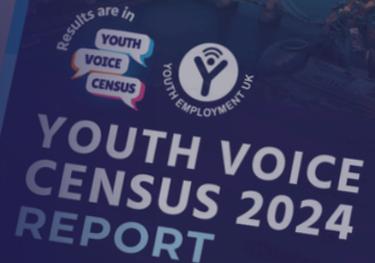




# Youth Voice Census 2024 Key Findings

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# Executive summary

**The Youth Voice Census has always been a space for young people across the UK to share their experiences.**

It provides us with the most comprehensive view of what it is like to be a young person in the UK, including what is working for them and the challenges and issues they face.

Challenge and compromise are major themes throughout this year's report. Mental health and anxiety, fears around safety and discrimination, and the rising cost of living continue to challenge young people.

Added to this is the lack of local connectivity; young people have access to fewer local services than ever before, either because the services they seek simply do not exist or because transport is unreliable, unavailable, or unsafe.

**Young people are forced to compromise on cost, safety, and/or location to access what they need.**

Overall, young people are less confident this year about their ability to access good opportunities for learning, training, or employment, a growing trend. A lack of stability contributes to this uncertainty, with increasing disruption, particularly for those still in education.

Confidence in employability skills has decreased at its fastest rate this year for young people currently in education, although it remains steady for those looking for work.

For those out of education and seeking employment, we see a growth in confidence regarding their understanding of the skills employers are looking for, and a marginal increase in the number of young people who know how to write a CV.

However, this does not yet translate into greater confidence in finding quality work, with 1 in 5 still unsure if they will be able to progress.

There are fewer spaces, places and moments for young people to develop themselves, and across the board, opportunities are down for young people.

Opportunities for enrichment have also reduced this year. For those in education, there are fewer opportunities to access arts, music, sports, and after-school clubs, with only half of young people having access. This reduction, coupled with fewer careers education opportunities, is leaving our youngest respondents worried and unprepared for what comes next.

For the most part, when work is of good quality, it is a positive experience for young people, especially apprentices. However, we see a reduction in work satisfaction this year, with money and location being factors, in addition to increased workloads, stress, pressure, and growing uncertainty.

We must also recognise that work and young people's expectations of work are changing, and are often different from those of their line managers and senior leadership teams.

**There is more work to be done in defining quality work for young people and supporting a successful transition into work, including a programme of support to ensure retention.**

Amidst all this, what is clear is the sense of unfairness from young people, the sense that the way things are stacked, it just will not work out for them. We must recognise that some groups have always, and continue to, receive less. The data shows the nuance in this, that receiving more of everything does not necessarily boost confidence, but receiving less will always leave you feeling further behind.

Young people want to be hopeful for their futures. There is a real sense that easing just one barrier could push them forward, closer to their next step. While there is much to change in our systems, young people are realistic and believe that if they were listened to and able to access the services they are entitled to, they would (for the most part) be able to take their next steps.

**Not everything needs to change, but what is available should work for everyone, everywhere.**



**Lauren Mistry**

Deputy CEO of  
Youth Employment UK



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# Youth Voice Census 2024

The results are in, with insight from **over 5,000** young people

7 years ago, we created the Youth Voice Census. Today, it is the largest data set of youth voices in the UK. This year we hit a milestone, capturing the views and experiences of more than 5,200 young people aged 11-30 from across the UK.

This booklet provides key insight into what young people have to say about: where they live, where they study or work, the wider experiences they have of support and opportunities and the biggest issues they are facing in 2024.



Key findings



Insights



Recommendations

# 1 Anxiety, safety, discrimination and the cost of living are the biggest issues for young people.

**Anxiety continues to impact young people, it is one of the biggest barriers young people face.**

**43%** of young people think anxiety will be one of their biggest barriers to finding work now or in the future.

**44%** of young people currently in work thought anxiety was a barrier when they were looking for work.

**3 in 5** young people indicated feeling anxious in their daily life.

**Discrimination is the biggest worry young people have for the country.**

**47%** of young people in education had personally experienced at least one instance of bullying or harassment.

**17%** of those in work had personally experienced at least one instance of bullying or harassment.

**61%** had witnessed at least one instance of bullying or harassment in their education setting.

## Young people are worried about safety where they live, work and study.

Young people are feeling 10 ppts less safe than last year.

**49%** of young people do not feel safe where they live.



Just over half felt they belong (**51%**) and **54%** feel that they can be themselves.

## Money worries are increasing,

with the cost of living influencing decisions on what young people can access both in terms of work and social experiences.

- The **economy is a major worry** for young people aged 14 onwards
- **33%** of young people in college or sixth form have **sought financial support** whilst in education



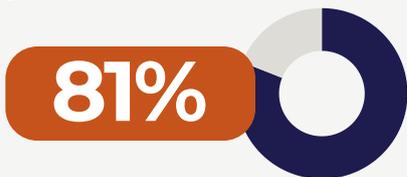
# 2 Readiness for next steps has dropped

Whether it is preparing for secondary school, college, training or work, young people feel less prepared than they did last year.

## Life continues to lack stability.

Young people are reporting more disruption than last year, even higher than experienced at the height of the pandemic.

For those in education, this is up 28 pts on last year and sits at **81%** reporting disruption.



This is predominantly driven by ill health and strikes.

## There is greater uncertainty regarding study and career plans.

**87%** of those looking for work changed the type of work they were looking for.

**2 in 5** young people in education have changed their study choices.

**Over half**

of young people in work have **changed their career plans** in the last 12 months.

# Young peoples confidence in their skills is down from last year

It is leaving young people unsure what the best choices will be for their next steps.

**Confidence continues to decline for those in education...**

**36%** of young people in secondary school think they understand the skills employers are looking for.

**A third** of young people feel like their school supports them.

**Young people in education feel less confident across all employability skills.**

**but remains steady for those on their journey to work.**

**51%** feel they understand the skills employers are looking for, a rise of 6 ppts on last year.

Those out of education feel more prepared.

But, they still don't feel they will progress into a good job.

**31%**

**of those out of education think that employers are supportive of hiring them, a reduction from last year.**

# 3 Opening up opportunities

Overall, opportunities for **enrichment, extracurricular activities and fun are down again this year.**

**In addition, the majority of careers exploration opportunities are down this year for young people in secondary school.**

**There are groups still getting less.**

The biggest inequality in opportunities is for Black, African, Black British or Caribbean respondents, care experienced respondents, young people with additional needs, and those eligible for free school meals.

While more young people were able to go on school trips this year, we saw:

- Access to sports clubs is **down 6 pts**
- Access to learning a musical instrument is **down 7 pts**
- Access to enrichment and engagement activities is **down 9 pts**

Over **1 in 10** young people did not participate in any activity over the last 12 months.

**Work experience** is up for young people in secondary school, with the biggest increase seen for 14 - 16 year olds.

**36%**

**of young people had access to work experience in secondary school.**

## Where you live matters.

Location is a bigger factor in decisions about study and work than in previous years.

Young people in education and work are finding travel and location more challenging to manage this year.

**Cost, access and safety** of travel play a big part in what extracurricular activities young people can participate in.

Parents are more likely to be picking up support for all areas.

This year it has increased by:

**4 ppts** for mental health support.

**5 ppts** for financial support.

**1 IN 4**

young people reported that they cannot access support for their mental health issues.

**1 IN 5**

indicated that they could not access financial support.

# 4 Overall, work is a positive place for young people.

83%

think that their working environment is supportive.

70%

of respondents are happy in their current job role.

70%

of respondents would describe their employer as youth friendly.

The number of respondents happy in their current job role is slightly down on last year. **This is largely driven by young people wanting fairer pay.**

This is **especially true for apprentices**, there are more young people considering another job alongside their apprenticeship this year.

# But workload, stress and pressure is increasing

For young people in work, **3 in 5** have reported an increase in stress and pressure over the last year.



**55%**



**Just over half** of young people are confident that they will be able to **progress into a good job.**

For those looking, it is **harder to find and access quality work this year**, a growing trend for young people.

**10%**



**of young people think that they will be able to access quality work where they live.**

**Young people are looking for an employer** with fair pay, opportunities to progress and be promoted, and employers being supportive and inclusive of young people.

# Recommendations



01

Ensure that opportunities to access youth provision, sports, volunteering and other forms of enrichment are accessible to young people where they live.

02

Ensure young people are better able to share their voice on what they need to progress.

Commit to making the services around young people work by ensuring that EHCP plans, mental health services, care support and support with housing is available when they need it.



# Recommendations

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**03**

**Build the Young Person's Guarantee at a hyper-local level.**

**Ensure that there are quality training, apprenticeship and employment opportunities for young people where they live and that barriers such as transport and costs are removed.**

**04**

**Encourage employers to understand their role in developing good quality opportunities for young people, recognising the Good Youth Employment Standards and encouraging employers to measure their activity with the Good Youth Employment Benchmark.**

# Next steps

**We support our Members to develop their youth employment practice.**

Every organisation in our Membership community must be willing to commit themselves to recognising the importance of the 10 Good Youth Employment Standards.

Through our Membership and the growing commitments to these Standards, we are collectively making a difference with every opportunity.

COMMITTED TO  
**GOOD YOUTH  
EMPLOYMENT  
STANDARDS** 2024

We celebrate our Members with the Good Youth Employment Standards Badge, with a host of additional benefits.

**Start your membership journey and get:**



**Expert Insight**



**Exclusive Events**



**Entry into our Awards**



**Join a community voice**



# Support tomorrow's workforce with us

We are committed to setting the standard for Good Youth Employment.

We are ideally placed to understand the complex employment landscape and to support employers, young people, and policy makers as we drive for full youth employment.

Membership with us is being part of a system that supports and champions good youth employment practices.

Join these organisations already working with us

PREZZO



careersinracing.com



Start your membership journey

Speak to us today, our team is ready to hear from you.

[members@youthemployment.org.uk](mailto:members@youthemployment.org.uk)





# Your pledge

## Write down your own next steps and share it

Now you've heard what over 5,000 young people had to say, what actions are you committed to taking? It can be about your commitment to recruit, train and support young talent. Or, it could relate to your early careers outreach.

Fill in your pledge and share it on social media, however you want. It's your pledge and you can choose how to use it.

This is a chance to show other organisations and young people that you listen to youth voices and are making plans to support young people with their futures.

Scan the QR for a free Canva template that you can share.







Results are in  
**YOUTH  
VOICE  
CENSUS**



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**WWW.YOUTHEMPLOYMENT.ORG.UK**