The Confederation for British Industry and British Chamber of Commerce, that the UK education system is failing to provide young people with the information they need to progress, such as failing to develop work skills and how to apply effectively for jobs.

A high level of university applications and certain vocational courses indicate that the advice given to young people does not take into account labour market information and is not aligned with the skill demands of the UK economy.

Our research

Between October 2014 and January 2015, we ran an online survey with an active web link that was shared via social media platforms (Twitter and Facebook) and through member newsletters. All young people who took part did so anonymously, all that was revealed was the ISP of each respondent which enabled any duplicates to be removed.

The 131 young people who took part were aged 16-24:

- 68% respondents were still in education
- 32% respondents were no longer in education (left between 2010-2014)

⁴ Available from http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmeduc/632/632.pdf

⁵ Available from https://www.gov.uk/government/news/careers-guidance-in-schools-not-working-well-enough





All respondents were asked what level of education they had obtained or were currently working towards to date:

- 47% undertaking A levels,
- 29% had studied to graduate level
- 12% undertaking GCSE's
- 7% undertaking vocational based qualifications
- 2% studied at post grad level and carried on to masters
- >1% had studied an apprenticeship

What young people said

"Do you think careers education is important for young people?"

"Careers education is very important to young people, as they need to be aware of the many different options on offer to them. Parents don't always know the many different paths that their children may want to take, so it is important for there to be a variety of enriching training programmes etc on offer to young people."

"Young people need to know the options that are available to them and be given a realistic representation of the challenges and difficulties they may face and we are led to believe that going to university and graduating with a good result is a guarantee of employment which does not reflect reality and can be a big shock and quite damaging to the confidence of a young person."

"Yes, because it helps us to understand what we need to do in order to get where we need to be."

"As a young person, having a clear path for the future can be difficult and knowing where to start with this is hard. Having guidance and inspiration in this is extremely useful especially when offering possible career paths."

"When it's useful - I was given way too much information concerning irrelevant apprenticeships and little on how to succeed in an interview or what paths to take to start a career in the area I was interested in."

"Yes - gives much needed knowledge to young people and shows them what is expected of/from them."

"Yes, it opens our minds to opportunities we didn't know about that we could pursue."

"Yes because university level education is not for everyone. However, I feel we are pushed in that direction to the point we are unsure what else to do but go to university, with fear that without a degree we will not get a good paid job."

"It's a big world out there and I still don't know what to do as a career. There are jobs out there that I have never heard of so school should give you more options."

"Yes - gaining employment is crucial for the economy and for the best interests of each person yet the focus only seems to be on university."





"Yes - it helps young people consider what direction their further education or training should take. It also helps young people understand the careers market, recruitment, industry growth/decline etc."

"At school, I was pushed to going to university as I am 'intelligent'. Looking back, I would have liked more information on higher apprenticeships."

"Do you think schools should do more to help young people prepare for the world of work?"

"I think the full range of options should be explored as opposed to purely advertising the traditional route of sixth form followed by university. Volunteer opportunities should be advertised to help young people build up their skill sets and confidence. Young people should also be given a more realistic representation of the world of work instead of being shown a generic CV which will supposedly get you a job"

"Yes, I believe more work experience opportunities should arise when young people are in school/college- despite the one or two weeks that is offered to people at school, and some people finding work experience of their own, not all young people have the knowledge or connections and need to be offered it, and the different options explained in detail to them by a qualified careers guidance counsellor."

"More focus on the arts, small businesses, tax returns, information on being a freelance worker."

"Tailored and regular support, less pressure by stigmatising not getting top grades/e.g. apprenticeships."

"Make it more fun and challenge and also bring lots of inspirational speaker."

"More personalised advice."

"More advice in year 10."

"More careers advice on how to become whatever it is a young person may want to do as a job and the sort of grades needed to get that job."

"Work experience and more career events should take place."

"More days focused on how to get jobs and how to prepare for interviews etc."

"More information about different training options and all the different sorts of careers you could go into with the subjects you are studying and enjoy."

"More employment fairs and someone to take the time to listen to your interests. Work experience should be mandatory."

"More diverse help, less mainstream. Cater for everyone not just those who want to go to uni or get an apprenticeship."

"I would like creative jobs to be encouraged more - I work in Fashion now but I was never encouraged to follow it, in fact, I was often told it was a waste of time. I only got to be where I am

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through doing my own research and placements, not because I was given direction earlier on. There are so many types of jobs (e.g. marketing, visual merchandising) that recruit lots but are never mentioned before, as creative areas are just written off by most teachers."

"Jobs clubs, looking at different industry sectors, where jobs are available, vocational routes."

"More events, inspirational discussions, enterprise days, trips out, presentations, more opportunities that engage different cultures."

"More qualified careers and/or recruitment experts speaking to pupils. Pupils made aware of the wide range of options available rather than being pushed toward one option e.g. university."

"Yes - I was forced into university by my head of sixth form which led me into choosing a course which I hated and ended up leaving. I am now on a different course, but wish I was able to have had a year out in order to think things through. I am now in extra debt and won't get any further funding from student finance because of the year I quit. I think students definitely need more help deciding but also need support in other options that don't involve education - I truly believe it's not for everyone and some teachers force students into this anyway. I felt very much in a pressured environment during my sixth form years."

"School is nothing like 'the real world' so we need as much information as we can get because we have no idea what we're in for."

Conclusion

Our view is that provision has been inadequate since the government changed responsibility for the statutory duty of careers education. The Youth Employment UK survey of young people supports the evidence presented to the Education Select Committee in their review of the changes to the statutory duty and the Ofsted thematic review.

Young people are not being given the advice they need to make informed decisions. As a result, they are either taking a costly route post 16 or having to step back into education at their own cost to gain the qualifications they need to proceed on their career path.

In respect of accountability, currently young people are being held responsible for the mismatch in skills and behaviours, for not being career savvy or not doing enough to attain the experience they need for employers. Yet it is clear from the survey that young people are not receiving the information or support they need to develop their work skills or experience.

Young people feel that school should do more to prepare them for the world of work and that careers education is essential to help make informed choices at key decision times. Young people feel that better careers education would help them to progress successfully into the world of work.

Each young person is the consumer of careers education. They are the ones who pay a price financially and socially when they are not properly advised. The UK has a duty to ensure every child can progress and we are currently failing in that duty.

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Appendix - Survey Responses

1. Did your school or college provide you with an interview with a qualified careers professional to discuss your careers and education choices?

















