



THE CAREERS &  
ENTERPRISE  
COMPANY



YOUTH VOICE

# CENSUS REPORT 2020



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# FOREWORD:

**Laura-Jane Rawlings,**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Youth Employment UK

I write this foreword more worried than I have ever been about young people. Whether they are still in education, taking their next steps, in employment or searching for work – young people will now find every step harder. Those who face levels of disadvantage are likely to see those gaps widen, and the impact of COVID-19 on youth unemployment is likely to be catastrophic.



**Laura-Jane Rawlings**

Youth Employment UK was set up after the economic crash in 2008 that led to a rise in youth unemployment to 1 million. This year we could see that rise to between 1.5 and 2 million. Depending on how long some parts of the economy take to recover, young people will find it harder to access the labour market than ever before.

This is why we must take action; we must collectively ensure that young people have the skills, knowledge and confidence to enable them to find their pathway and we must ensure that they don't fall further victim because of their age. Employers and those organisations supporting young people must come together to create good quality opportunities, opportunities where young people have influenced what good looks like to them.

We must stop deciding what young people need without listening to them. Using the data from this Census and other youth consultation to work with young people and help reshape the world before them, to be bold and create a Youth Friendly UK where every young person can fulfil their potential. With that radical thinking we must also ensure that young people with additional needs are better supported, the Census tells us that these young people are being left behind and it is unacceptable

that young people who need us the most are the last to be helped.

The class of 2020 is going to be more different than we can imagine, with support needs that we have to recognise and respond to. We see from the Census that our current system has not prepared young people for what is coming as a result of the Coronavirus and so we have to step in and rapidly fill the gaps. More so in a local context, as young people have

told us that they do not feel confident that there are good opportunities where they live.

I could not be prouder of the resilience shown by young people in the last few months and know that they will keep exceeding my expectations – it is time for us to do the same. Youth Employment UK will continue to be their biggest champion and I urge you to stand with us.

Before I leave you to immerse yourself in the findings of this year's report, I would like to warmly thank our sponsors bp plc, The Careers and Enterprise Company, Pearson and The Skills Builder Partnership, for supporting this Youth Voice Census. Youth Employment UK is a non-funded organisation, and your support is much appreciated. I'd like to extend my gratitude to all those who contributed to the question setting – and, finally, a big thank you for my team and all they have done to bring this Youth Voice Census report together.

# OUR NEXT STEPS

Youth Employment UK will be using the information provided by young people in the census to develop our services and continue our work in delivering our three core objectives:

<p><b>To give young people a voice and empower them to be more prepared for the world of work</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invest further in our online resources, providing greater opportunities for young people, including personalisation of content and opportunities</li> <li>2. Develop real-time supporting resources to specific youth and employment issues brought on by COVID-19</li> <li>3. Grow our ambassador team to represent youth voice in more key issues and planning</li> <li>4. Create a suite of resources which can be utilised on and offline to support those young people without access to technology</li> <li>5. Lead on best practice for engaging with young people with additional needs, following on from our work with Sheffield University</li> </ol>
<p><b>To help organisations be better equipped to support young people and adopt Youth Friendly principles</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with employers to support young people through the changing landscape and encourage ongoing recruitment</li> <li>2. Put the Youth Friendly Employer Mark and Framework centre of the work of organisations supporting and employing young people. Young people need to know who the best-in-class organisations are</li> <li>3. Ensure that we are providing the most up to date support to our member organisations to embed best youth employment practice including additional resources to support the unique situation brought on by COVID-19</li> <li>4. Review with young people what they see as best practice when it comes to employers developing digital alternatives to early careers engagement, work experience and employment</li> </ol>
<p><b>To ensure that government policy is geared towards the real needs of young people</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to support the COVID-19 Youth Employment Response group, ensuring that policy recommendations are joined up and serve the needs of all young people</li> <li>2. Adapt the agenda for the All-Party-Parliamentary Group for 2020 to ensure it is focused on the impact of COVID-19 on youth employment</li> <li>3. Provide more opportunities for young people to engage with their MP and ensure where they live is youth friendly</li> </ol>

# FOREWORD:

**John Yarham,**  
Interim Chief Executive,  
The Careers & Enterprise Company

The Youth Voice Census provides us with valuable insights into young people's attitudes to work, education and related issues.

This year, the Census captures a timely snapshot of the state of play just before the full impact of the COVID-19 lockdown hit. It also provides a reminder of the importance of careers education for young people soon to transition into a post-COVID-19 economy.

Much of that insight is positive – young people tell us they were enjoying more work experience opportunities, that they value meaningful work experience, and that they feel it has helped them prepare for the world of work.

This chimes with the picture emerging from our own evidence and experience. Over the last few years, schools, colleges and employers have got better at working together to help prepare young people for the world of work. More and more young people were benefiting from regular interactions with employers while at school and college.

But the sudden closure of schools, colleges and businesses across the country has changed everything. The challenges now facing young people about to enter the workforce are unprecedented.

Nobody can predict with confidence what the next 12 months will hold. But it will undoubtedly present significant challenges to those about to embark on the beginnings of their career journey.

It also presents significant challenges to those of us whose business is helping them on that journey. We must continue to adapt the support we provide to young people – whether that is work experience, careers guidance or opportunities to engage with employers – within the ongoing restrictions of social distancing. This will require changes. But we must adapt within, rather than outside, the strategic approach that has driven progress over recent years – the Gatsby Benchmark framework.

And while we're all in this together, the unfortunate truth is that the long-term impact of the lockdown on our economy won't be shared equally. As in previous economic shocks, the young – and particularly those from poorer backgrounds – will be hit hardest. That inequality is also a theme this Youth Voice Census underscores. In this sense, the pandemic has amplified an existing challenge, rather than created a new one.

There is no doubt whatsoever that all of us that work in this field will have to re-double our effort if we are to rise to this challenge. Once schools, colleges and businesses begin to reopen, we owe it to these young people to not just go back to 'business as normal'.

One silver lining is that the improvements in careers education and guidance over the last few years give us a solid base to build from. And research like the Youth Voice Census allows us to hear directly from young people about a way forward. It tells us how much they value meaningful work experience, one-to-one support, and personal careers guidance, for example.

The next year will be challenging for all of us, but particularly for young people. But by listening to the voices of young people, and acting on what they say, we will find a way forward.

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# INTRODUCTION

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This Youth Voice Census report, the third of its kind, is a much-anticipated look at how young people are feeling on a range of issues related to education, work and the areas in which they live. Open to 14-24 year olds across the UK, it captures the voice of young people within our network and allows them the chance to be heard.

Built with the feedback and support of young people as well as in collaboration with partners across the sector, the Youth Voice Census has seen small adaptations this year to provide a better user experience and to provide a richer source of information for all.

The Youth Voice Census is such an important initiative. It allows us to identify where things are improving, where tensions remain and what more we should all be doing to better support young people as they navigate the ever changing pathways from education into employment. This year's census was open from 3rd February to 6th April 2020. The vast majority (83%) of responses were received before the pandemic took hold.

Where response data allows we have analysed the findings against gender, race and ethnicity, age, eligibility for free school meals and additional needs. Where we discuss these factors we do so because the data shows statistical differences. Our ambition for the Youth Voice Census has always been that young people have an opportunity to share their journey, what is working for them and what they need more of. We have taken a grass roots and organic approach to growing our audience which means, in certain question sets, full analysis of all groups is not available.

This year's census findings tell the story of those in education, work and seeking work just as the landscape is set to change in an unprecedented way.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This year is like no other; the changes to the nation have been vast and far-reaching, with many of the solutions and long term impacts of Coronavirus as yet unknown. We anticipate that youth unemployment could rise by as much as two million in this year alone.

Overnight we saw the closure of schools, colleges and universities followed by businesses closing their doors. Staff have found themselves in a new world of working from home, furloughed, made redundant or working on the front line in circumstances previously unimaginable.

This situation is not a leveller – some demographics will be hit harder than others. Everyone is feeling unsure, uneasy and uncertain of their future. Our report on the [role of the family in social mobility](#) saw some stark differences in the way parents are able to transfer social, economic and cultural capital to their children. Social mobility has been stagnant for 10+ years and now the health crisis will amplify those gaps and result in even more young people facing disadvantage falling behind.

We know that young people suffer most in times of economic uncertainty. We are fearful of the scarring long-term impacts this pandemic will have on them and their future prospects. None of us could have pre-planned careers advice for a pandemic, but the Youth Voice Census shares unique insights from young people about what support they are getting, what really works for them and what they want more of.

Young people tell us that they need more work experience and more experiences of the world of work. We are delighted to see that more respondents received work experience opportunities in schools this year as well as visits from apprentices and employers to schools being on the rise too. These are important milestones which will be at risk in the world of social distancing and an economy in recession.

The playing field is not equal for all of our young people. The information you receive will depend on your gender, eligibility for free school meals and numerous other elements of your background, including any additional needs you may have. Pathways are opened up or closed down by the conversations you have about your future. What we do know is that young people need support navigating their decisions and deciphering the information they are given – they ask for more one-to-one guidance and support to navigate decisions at every stage of education. Once young people leave the school environment they become difficult to reach and support, and individual conversations take time and effort that few organisations are set up for.

Young people's confidence is plummeting; confidence in finding work is decreasing and the number of young people suffering with wellbeing in work is on the rise. Young people believe they will face additional barriers including lack of work experience and not knowing what skills they need. This anxiety is gaining momentum.

For the first time young people told us that they believed their social status would be a barrier for them to progress into work. Disability and discrimination also featured more prominently than in other years.

For those who can navigate a difficult minefield and find themselves in employment, there is good news, in particular, for those in apprenticeships – the confidence and happiness levels for those in work are the highest reported in this year's census. Despite seeing a slight decline in some of the percentages compared to last year, across all groups in the survey those in work are likely to be having the most positive time. We know what it takes to be a Youth Friendly Employer and what it is that young people value the most from the organisations they work with.

We will continue in our work to support young people and employers. Since the pandemic started we have created additional supporting resources for young people, employers, schools and parents alongside our continuing support across the sector. We have proactively helped to found the COVID-19 Youth Employment Group alongside Impetus,

The Youth Futures Foundation, the Institute of Employment Studies and The Prince's Trust. We are determined to lead the way in tackling the youth unemployment challenge that is before us and ensuring that all young people can fulfil their potential.



# KEY FINDINGS

## Demographics:

1,390 young people responded to the 2020 Youth Voice Census

40% Male  
56% Female  
4% Other

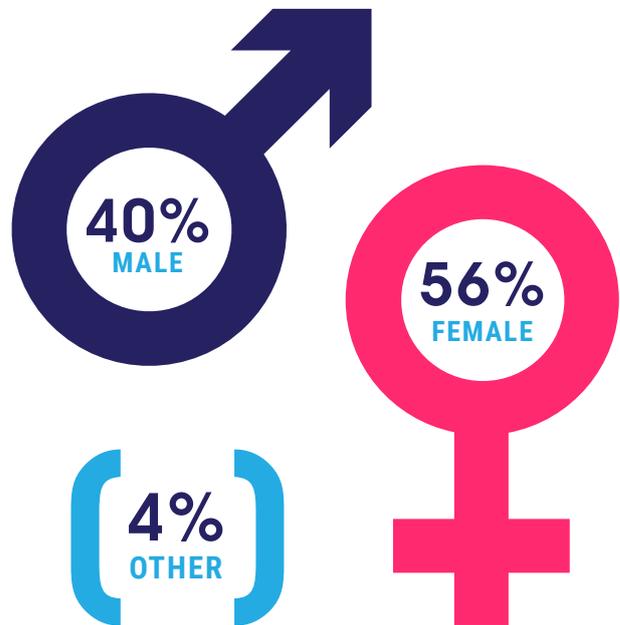
57% aged 14-16  
25% aged 17-19  
18% aged 20+

12% were eligible for free school meals at some point during secondary school

17% identified as having additional needs

82% of respondents were white  
11% of respondents were Asian  
5% of the respondents were black  
2% of the respondents classified themselves as other or preferred not to say

### GENDER



### AGE GROUPS



## The breakdown of additional needs:

Social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)	<b>35%</b>
Specific learning difficulty	<b>29%</b>
Autistic spectrum disorder	<b>25%</b>
Other	<b>22%</b>
Behaviour, emotional & social difficulties	<b>17%</b>
Moderate learning difficulty	<b>15%</b>
Physical disability	<b>14%</b>
Visual impairment	<b>12%</b>
Speech, language and communications needs	<b>10%</b>
SEN support but no specialist assessment of type	<b>8%</b>
Hearing impairment	<b>7%</b>
Multi-sensory impairment	<b>6%</b>
Severe learning difficulty	<b>5%</b>
Profound & multiple learning difficulty	<b>5%</b>

## 1. Work experience is on the up for those in school

Work experience was offered to 66% of respondents during their time in secondary school, up by 14 percentage points (ppt) on last year and up 15 ppt from 2018 scores. Student satisfaction in the work experience offered remains high, although young people would like to see more choice available to them.

We also see positive movement in scores for apprenticeship visits, up by 4 ppt on last year and employer visits in schools, up by 3 ppt for those in secondary schools.

Work experience is down by 6 ppt for those in college or sixth form to 50% and down 29 ppt for those in university. Young people told us that there should be more done to make work experience and opportunities to learn about the world of work more available in these settings.

## 2. Careers information inequality

Careers support and the information received can be skewed by your age, race, gender, eligibility for free school meals or additional needs. The pathways and opportunities discussed differ for young people and impact those with protected characteristics more negatively than those without. This difference in information was evident in both school, college and sixth forms.

We asked all respondents to indicate which pathways had been discussed in schools and how often.

### Gender

*Young men are sold the vocational route. Young women are sold the academic route.*

Throughout the Youth Voice Census we see evidence of young men hearing more about vocational pathways than young women, but also that young women hear about academic pathways a disproportionate amount when compared to other pathways.

- 59% of young women had the option of going to university discussed with them 5 times or more whilst in secondary school. In fact, only 6% of female respondents had never had university discussed with them.
- Young men were more likely to hear about traineeships (28%) and starting their business (49%).
- Young men were more likely to hear about apprenticeships more often than young women with 31% of young men hearing about apprenticeships 5 times or more compared to 24% of young women.

### Race

*Black respondents were less likely to hear about all of the options.*

- 33% of black respondents had never had apprenticeships discussed with them compared to 13% of white respondents.
- 22% of black respondents had never had going to university discussed with them compared to 9% of white respondents.

### Additional needs

*Those with additional needs are less likely to hear about all of the options available to them.*

- 52% of those with additional needs had the option of going to university discussed with them, compared to 59% of those without additional needs. Those with additional needs are also twice as likely to have never had going to university discussed with them.
- 19% of those with additional needs had never had apprenticeships discussed with them, compared to 11% of those without additional needs.

### Free school meals

*Students who had received free school meals are more likely to be told about Jobcentres*

Although accessing Jobcentre provision was not often discussed amongst respondents, those who received free school meals reported more instances of this than those who were not eligible for free school meals.

- Those who received free school meals in school were 20% more likely to have been told about accessing Jobcentre provision than those who were not eligible.

### 3. Confidence, wellbeing and barriers: Today's challenges are all holding young people back

#### Confidence

*Young men are typically more confident than young women or those with additional needs.*

Throughout the survey young people were asked their confidence level on a number of different factors relating to education, employment, unemployment and employability skills. Across the whole sample, confidence remained stagnant or dropped from last year's score.

- 13% of young people were 'very confident' to 'extremely confident' that they would find quality jobs in their local area.

We know that confidence is impacted by gender; the young men surveyed were more likely to rate themselves as being highly confident on issues relating to finding work in the future, with young women being less sure.

Those with additional needs had, on average, 10% less confidence in their employability skills. They were also 11% less confident in being able to secure meaningful work in the future.

Black respondents were at least twice as likely as their white peers to say they 'were not very confident' in all but one of the employability skills discussed. 34% of black respondents were 'not very confident at all' that there would be quality work opportunities in their local area compared to 22% of asian respondents and 9% of white respondents.

#### Wellbeing

*Whilst happiness scores are highest for those in work we see a rise in mental health and wellbeing issues for young people is following them in to the workplace.*

33% of respondents reported that they struggle with their wellbeing at work, up by 12 ppt on last year's score. In addition to this, in our free text commentary throughout the survey we hear often from young people who are anxious about their next steps and unsure where to turn. The percentage of respondents highlighting that they were suffering from anxiety and depression was up on last year too.

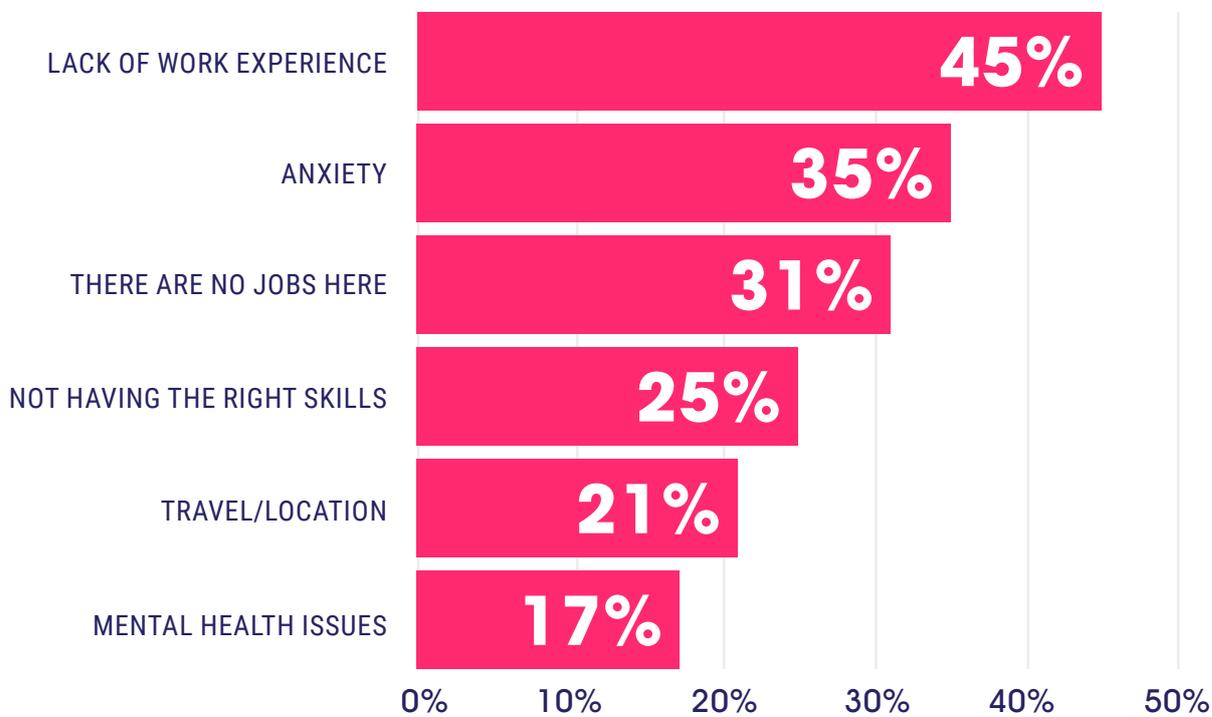
#### Barriers

We asked all respondents the biggest barriers they thought they might face in accessing employment. The most common answers were:

- Mental health
- Location
- Lack of jobs
- Disability
- Lack of work experience
- Social status
- Discrimination

Those young people who had experience of being NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) highlighted their barriers to be:

**WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST BARRIER TO GETTING A JOB? \*TOP 5**



## 4. Young people aren't being prepared

### Not all options are created equally

*Academic qualifications are still discussed with students more frequently than vocational qualifications – and 77% of them have never been told how to use a Jobcentre to its best advantage when seeking work.*

Traditional academic routes were more likely to be discussed with young people throughout years 9 and 10 at school. 93% had GCSEs discussed and 60% had A levels discussed. We are pleased to see that 57% had BTECs discussed with them but other vocational choices were discussed with 22% of this sample, and English Baccalaureate (EBacc) – with 18% and 6% of the sample – had T levels discussed with them.

We see also that whilst attending university had been discussed with over half of the respondents five times or more throughout their time in school, vocational options and alternative choices were more rarely discussed.

**% of respondents who had discussions 5 times of more:**

- 56% attending university
- 49% joining sixth form
- 50% attending college

**% of respondents who had never had discussions:**

- 55% starting a business
- 77% accessing Jobcentre provision
- 76% traineeships

Young people, young women in particular, can make it through school and college without recalling any interactions with a careers advisor and without ever seeing inside of a business (through work experience or through visits to employer sites).

### One-to-one support

*What is the key improvement in careers education that young people reference time and time again? Personalised one-to-one support.*

Having access to a careers advisor in school is down by 8 ppt on last year's scores to 59%, down 3 ppt for those in college to 44%. Whilst the percentage of young people who had received a one-to-one session with a careers advisor at university was down by 25 ppt to 41%, 82% of those at university said they had access to a careers advisor.

We must recognise the importance of quality one-to-one support to young people. Throughout the survey young people were given the option to talk about what careers support they needed and what could have improved their career confidence at each stage of education. Notably, whenever young people were given the opportunity to share their opinions, they told us that they needed one-to-one support to navigate their skills, think about their next options and access work.

We also asked those who had spent time NEET what support they would require and we saw commentary around one-to-one support, with people that know and understand them and their skills on hand to help them plan their next steps.

## 5. Increased engagement for those in work, especially apprentices

*Young people should not be stigmatised for a perceived lack of work ethic. Young people – especially apprentices – find employment stimulating and rewarding.*

The employment journey might not be easy, but the young people who did find work displayed the most positive feedback and engagement scores of any other group surveyed. This was especially true for those in apprenticeships. Whilst some engagement scores were slightly down on last year, those in employment were still the happiest of the sample.

59% of respondents in work were 'happy' or 'very happy' in their current role. 64% were 'likely' or 'very likely' to rate their employer as Youth Friendly.

83% of those in apprenticeships rated their apprenticeship as 'good' or 'very good' and 72% thought their apprenticeship was 'helpful' or 'very helpful' in preparing them for the next step.

# METHODOLOGY

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We recognise that this Youth Voice Census is not statistically representative of every young person in the UK. The Census gives us an excellent indication on how young people feel on issues surrounding employability, education and careers right now. The participants reflect the views of the young people in our network.

The 2020 participant sample is over represented by 14-16 year olds. This provides excellent insight into the real-time experiences of young people currently in education and the skills, careers and education support and experience they are receiving.

The respondents mirror well the representation of free school meal recipients and those with additional needs as well as gender division as a whole.

Information and insight on the 2018 pilot 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. This year we have further adapted the survey, following feedback from young people. We have received additional support in analysing the data from The Institute of Employment Studies.

Our improvements for 2020 have included adapting some questions to offer a better experience for young people. As a result, not all questions will be directly comparable to last year's report. We have also included a new section entitled 'where you live' covering details on local areas with a focus on safety, transport, access to youth services and quality jobs.

The survey has been designed to engage 14-24 year olds, asking all young people the same set of questions around careers education and work experience in school, employability skills and social action, and their local area. Additional questions surfaced depending on the respondent's journey to date. Subsections include college and sixth form,

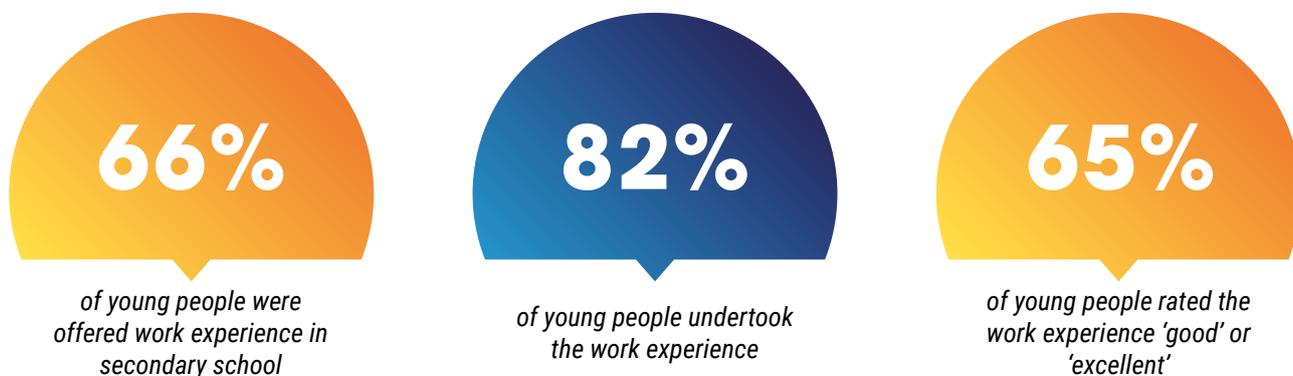
university, traineeships, apprenticeships, those in work, those who are currently or have spent time NEET (not in education, employment or training), and those who have set up their own business.

We recognise the challenges of using surveys as a research method. There is a risk of fatigue when filling in long surveys such as this, as well as when questions appear repetitive, as was necessary for this survey. We are therefore particularly encouraged to note the number of young people who added voluntary comments and suggestions where free-text allowed, suggesting a high level of engagement with the issues explored. We know that recalling incidents of careers interactions and advice at school, especially for those who left some years ago, has the possibility of being unreliable. We sense check this year on year and supplement with qualitative focus groups and interviews where required.

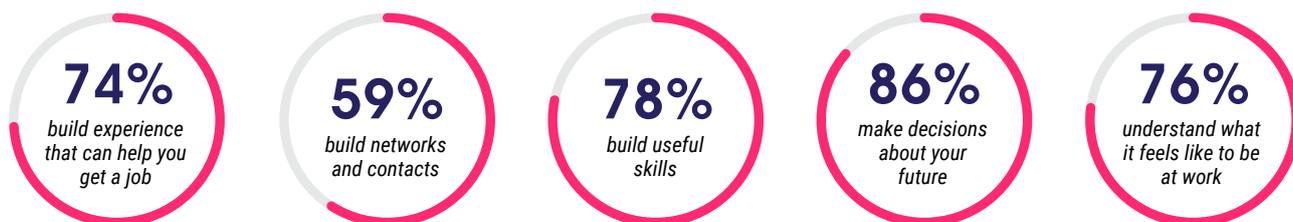
The 2020 Youth Voice Census has received support from bp plc, The Careers and Enterprise Company, Pearson and The Skills Builder Partnership.

# WORK EXPERIENCE IN SCHOOL

This section asks young people about work experience placements they have received in school. Questions are asked to the whole sample and work experience refers to a 'traditional' block placement. We explore other 'Experiences of Work' respondents might have had within our careers education section.



## % of young people who 'agree' or 'strongly agree' that work experience helps them to:



*This year's increase in work experience opportunities has been welcomed by students who recognise its value. Who is doing the most to source opportunities? Parents, carers... and young people themselves.*

The number of young people who stated that they were offered work experience in secondary school was up from last year, from 52% to 66%.

Whilst 68% of white respondents had been offered work experience only 50% of black respondents and 55% of Asian respondents had.

Young people who were black or Asian were more likely to ‘strongly disagree’ with every work experience statement. Black and Asian respondents were 3 to 4 more likely to say they strongly disagreed that work experience helped them build contacts, helped them make decisions on work and helped them build useful skills than their white counterparts.

Of those respondents 72% were offered work experience in Year 10. Young men were twice as likely to receive work experience in Year 9 (10% of young men vs 5% of young women). 20% of young women received work experience in Year 12 vs 14% of young men.

When asked when they thought work experience should start in schools 12% believed it should start between 11 and 13 years of age, 79% thought it should start between 14 and 16 years of age 3% thought it should start at 17+ and 2% didn’t believe work experience should start in school at all.

### Did anyone help you find the work experience?

Parents/Carer	<b>30%</b>
Youth worker	<b>1%</b>
The school found the placement	<b>24%</b>
Through a relative or friend	<b>8%</b>
I found it myself	<b>29%</b>
Other	<b>8%</b>

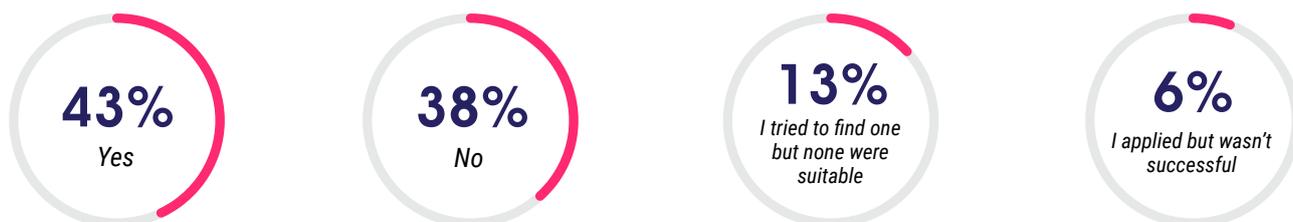
Whilst 24% of young people were found a placement through the school, a wider portion had parents, carers and relatives find them opportunities, with 29% sourcing a placement themselves. Young women were more likely to have to source their own placements: 33% had to find their own placements vs 21% of young men.

When asked to rate their work experience, most respondents (90%) rated their time as ‘ok’ or above, with 10% of young people rating their experience as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’. Overall comments about work experience were positive (but there was a real recognition in free text commentary that for work experience to be valuable it had to be of interest, of good quality and be supported). Young people were keen to point out that doing poor quality placements not linked to their interests did not feel valuable to them.

## Experiencing work

43% of young people had a job whilst in secondary school. We included extra options this year to capture those young people who had looked (but hadn't been successful), and those who couldn't find anything suitable. These options were included to help us ascertain better if young people were seeking work and, if so, what the barriers might be.

### Did you have a job whilst in school?



## How could work experience in schools be improved?

- Focus on all job types, vocational and academic
- Offer more opportunities to gain work experience throughout the duration of school
- Offer work experience placements based on a student's interests
- Offer all students the opportunity to undertake work experience, not just certain groups

*“ More support finding placements.”*

*“ Some companies that were free for children were far from home and required transport some children could not afford to have the best experience where they chose to complete it.”*

*“ 1-to-1 careers support specifically about finding work experience.”*

# CHOICES

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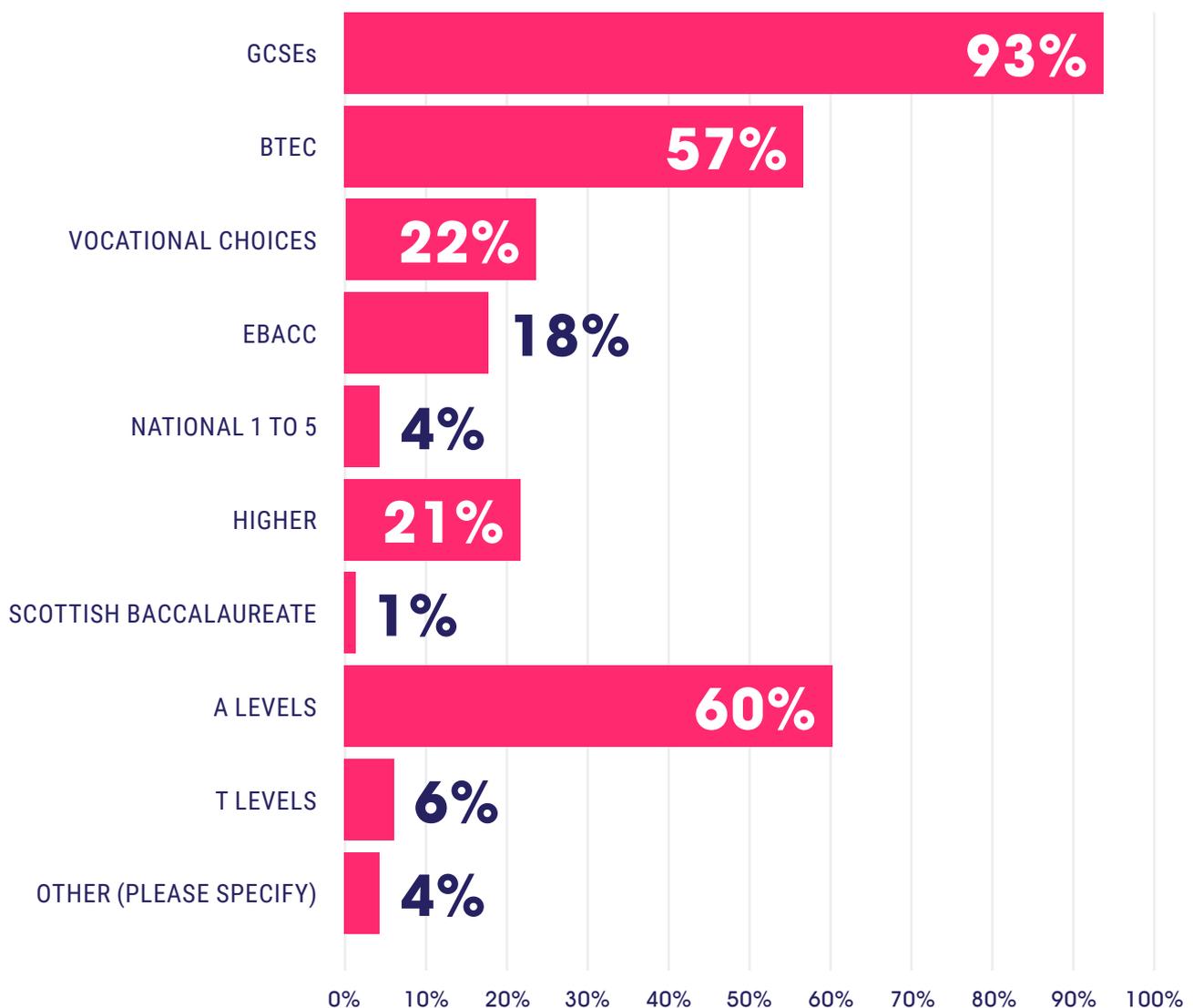


Pearson

Young people used the census to clarify what choices were offered and discussed with them whilst in secondary school, as well as what careers and employability information they were receiving. These questions were asked to all respondents.

*BTECs join GCSEs and A levels as the most-discussed next step for students aged 14-16.*

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



GCSEs, A levels and BTEC were the most discussed topics amongst respondents. Less than one in five of the respondents reported that other topics were discussed with them in years 9 and 10. 14-16 year olds are most likely to have heard about BTECs (49%), EBaccs (19%) and T levels (8%).

67% of respondents felt that the options available to them at school suited their style of learning. 49% of black respondents agreed that the options available suited them compared to 68% of white respondents. For those who felt the learning style did not suit them, the main reasons recorded were lack of choices, disruption to their course, or the options they had wanted not being available once they joined.

**We also asked young people how often the following options were discussed with them in secondary school.**

	<b>% of those who had had one instance or more of this being discussed:</b>
Traineeships	<b>24%</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>86%</b>
University	<b>92%</b>
Starting a business	<b>45%</b>
Sixth form	<b>83%</b>
College	<b>91%</b>
Accessing the Jobcentre	<b>23%</b>

56% stated that they had university as a next step discussed with them 5 times or more, 49% had attending sixth form discussed with them 5 times or more and 50% had attending college discussed with them 5 times or more.

There were three topics that were never discussed amongst a high percentage of the respondents: traineeships (76%), starting a business (55%), and accessing Jobcentre provisions (77%).

Black respondents were less likely to have had apprenticeships and going to university discussed with them. 33% of black respondents had never had apprenticeships discussed with them compared to 13% of white respondents. 22% of black respondents had never had going to university discussed with them compared to 9% of white respondents.

Whilst numbers for discussions relating to starting a business or traineeships were low, overall it was a topic more commonly discussed with the young men in our sample. In contrast, university being a topic discussed more commonly and more frequently with young women.

Those with additional needs were less likely to hear about apprenticeships and attending university than those who did have additional needs. 11% of those without additional needs had never been told about apprenticeships – but for those with additional needs this rises to 19%. Those with additional needs were also twice as likely to have never been told about attending university (12%).

Although accessing Jobcentre provisions on the whole was not frequently discussed amongst respondents, those who received free school meals were 20% more likely to have been told about it. 40% of those who received free school meals indicated that they had had this discussed with them at least once, vs 20% of those who had never received free school meals.

## Influencers

*When it comes to career choices, the biggest influencer for a young person in 2020 is themselves.*

When it came to making choices about next steps, half of the respondents stated that they were guided by their own choices and 21% stated that they were most influenced by their own career aspirations.

### What influenced you most when you were choosing what to study?

Parents/carers	<b>11%</b>
Careers aspirations	<b>21%</b>
Teachers	<b>3%</b>
My own choice	<b>50%</b>
Peers and friends	<b>1%</b>
It was the only option	<b>3%</b>
Not being able to choose what I wanted	<b>3%</b>
Independent research	<b>2%</b>
Careers advisor	<b>1%</b>
Career talk	<b>1%</b>
Employer talk in school	<b>0%</b>
Other	<b>4%</b>

Whilst 52% of white respondents stated that their biggest influence on choosing what to study was their own choice, or black respondents this figure was 28%.

## What can schools do to help young people progress?

- Listen
- More choice
- More information on the pathways
- More careers support

*“ Explain the full UCAS system for University clearly – are students aware they can defer and offer? That, courses with an Hons is important? The option of clearing? How to keep track of their progress? ”*

*“ Assistance if students are not going to their schools Post 16. Advise on how to prepare for that transition (alumni coming in to talk). ”*

*“ Opportunities beyond the Tertiary sector and Business sector (e.g. Finance, accounting, IT, marketing and sales). ”*

*“ Given me more information on my next steps which i had to figure out for myself and chose my courses by my own choice and knowledge. ”*

*“ Focus on finding a career that suits you. ”*

*“ Talked to us about different paths that we can take in the future. ”*

*Many young people know what they want to do in life. They just want more support and encouragement to do it.*

As an additional question this year, we asked young people if they had any career aspirations. Whilst around 10% of respondents said they didn't know or were unsure, the majority had at least an idea of the sector they were interested in, a range of sectors appeared including law, teaching, trades and medicine. A high proportion of the respondents were very enthusiastic and talked at length about jobs they would love!

*“ From a very young age I have been inspired by doctors and what they do and go through day in day out to save a patient's life and I have seen first hand that it is a rewarding job and gives the best experience in life. I refuse to choose another career path. This is who I want to be – a doctor. ”*

*“ Working in STEM, becoming an author, designing clothes are a few, I have a lot of interests. ”*

*“ Civil or mechanical engineer – project leader. I hope to work at Rolls Royce or Laing O'Rourke and win IET Young Women Engineer of the Year Award. ”*

*“ My aspiration is to become a lawyer, leaning more towards the international criminal side of things. ”*

*“ I would love to work in the Canine domain. Working with animals generally has always been an ambition of mine since I was little anyway. ”*

*“ I would like to work in education, being specific I would like to teach primary school. ”*

*“ I would like to be a barrister. ”*

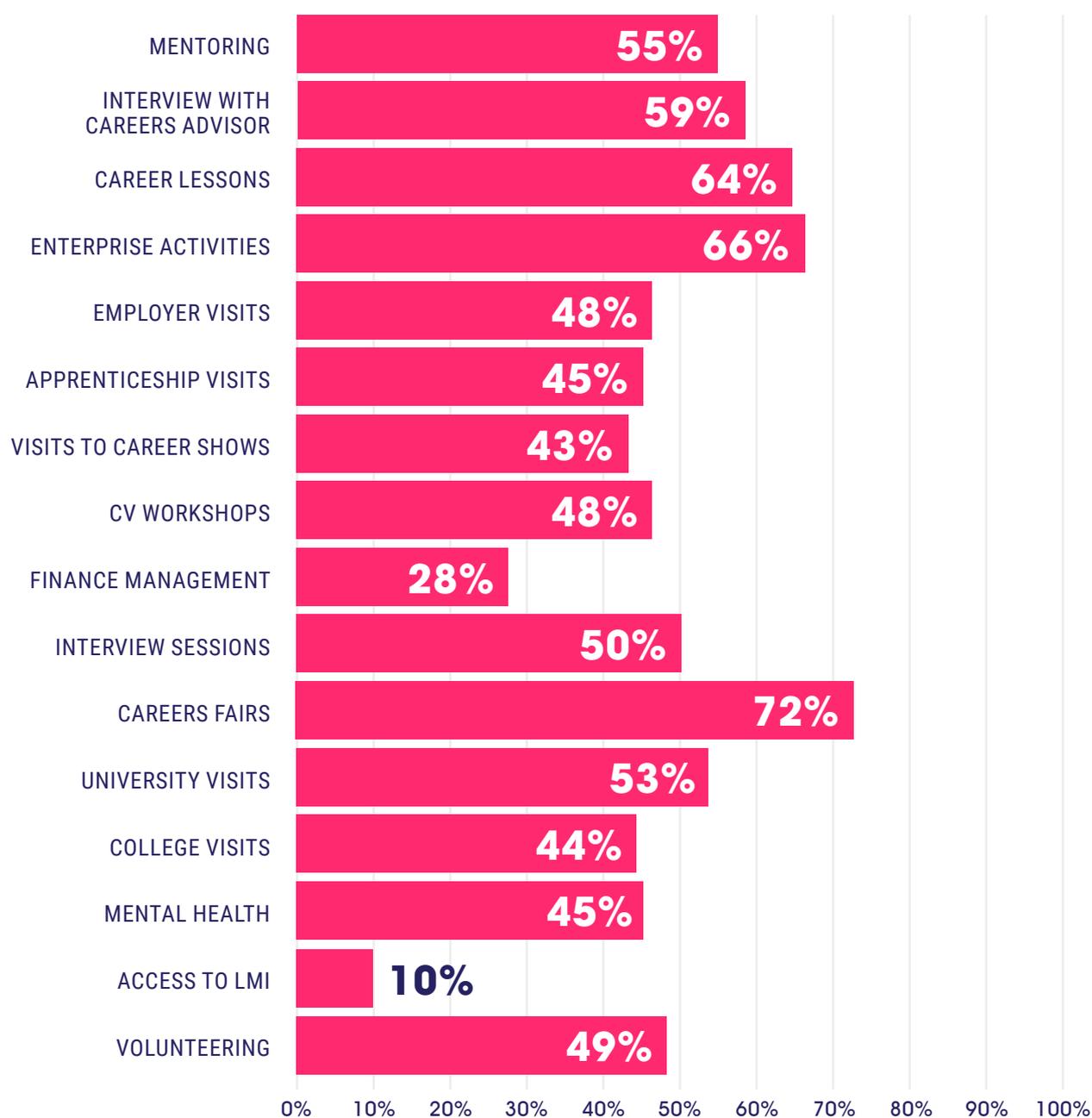
*“ I would like to be a plumber. ”*

*“ Something environmental, marine biology, travel blogging/writing/ photography, writing, setting up a business, art or graphic design, historian. ”*

# CAREERS EDUCATION

We asked all respondents how often they received the following forms of careers education in school, from mentoring to careers fairs. The numbers below indicate the percentage of respondents who could recall at least one experience of that form of careers interaction.

## Careers education in school:



*Gender disparity in careers education is less noticeable in 2020, but young men are more likely to have visited employers.*

Gender was less of a differentiator than it has been in previous years. Young men were more likely to have had financial management training, labour market information and visits to employer sites than young women. Girls were more likely to have had four or more careers lessons and two or more CV workshops.

There have been increases of certain interactions when compared with last year’s census results: namely visits to careers fairs have increased by 26 ppt since last year, access to mentoring has increased by 6 ppt, apprenticeship visits by 4 ppt and employer visits have increased by 3 ppt. The remaining interactions have remained fairly stable.

## What do young people find useful when looking for career support?

*Most young people rate input from parents, carers or employed peers... but young men say they aren’t impressed by careers support via social media.*

What’s useful?	What’s not?
<p><b>% rated ‘useful’ or ‘very useful’:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>61%</b> Parents</li> <li>• <b>47%</b> People I know who are employed</li> <li>• <b>40%</b> Teachers</li> <li>• <b>40%</b> Careers &amp; employability websites</li> </ul>	<p><b>% rated ‘not useful’ or ‘useless’:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>36%</b> Apps</li> <li>• <b>34%</b> Mentor</li> <li>• <b>34%</b> Social Media</li> <li>• <b>32%</b> Youth Worker</li> </ul>

Gender played less of a role here than in previous years, but young men were more likely to rate apps as ‘not useful’ (17% vs 13%) and social media as “useless” (19% vs 11%) than young women.

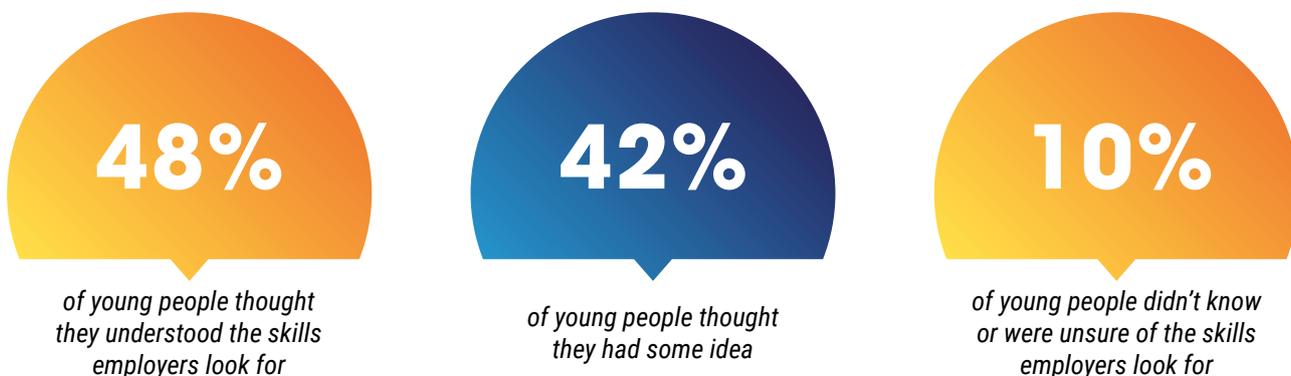
27% of black respondents suggested that careers and employability websites were ‘useless’ compared to 11% of white respondents (and 22% of asian respondents).

Black respondents were more likely to suggest that apps were ‘useful’ 27% vs 8% of white respondents.

# EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS



We asked all respondents about their understanding of the skills employers look for, who they think is responsible for helping them to build them and how confident they feel about these skills.



The responses to this question are almost divided equally to those who had a good understanding (just below 50%) and those who had some or no idea (just over half).

Overall young men were more likely to be sure they understood the skills employers look for, 52% compared to 47% of young women. Young women were more likely to say that “they have some idea” what skills employers look for than young men (45% vs 37%). 14 and 15 year olds were less likely to think they understood the skills employers look for but were more likely to suggest they had some idea.

## Who do young people think is responsible for growing their employability skills?



Young people who responded to this survey strongly believe schools are responsible for teaching employability skills. 71% of young people from different age groups think teachers should teach these skills. In addition, 41% of the respondents see this a responsibility for career advisors. However, they didn't feel that their school had prepared them sufficiently with skills development.

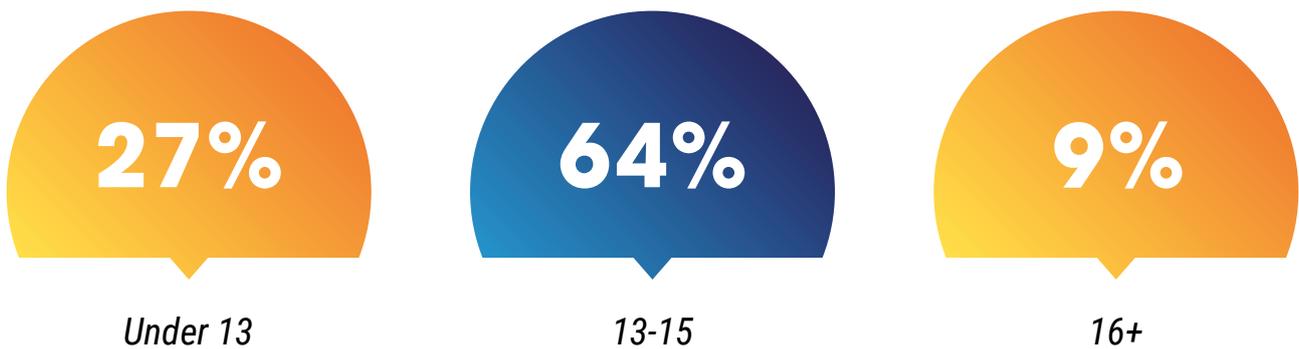
**“My school supported me sufficiently with developing employability skills”:**



Almost half of the respondents disagreed that their school supported them with developing employability skills.

Young people who received free school meals were more likely to strongly disagree with the statement. 26% of those who received free school meals strongly disagreed compared to 16% of those who never received free school meals.

**The age at which young people think they should start learning about employability skills:**

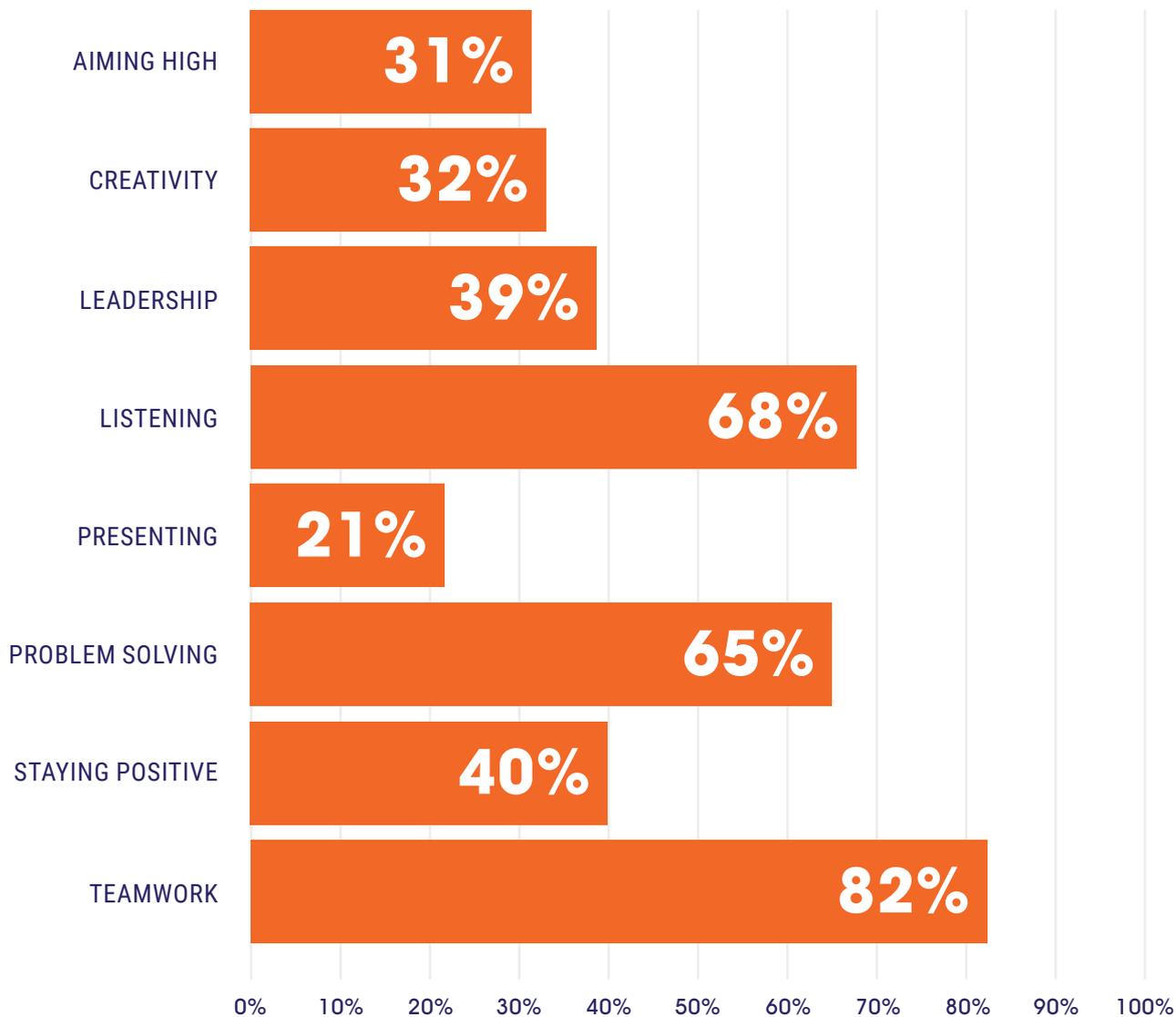


The most common age for young people to start learning employability skills was 14, and young women were more likely to suggest they should start learning employability skills at 14 than young men. 32% of young women thought this vs 26% of young men.

Whilst the numbers were low for those suggesting that employability skills should start being taught at 18 years old, those who did opt for this are more likely to be those who had indicated that they have additional needs (3% vs 0%).

## Which skills do young people think are most important for work?

Respondents were asked to select up to three choices...



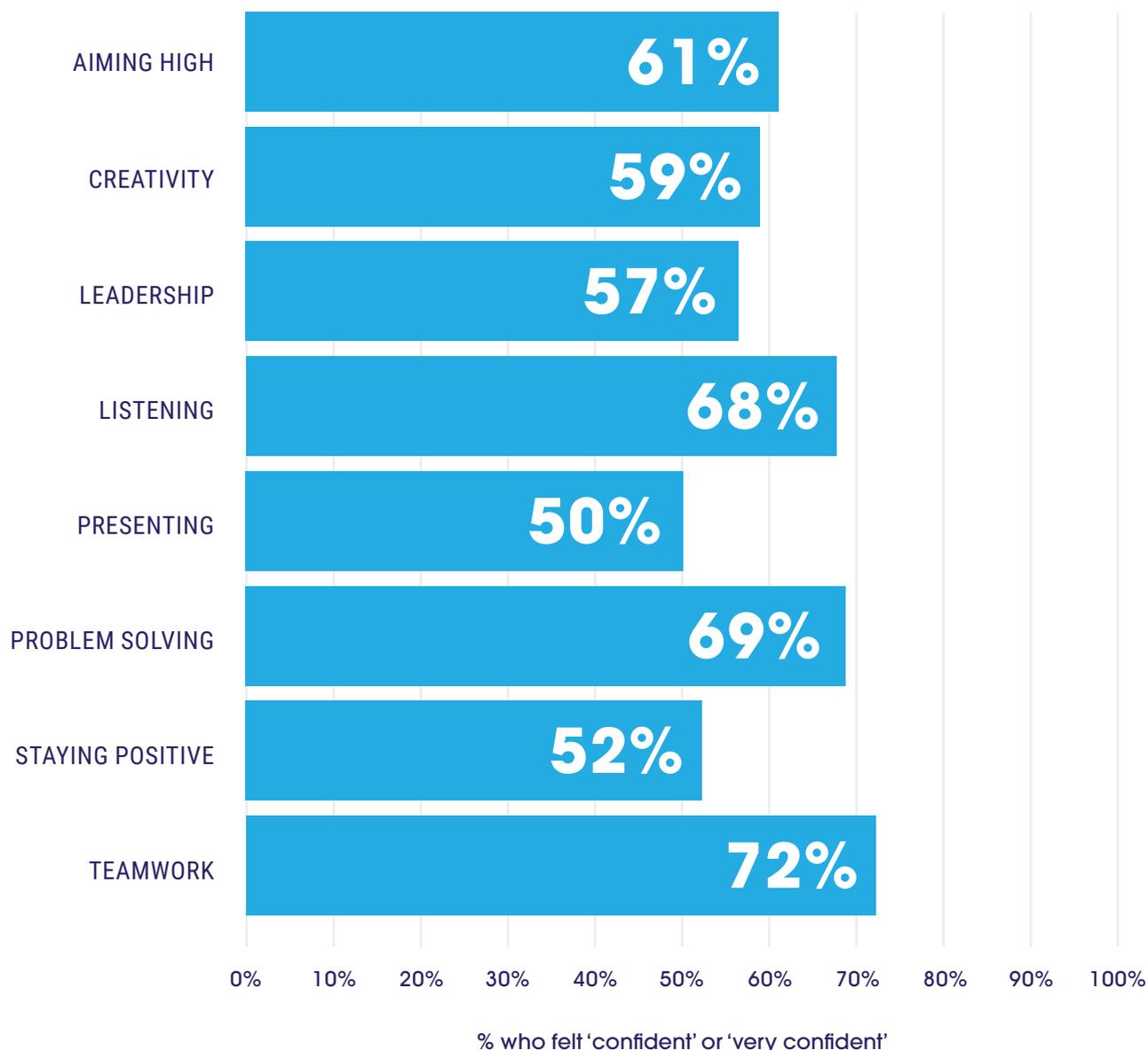
Respondents were also invited to share their own opinions on the skills most important for work based on Skills Builder’s eight essential skills. Of those entered under ‘other’, the most popular additions were communication, organisation and being motivated.

Young men were more likely than young women to think presenting (26% vs 18%) and creativity (39% vs 28%) were important. Young women were more likely than young men to think that teamwork was important (86% vs 78%).

Asian respondents were more likely to suggest that aiming high was one of the most important skills for work, 43% of Asian respondents rated it this way compared to 10% of black respondents and 32% of white respondents.



### How confident are young people in the following skills?



Young people were asked in the survey to select how confident they are in the eight essential skills. The findings show that, 72% of the respondents feel confident in teamwork, 69% feel confident in problem solving and 68% in listening. But less confident in the rest of the skills including presenting and staying positive.

Further analysis was done to study the effect of background factors on confidence in skills. The findings reveal that gender plays a role in confidence level. Young women were less confident about their presenting skills (36% were 'not at all' to 'not very' confident) compared to their male counterparts (28% were 'not at all' to 'not very' confident). Young men were more confident in their problem solving skills than female respondents (75% vs 68%).

Ethnicity and race is also a factor; black respondents more likely to be 'very confident' in their presenting skills (23%) compared to their white peers (10%). For every other skill black respondents were at least twice as likely as their white peers to say they 'were not very confident' in the chosen skill.

In addition, the age of the respondents has an effect on confidence. Younger respondents appeared to be less confident on average. For instance, young people aged 14-16 were the least confident about their listening skills (77% confident to 'very' confident), with those aged 17-18 being the most confident (87.2% confident to 'very' confident).

Confidence levels on presenting and problem solving increases with age. Young people aged 17-18 were the least confident about their creativity skills (53% confident to very confident).

19-21 year olds seemed to be the least confident about aiming high (57.8%), with 22-24 year olds being the most confident about this skill. Interestingly, the same number of 19-21 and, surprisingly, 22-24 year olds (around 17.5%) were not confident 'at all' about aiming high.

Young people who recalled receiving free school meal at school were less confident in some of the skills. For example, those who had not received free school meals were 9% more confident in their listening skills than those who had received free school meals. Some of the wider disparities were in aiming high (12% lower confidence score) and staying positive (an 18% lower confidence score).

On average those with additional needs rated their confidence in these skills as reduced – around 10% lower than those without additional needs.

## How employers can help young people develop employability skills

*Young people value input and opportunity from employers. Employer-led skills workshops provide real-life context to help students better understand employability skills.*

In general young people told us that they would like to see employers at more career fairs. They would like to have more workshops with employers and they would like employers to offer work experience as well as coming into schools.

*“ Employers could run employability skills workshops where they talk about the skills they want students to have when applying for roles and how to specifically develop those skills whilst at school/sixth form. ”*

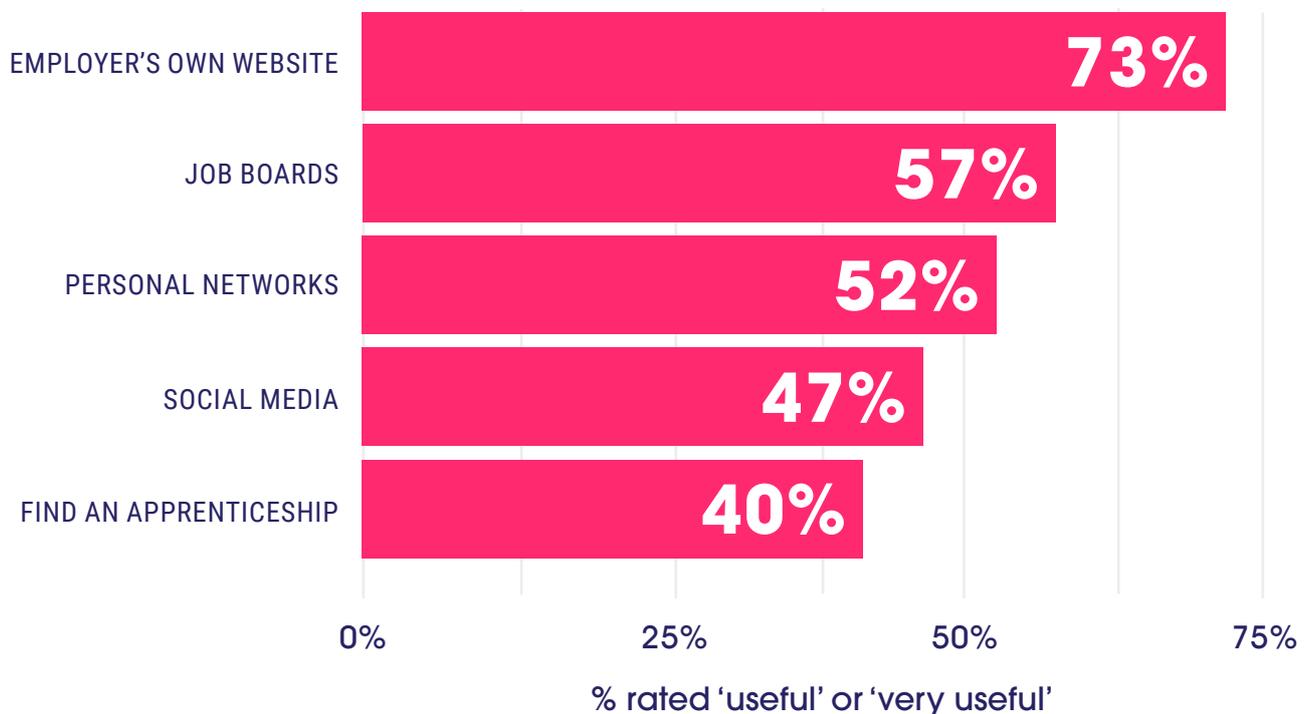
*“ Give out more opportunities where children, from ages 10-16, can visit places of work, be in the frontline and see what these people do at their work, give out more workshops for the children for the different types of career paths they may want to take. ”*

# MOVING INTO WORK

We asked all respondents to indicate where they would look for work and if they had applied for jobs.



## WHERE TO LOOK FOR WORK

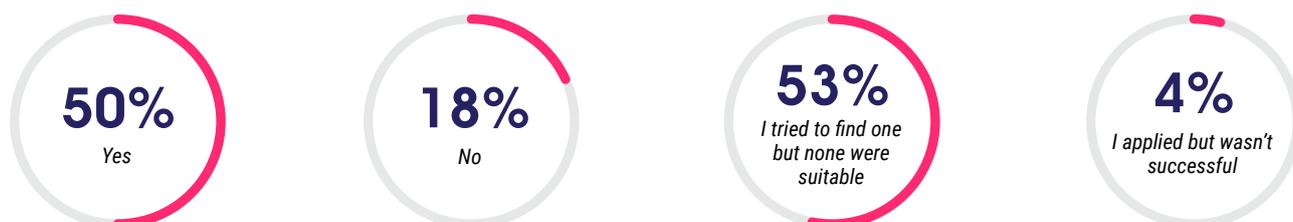


Young women were more likely to say that they would not use Find an Apprenticeship to find a job (20% vs 11%), and young men were more likely to consider it to be a useful resource (31% vs 23%). This may indicate a waterfall effect from young men having apprenticeships discussed with them at school more frequently than young women.

Those who had received free school meals were more likely to rate online job boards as useless (11% vs 6%) and more likely to rate social media as very useful (18% vs 11%).

Those with additional needs were more likely to rate personal networks as useless (13% vs 8%). They were half as likely to use employers' own websites, and 11% indicated they would not use them. Those with additional needs were more likely to rate LinkedIn as very useful (15% vs 9% of those without additional needs).

### Types of work on offer

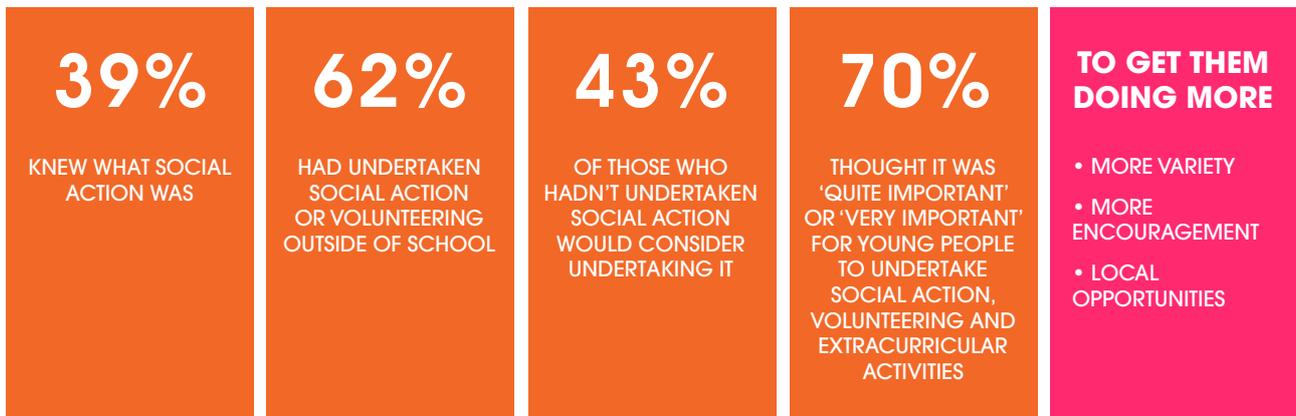


26% of respondents eligible for free school meals had undertaken a short term or gig economy role, making them 10% more likely to have done so than those who were never eligible for free school meals.



# SOCIAL ACTION, VOLUNTEERING & EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

All respondents were asked about their experiences with social action, volunteer and extracurricular activities. We explored how important they thought these activities were and what they found most enjoyable about them.



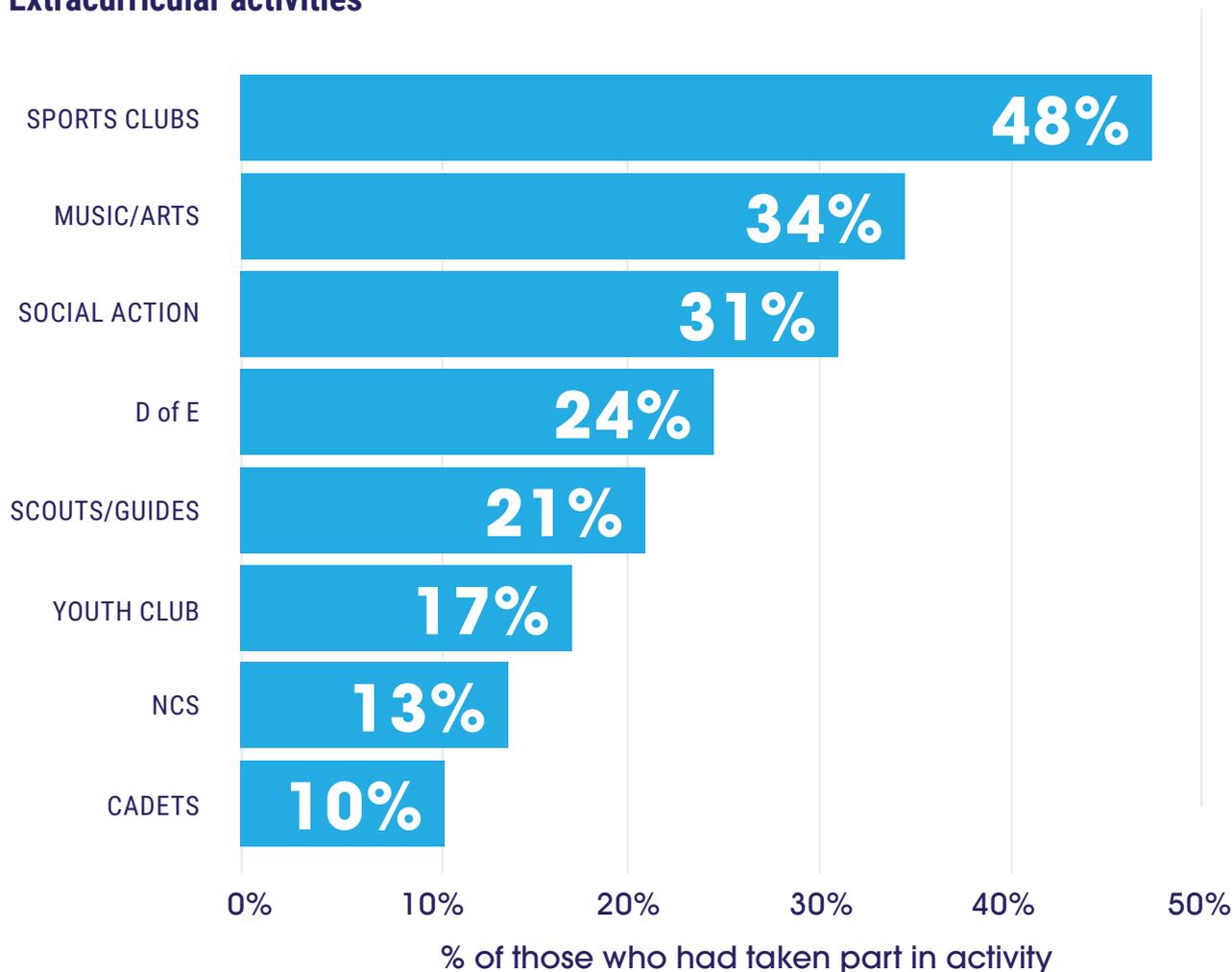
*Young women are generally more aware of social action than young men – and young people with additional needs are generally more aware of it than anyone.*

43% of young women knew what social action was compared to 34% of young men. 48% of those with additional needs knew what social action is – 10% more than those without additional needs.

Respondents were given a definition of social action which explained that volunteering and fundraising was a part of social action. With this revised definition in place 62% of respondents recalled taking part in social action or volunteering outside of school.

67% of young women had taken part in social action or volunteering outside of school compared to 54% of young men. When those who had not taken part in social action were asked if it was something they would consider doing, 52% of young women agreed they would consider it, compared to 34% of young men.

### Extracurricular activities

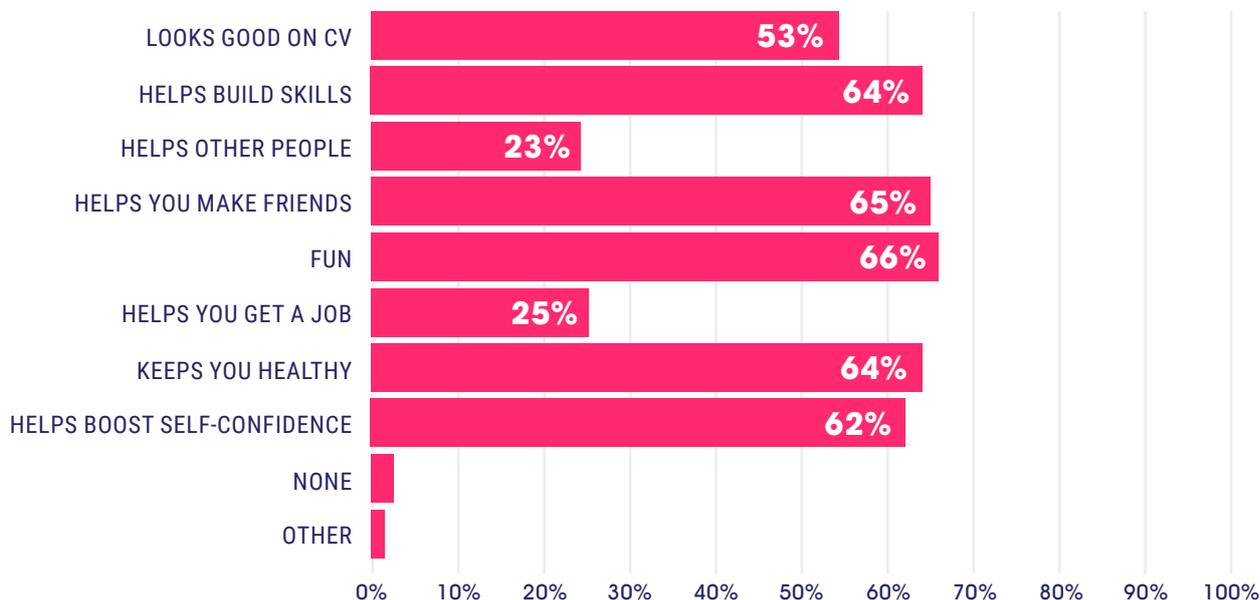


Young men were more likely to take part in sport (51%, compared to 47% of young women) and were twice as likely to take part in cadets, with 14% of young men saying they had undertaken this activity. 42% of young women had taken part in music or arts clubs, a rate 20% higher than young men.

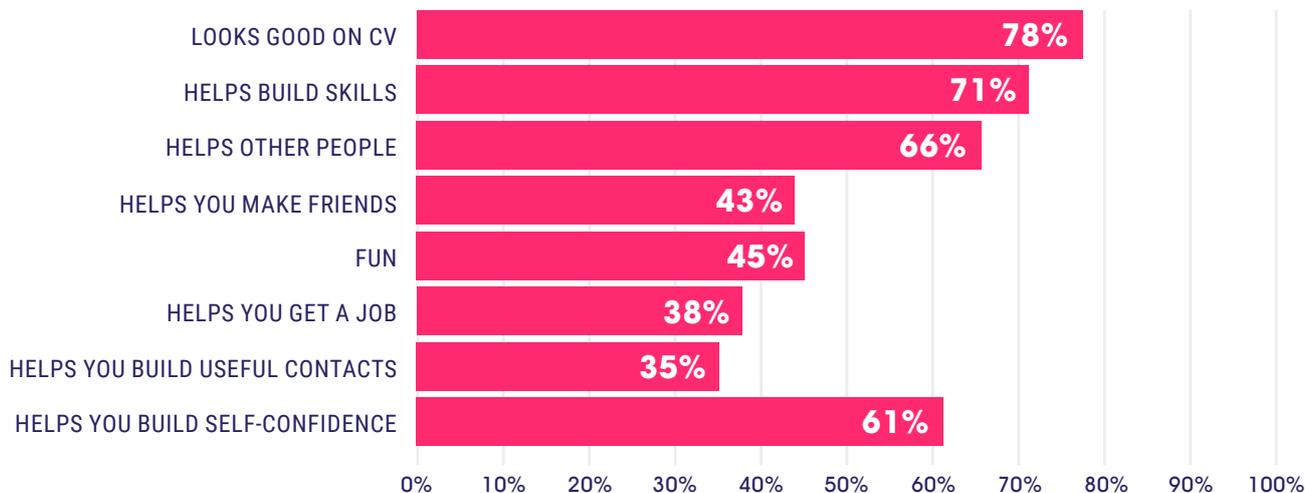
Those eligible for free school meals were 10% less likely to have undertaken scouts/girlguiding than those who were not eligible. 36% of young people with additional needs had taken part in sports clubs, compared to 51% of those without additional needs. Those with additional needs were more likely to have joined a youth club - 26%, compared to 15% of those without additional needs.

## The benefits

### WHAT ARE THE BEST THINGS ABOUT UNDERTAKING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES & HOBBIES?



### WHAT ARE THE BEST THINGS ABOUT UNDERTAKING SOCIAL ACTION & VOLUNTEERING?



Young people were likely to think that social action and volunteering would look good on their CV and that it would help them build their skills. Extracurricular activities were seen to help boost self-confidence and be fun.

## Importance

70% of young people thought it was 'quite' or 'very' important for them to undertake social action, volunteering and extracurricular activities. This score has stayed the same as last year.

27% of young people eligible for free school meals thought undertaking social action and volunteering was important, compared to 37% of those who never received free school meals. 43% of young women stated it was 'very' important compared to 27% of young men.

## What more could be done to encourage young people to undertake social action?

*“ Appeal to them better, current advertising is not effective on the majority as it comes across too ‘try hard-y’. ”*

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*“ Posters or more awareness in school to make it more obvious where you can go to volunteer. Lowering the age at which volunteers are accepted if possible, so more students can volunteer at times when they’re not overwhelmed with studying at the same time. ”*

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*“ Offer a variety of ways for them to volunteer and allow for lower age brackets. ”*

---

*“ Make it accessible, make sure that young people also have the capacity to take these things on and everyday life is not getting in the way. ”*

---

*“ Outreach needs to be better. Stop giving all the opportunities to middle-class young people who seem a “better fit” or more ready. They are only this way because they have had the privilege of their parents having good jobs and understanding the world of work from an early age. ”*

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*“ Help young people to understand why the social action that they’re getting involved in is important, helpful to themselves, and their wider community. ”*

# CONFIDENCE & BARRIERS

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## How confident are you that you will be able to move into meaningful employment?



Young men were more likely to say that they were 'quite confident' at 44%, 8% higher than young women.

13% of those who received free school meals indicated that they 'were not very confident' in moving into meaningful employment, making them twice as likely to state this.

Those with additional needs were twice as likely to be 'not very confident at all' (9%) or 'not very confident' (14%) in being able to move into meaningful employment.

**31%** | *of young people thought employers were 'supportive' or 'very supportive' of hiring young people*

This number remains static against the 2019 Youth Voice Census. Those with additional needs are twice as likely to think that employers are 'very unsupportive of hiring young people' at 13%.

When asked why young people gave their score, the key common themes young people explored were their lack of experience and employers wanting to hire people with more experience. There was also a common perception that there were no jobs at all available for under 18s.

*“ There is a competitive market so they’ll probably have applications from older people and assume they are more mature and hire them. ”*

---

*“ I feel that many people have a negative view of young people and would much prefer to employ those with experience. ”*

---

*“ I know hardly any young people who are able to get work due to unrealistic expectations of experience required for even very low-level jobs along with most jobs not allowing under 18s to work due to health and safety regulations. ”*

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*“ There is still much stigma around YP in the workplace, people do not think that we are equipped. Or, it’s the opposite, HR really wants to hire young people to increase diversity but once they’ve hired them, there are absolutely no resources available to help those young people integrate, especially if it is a new environment for them. Essentially, it feels like a tick box exercise. ”*

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*“ I have written to organisations locally and nobody can offer me an apprenticeship for when I leave school. ”*

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*“ They’d prefer people with experience. ”*

## Youth perception of barriers to employment

We asked all young people what, if anything, their barriers would be to finding a job. The free text commentary provided good insight from young people.

### The most frequent comments were:

- Mental health/ anxiety/ low confidence
- Transport
- Lack of jobs/jobs they want to do
- Lack of work experience
- Social status
- Discrimination (LGBT+, race, gender, disability)

*“ Being a female of ethnic minority; Not from central London (location); Little to no connections (status). ”*

*“ Being young. ”*

*“ Experience, being able to travel to where there is work. ”*

*“ Pay – having to take low paid work to gain experience in the field you want to work in. Not having enough experience low confidence in ability. ”*

*“ I feel that there are not many if any jobs out there that I could enjoy. I am worried that any jobs out there will be taken away by other people leaving me struggling for work. ”*

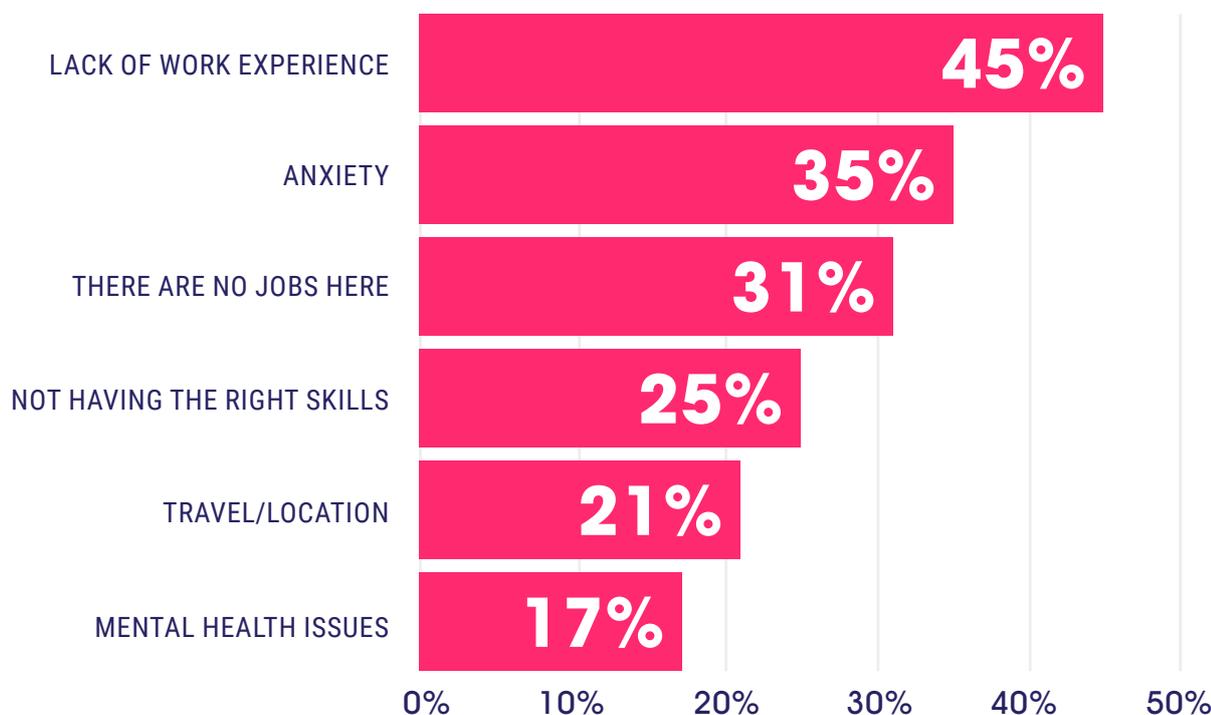
*“ Knowing how to present myself, and how to have the best chance of getting in. Also finding something I WANT to do. ”*

*“ Work experiences/voluntary work. ”*

## Those looking for work

Those young people who had experience of being NEET (Not in Education, employment or training) highlighted their barriers to be:

### WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST BARRIER TO GETTING A JOB? \*TOP 5



## Confidence

Those with additional needs had confidence scores on average 10% less than those without additional needs – particularly when asked about their skills. Those with additional needs were also 11% less confident in being able to secure meaningful work in the future.

## Those in work

33% of those in work said they struggled with their wellbeing – this is up 12 ppt on last year’s findings.

# WHERE YOU LIVE

This year we added a new section enabling young people to talk about their local area. This section covered safety, transport, youth clubs, quality jobs, youth voice and apprenticeships in their area.

## Safety

62% of young people feel 'safe' or 'very safe' in their local area.

17% of young men stated that they felt 'very safe' compared to 12% of young women. Young men were also more likely to say they felt 'very unsafe' 3% felt this way compared to 1% of young women. 5% of those with additional needs felt 'very unsafe', compared to 1% of those without needs.

13% of Asian respondents and 11% of black respondents felt 'very unsafe' in their local area compared to 2% of white respondents.

## Transport



### Transport safety

Young men were also more likely to say they felt 'very unsafe'; 3% thought this compared to 1% of young women. Young women were more likely to rate the safety of services as good at 53% compared to 46% of young men thinking the same.

5% of those with additional needs rated the safety of transport as 'very bad' compared to 1% of those without additional needs.

### Transport costs

28% of young women rated the cost of public transport as 'bad' compared to 21% of young men. Young men were twice as likely to rate the cost as 'very good' with 6% rating this way.

## Transport reliability

Young women were more likely to rate the reliability of transport as neutral (42% vs 34%), with young men more likely to rate the reliability as both very good and very bad.

15% of those with additional needs rated the reliability of services as 'very bad' compared to 8% of those without additional needs.

Whilst 36% of those eligible for free school meals rated the reliability of services as 'good' compared to 44% of those not eligible, 17% of those eligible for free school meals rated the reliability of services as 'very good' compared to 11% of those not eligible.

## How often services run

10% of those with additional needs rated the frequency of services as 'very bad' compared to 6% of those without additional needs.

Black and Asian respondents were at least 3 times more likely to rate the availability, safety, frequency of services, costs and reliability of services as 'very bad'.

## Youth clubs

46% of young people had access to a youth club, with an additional 40% being unsure if they had access to one or not. Young people commented that there used to be one but that it was closed down, there was one that wasn't interesting or useful, or that there was one in the town over.

Asian respondents were less likely to know if there was a Youth Club in their local area. 22% of Asian respondents knew there was a youth club in their local area compared to 49% of black respondents and 46% of white respondents.

14 and 15 year olds were more likely to have access to a youth club, with 60% and 52% respectively having access. The older the respondent, the more likely they were to be unsure if they had access. 52% of those eligible for free school meals had access to a youth club, compared to 44% of those who were not eligible for free school meals.

## Quality jobs

13% of respondents were 'confident' or 'extremely confident' that they would find quality jobs in their area.

Across the whole sample, confidence about quality jobs in the area was rather low: 44% were 'not at all' or 'not so confident'. Young women were less confident about quality jobs being in their area: 45% of the female respondents were 'not at all' or 'not so confident', compared to 40% of young men. Young men were more likely to suggest they were extremely confident there would be quality jobs for them (5% vs 1%).

Confidence in quality jobs tends to increase with age, with only 10.9% of 14-16 year olds saying they were 'very' to 'extremely' confident about quality jobs being in their area. The same is true for one in five 22-24 year olds, the most confident group.

34% of black respondents were 'not very confident at all' that there would be quality work opportunities in their local area compared to 22% of asian respondents and 9% of white respondents.

Young people with additional needs were more likely to be 'not at all confident' – 15% stated this, in comparison to 9% of those without additional needs.

### Looking for apprenticeship opportunities

- 23% of young people have looked for apprenticeships in their local area.
- 27% of young men had looked for an apprenticeship, compared to 20% of young women.
- 19 and 20 year olds are more likely to have looked for an apprenticeship in their local area (58% and 50%)

Those young people who had looked for apprenticeships gave the following feedback on the level of their search's success:

You found an apprenticeship at the right level for you	<b>25%</b>
You could not find any appropriate apprenticeship opportunities at the right level for you	<b>35%</b>
You could not find any appropriate apprenticeship opportunities at the right pay level	<b>12%</b>
You could not find any apprenticeship opportunities at all	<b>17%</b>
Other	<b>11%</b>

### Youth voice

#### DO YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE A SAY ON LOCAL ISSUES?



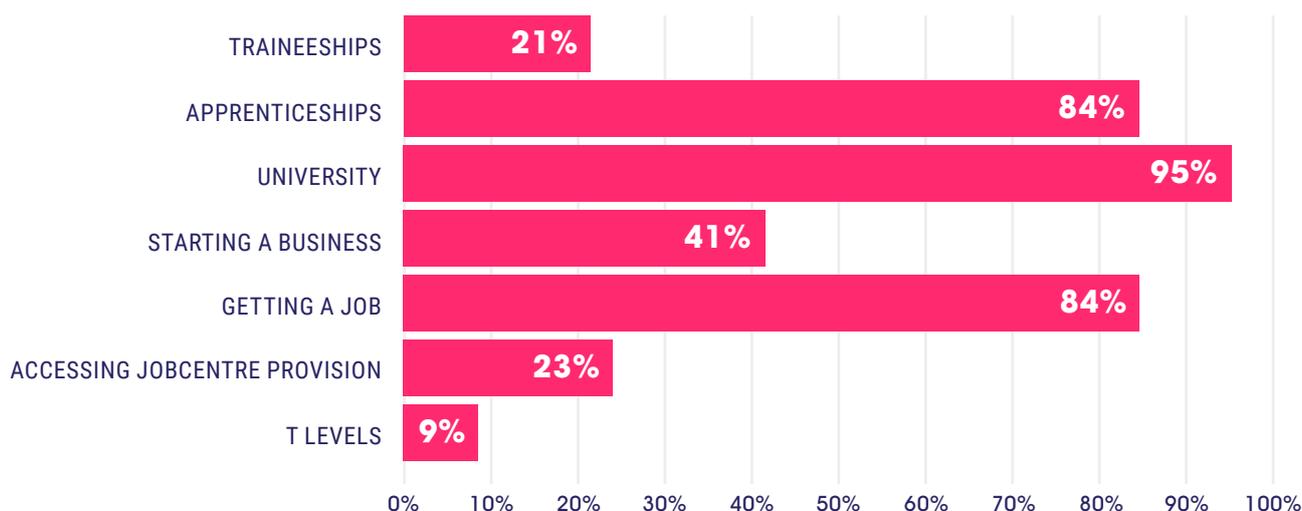
19 year olds were more likely to feel that they have a say at 21%, compared to younger age groups. For 16 to 17 year olds, that rate was 10% each.

# COLLEGE & SIXTH FORM



Of those students who were currently in or had attended college or sixth form young women were more likely to be studying A levels, (76% vs 66% of young men). Young men in the sample were more likely to be studying a BTEC, (43% vs 27% of young women). Respondents who were 20 years old were most likely to have studied or been studying an apprenticeship at 17%. Other respondents made up less than 7% of responses.

## Choices



Similar gender splits and themes appear to follow through for young people in college and sixth. 79% of young women had university discussed with them five times or more during their time in college or sixth form; for young men this figure was 59%.

Whilst general numbers for discussions on traineeships were low, young men were more likely to have had this discussed with them once or more. 28% of young men had had at least one discussion of traineeships in college or sixth form, compared to 15% of young women.

Young men were also more likely to have T levels and accessing Jobcentre provision discussed with them in college or sixth form.

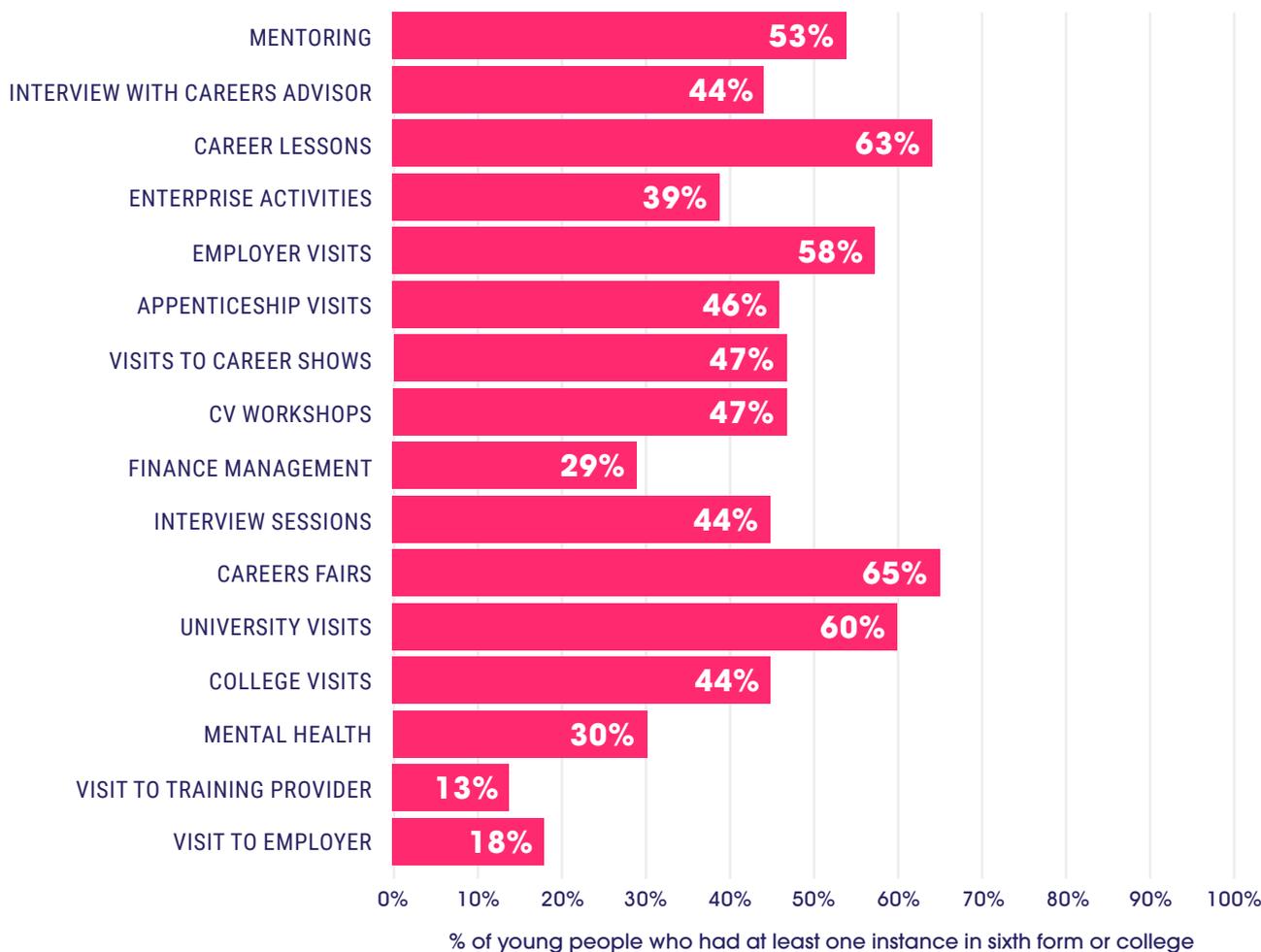
Those eligible for free school meals were 13% less likely to have had university discussed with them 5 times or more (60% had had this discussed with them).

Those with additional needs recorded a higher percentage of respondents who had 'never' had university discussed with them; this was the case for 12% of respondents with additional needs, and 3% of those without additional needs had 'never' had university discussed with them in college or sixth form.

### Careers education in college or sixth form

*A skewed system: If students are eligible for free school meals or have additional needs, they are less likely to receive visits to careers fairs or universities.*

#### CAREERS EDUCATION IN COLLEGE



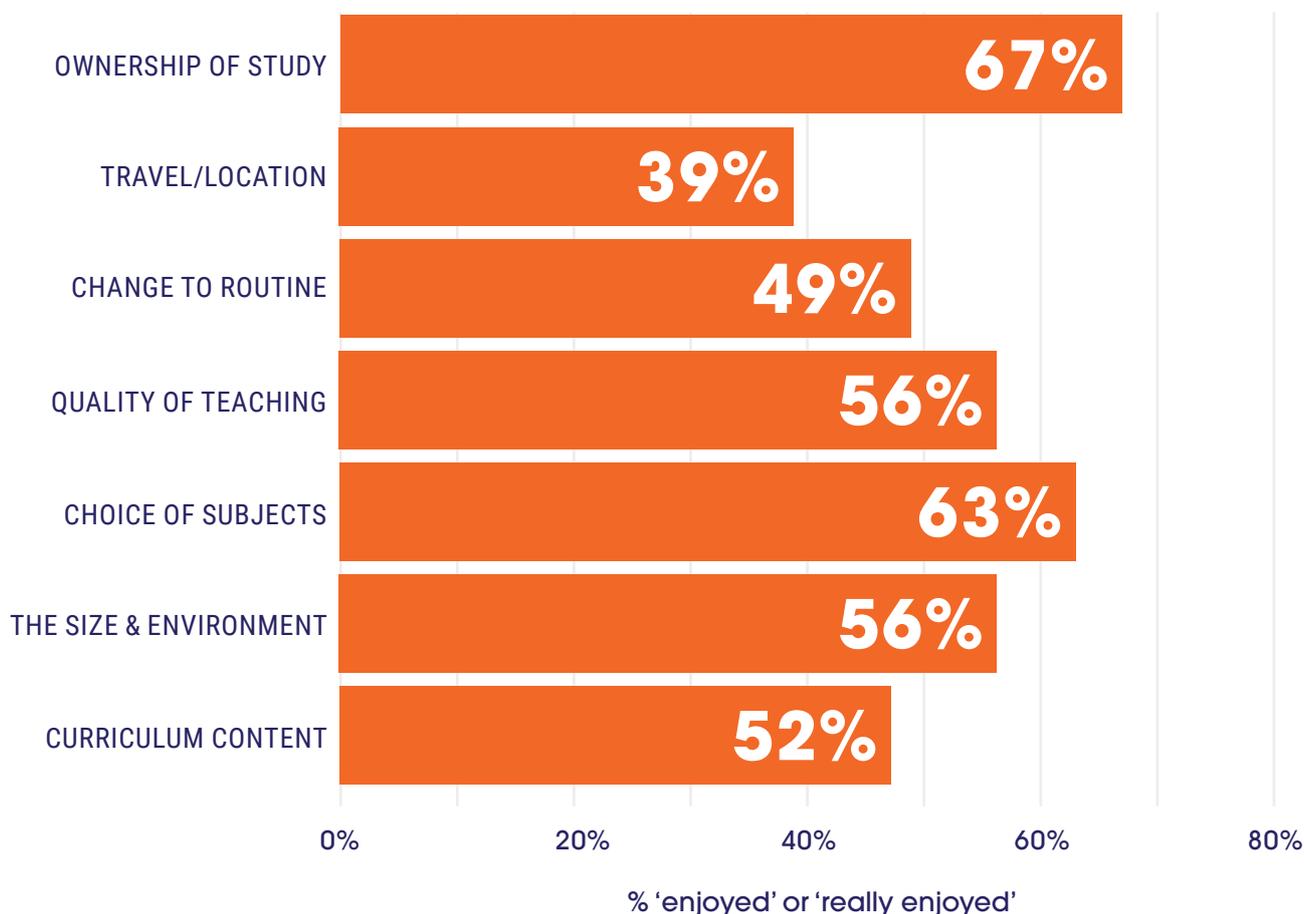
Overall, young people receive fewer career interactions in college or sixth form than they do in secondary school. It should be noted that certain interactions have increased since last year's Youth Voice Census, as visits to university had increased by 12 ppt and visits to career shows were up by 15 ppt. Interviews with careers advisors, CV workshops and interview sessions were all down slightly on last year.

73% of those with additional needs stated that they 'did not receive' visits to career shows, compared to 60% of those without additional needs. 51% of those with additional needs 'did not receive' visits to universities, compared to 35% of those without additional needs.

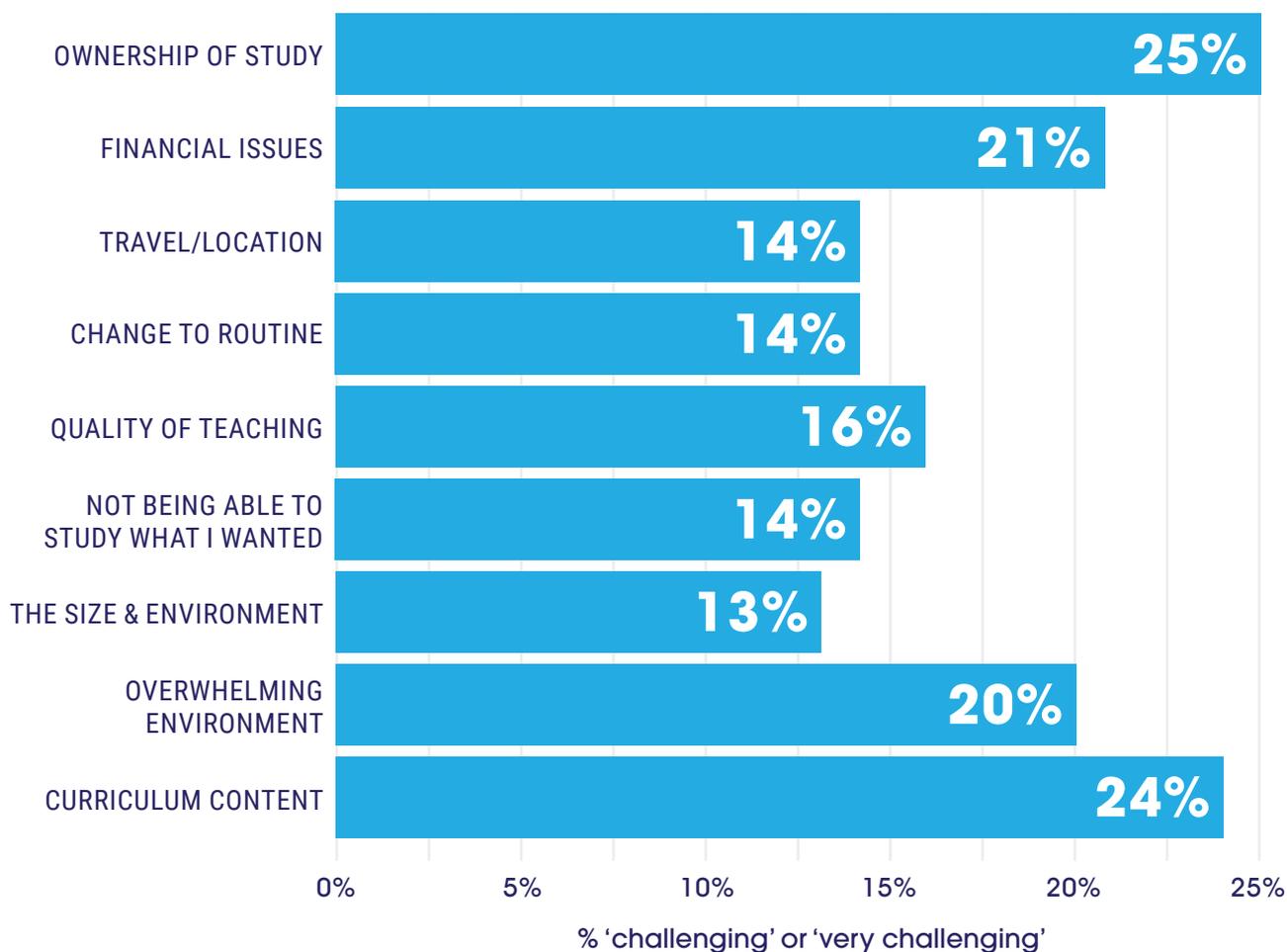
52% of those who received free school meals 'did not receive' visits to university, compared to 36% of those not eligible for free school meals. They also 'did not receive' visits to careers fairs – 47% eligible for free school meals did not receive this, compared to 32% of those who were not eligible.

### Challenges and barriers

#### WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED MOST?



### THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?



In the free text commentary for this section, young people spoke often of the difficulty and change from GCSE to A level.

Young women were more likely to have 'really enjoyed' having ownership of their own learning, and 31% thought this compared to 18% of young men. 21% of young women 'really enjoyed' the curriculum content compared to 13% of young men.

Those with additional needs were more than twice as likely to state that they 'really disliked' the change to routine, and 8% felt this way compared to 2% of those without additional needs. 15% of those with additional needs 'really enjoyed' having ownership of their study, compared to 28% of those without additional needs.

When looking at challenges, 22% of young men rated 'financial issues' as a '3' (out of 5, 5 being the highest) compared to 15% of young women. Young men also rated 'not being able to study what they wanted' as a '4' - 12% of young men rated it this compared to 6% of young women.

20% of those with additional needs rated the environment as '5', compared to 6% those without additional needs.

13% of those who received free school meals rated the environment as a '5', compared to 6% of those who never received free school meals. Those who received free school meals were twice as likely to rate 'financial issues' as a '5' compared to those who had never received free school meals (12% vs 6%). 12% of those who received free school meals rated the teaching quality a '5' compared to 5% of those who had never received free school meals.

### Preparing young people for the next step

**86%** | of those in college or sixth form rated their time as 'OK' or above

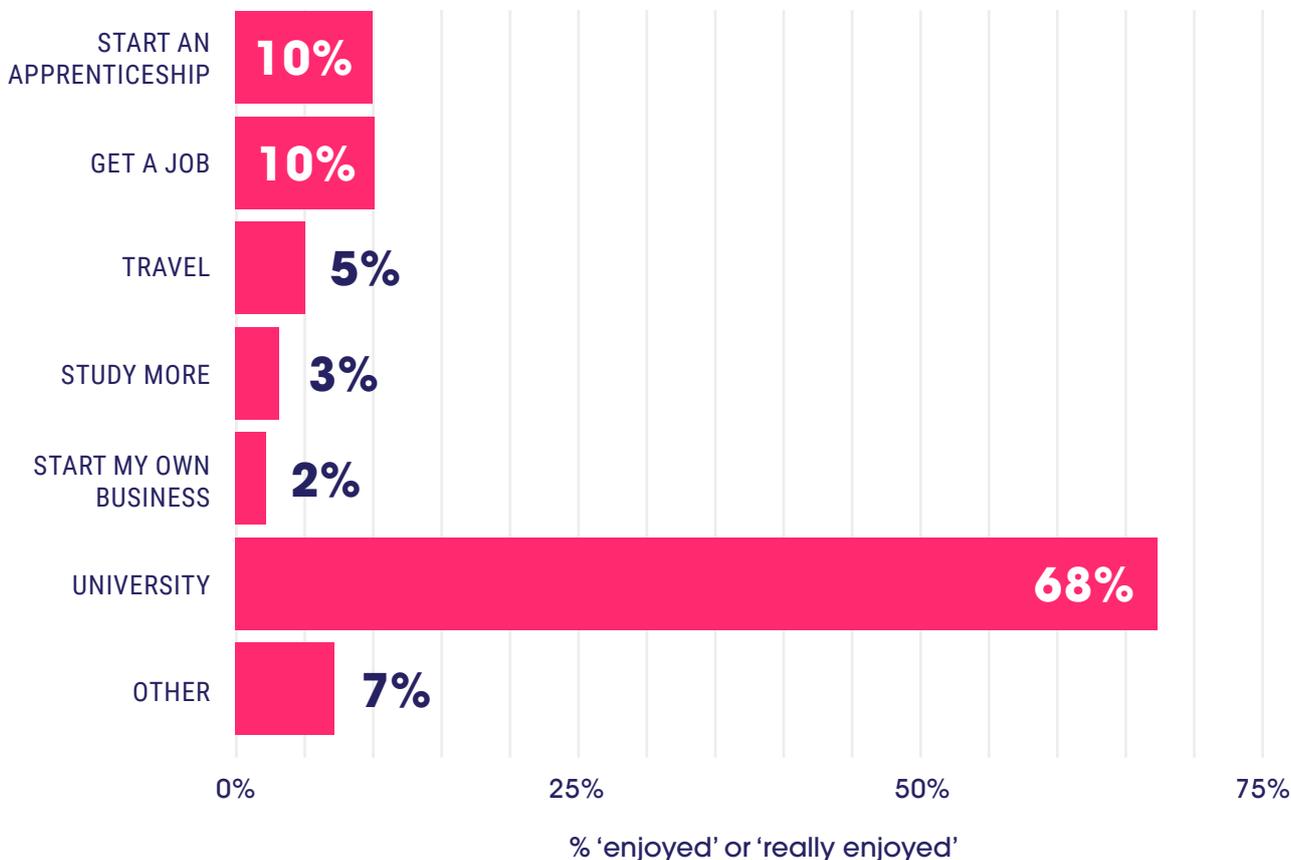
**44%** | of respondents thought their college or sixth form was 'helpful;' or 'very helpful' in preparing them for their next step

Those eligible for free school meals were over twice as likely to rate their time at college or sixth form as 'very poor' – 8% of those who were eligible rated it this way compared to 3% of those who were not eligible.

15% of those who received free school meals rated their college or sixth form as 'unhelpful' in preparing them for their next step, compared to 7% of those who had never received free school meals. Those not eligible for free school meals were 10% more likely to rate their college or sixth form as 'helpful' with 35% doing so.

### What's next?

59% of respondents knew what they wanted to do after college or sixth form:



Young women were more likely to say that they knew what they wanted to do after sixth form or college – 64% of young women knew, compared to 52% of young men. Whilst the percentage that said ‘no’ was very close, boys were more likely to say they were ‘unsure’, with 29% of young boys stating this compared to 18% of young women.

Those who received free school meals were more likely to say they were unsure, or that they did not know what they were going to do after sixth form or college. 23% stated that they did not know, compared to 12% of those who had never received free school meals – and 32% stated they were unsure, compared to 17% of those who had never received free school meals.

Of those who did know what they wanted to do after sixth form or college, young women were more likely to select that they would be attending university (69%) compared to 54% of young men, and young women were also more likely to be going travelling (6% compared to 1% of young men). Young men were more likely to be getting a job, and 18% of young men said this compared to 5% of young women.

## What could college or sixth form do to help students prepare for their future careers?

*Workshops, greater clarity on options, and a personalised approach... students know what they want when it comes to support for their transition into the world of work.*

*“ They mainly pushed university over anything else. I would have liked to have got more information about apprenticeships etc. I felt like I had no other option than to go to university, but also feel like they could have run workshops around how to prepare for this better. I wish someone had told me the value of gaining work experience. ”*

*“ Stop pushing the university route on every student, look at each student’s strengths and weaknesses. Have in-depth conversations with your students to understand what they know and what they need more help on. I barely had any career guidance while at sixth form. ”*

# APPRENTICESHIPS

72% of respondents thought their apprenticeship was 'helpful' or 'very helpful' in preparing them for their next step

## WHAT LEVEL?

**28%** – LEVEL 2  
**28%** – LEVEL 3  
**28%** – LEVEL 4  
**17%** – LEVEL 6

## WHAT YEAR?

**78%** – YEAR 1  
**22%** – YEAR 2

**94% WERE  
 OFFERED  
 OFF-THE-JOB  
 TRAINING**

## How do young people find out about their apprenticeship?

Parent/carer	<b>6%</b>
Find an Apprenticeship website	<b>44%</b>
An employer's own website	<b>33%</b>
Relatives	<b>11%</b>
Social media	<b>6%</b>
Other	<b>17%</b>

## Motivations and influencers

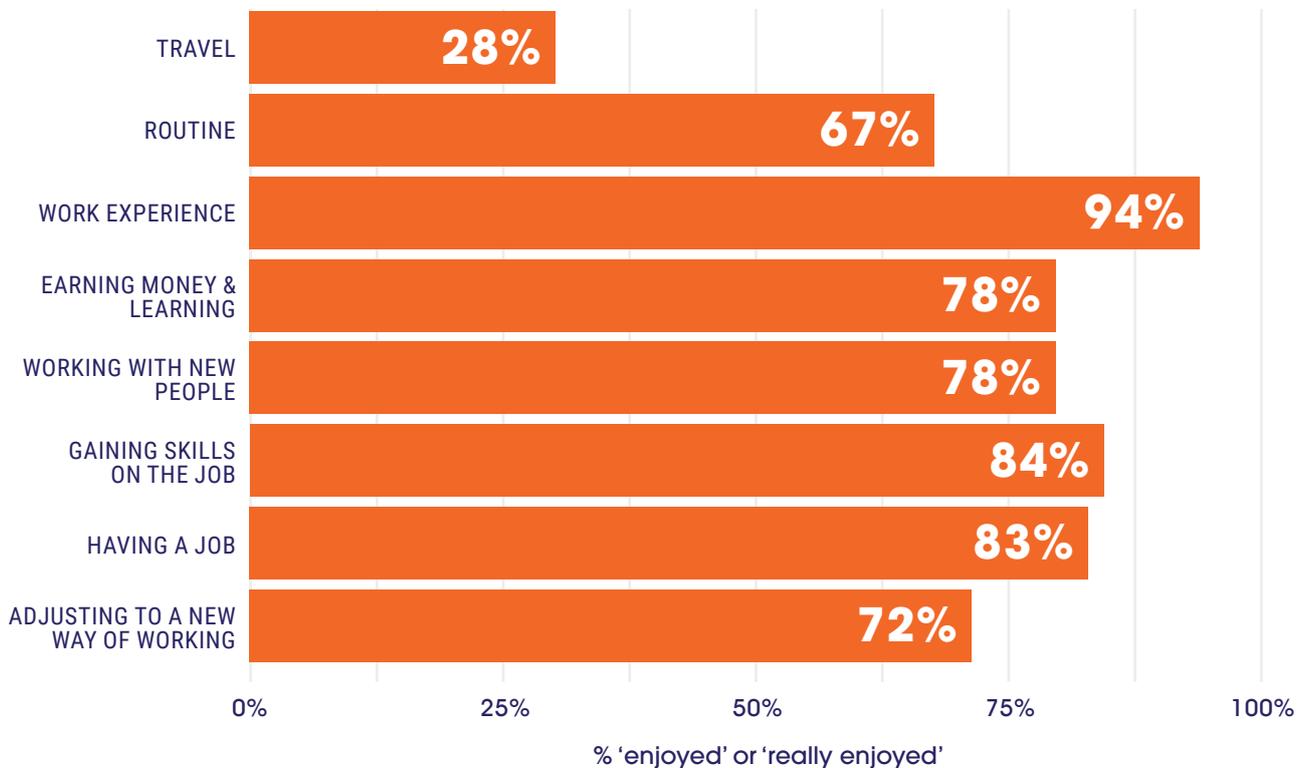
What is young people's biggest motivation/influence for starting an apprenticeship?

Earning and learning at the same time	<b>89%</b>
It was the job I wanted	<b>33%</b>
I felt it was the right thing for me	<b>56%</b>
My parents thought it was the best route	<b>17%</b>
My teacher thought it was the best route for me	<b>6%</b>
There were no other jobs	<b>6%</b>
Social Media	<b>0%</b>
Careers and employability websites	<b>11%</b>
Youth Worker	<b>0%</b>
The cost of university was too high	<b>28%</b>
Employer talk	<b>6%</b>
People I know who are employed	<b>6%</b>

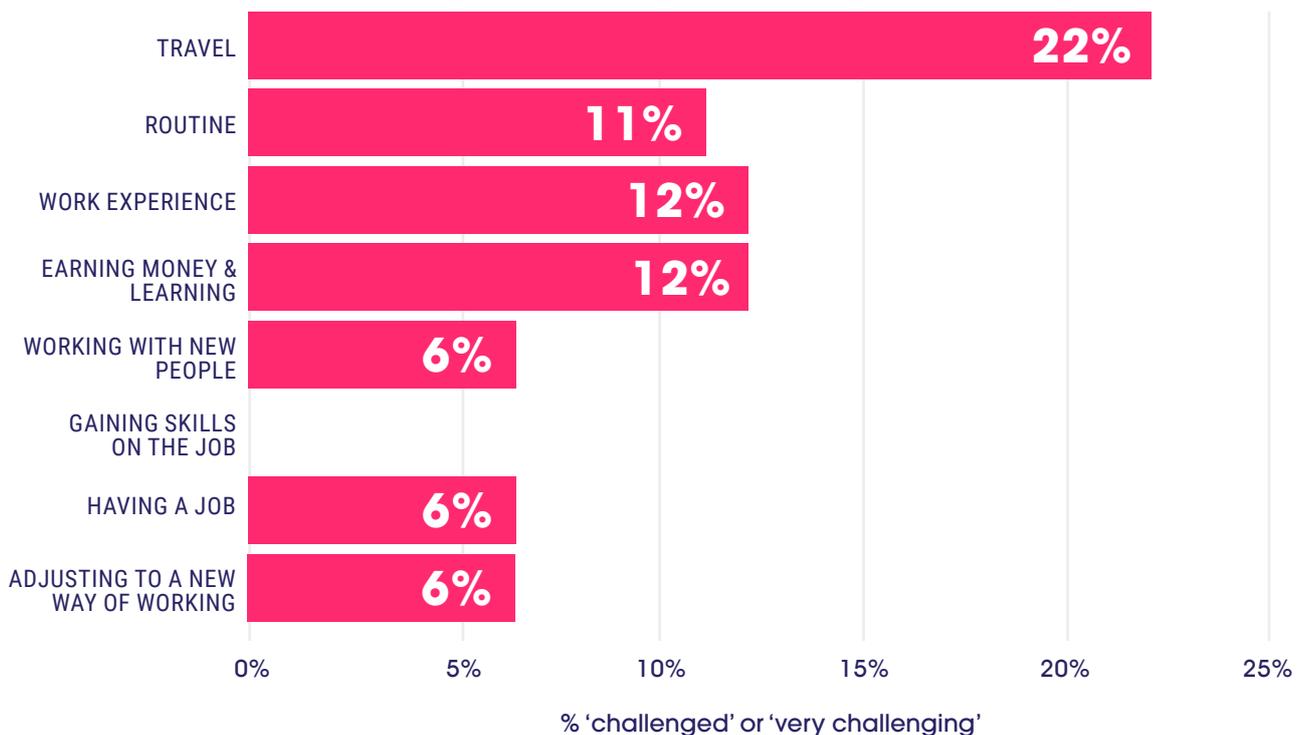
Overall young people appeared to be motivated by earning and learning at the same time, and felt that it was 'the right thing' for them – numerous national case studies indicate that this often relates to the experience of the hands-on learning process in contrast to academic learning. A high proportion of young people thought that the cost of university was too high.

## Challenges and benefits

### WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED MOST?



### THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?



In general respondents who completed an apprenticeship were more positive about their benefits and less concerned about the challenges.

*“ Challenges: The balancing of work vs studies is difficult as my apprenticeship is more fluid with deadlines while my job is more strict so I end up prioritising job deadlines. It’s not my employer’s fault as they are very very flexible and my manager is very helpful too. It’s just that my training provider is not proactive and the lack of accountability means I am able to get away with not doing my work, which isn’t helping me in the long-run. ”*

*“ Benefits: The opportunities for public speaking that it’s given me. I also feel closer to my local communities. ”*

### Young people rate their apprenticeships

83% of respondents rated their apprenticeship as ‘good’ or ‘excellent’, with 5% rating it ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’.

We asked respondents to rate different elements of their apprenticeships on the same scale.

#### % of those rating ‘excellent’ or ‘good’:



The only section to get ‘very poor’ ratings was salary. In free text commentary this was featured a lot too.

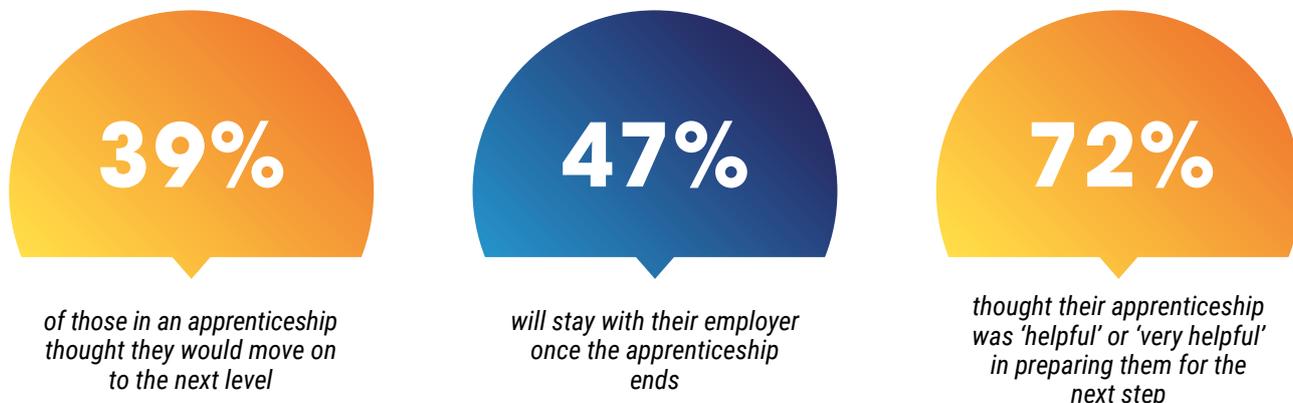
## Careers advice

We were keen to explore what, if any careers advice was available during a young person’s apprenticeship. In free text commentary young people told us:

*“ I was encouraged to move internally to different sectors if I wanted to. I was also told that I could move to different positions aboard in our partner companies. I was told by someone very high up to have confidence in myself and my ideas and not be afraid to make a mistake. ”*

*“ My assessor is absolutely fantastic and has given me absolute support and confidence in everything I do. However the assessor of the other apprentice has not been great. I feel like the assessor can be the most vital part of the process, alongside the employer itself. ”*

## What’s next?



When asked what more their apprenticeship could have done to prepare them for the next steps, respondents stated that there was not much else their employers could do. Some remarked that their training provider could have been better, with a small number of respondents pointing out that there should be a job at the end of it and there wasn't.

# UNIVERSITY

## WHAT YEAR?

**36%** – YEAR 1  
**30%** – YEAR 2  
**21%** – YEAR 3  
**12%** – OTHER

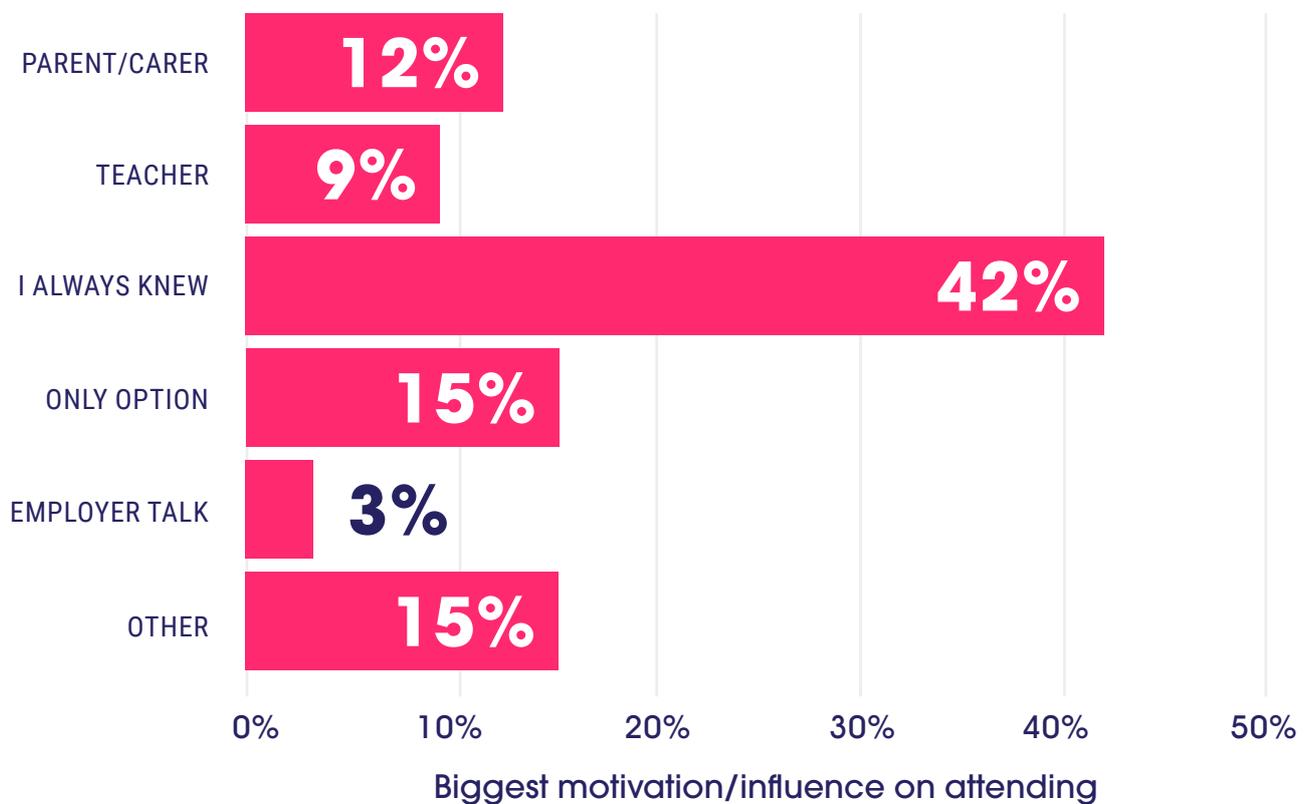
**30%**

WERE OFFERED  
WORK  
EXPERIENCE

## LOOKING FOR WORK?

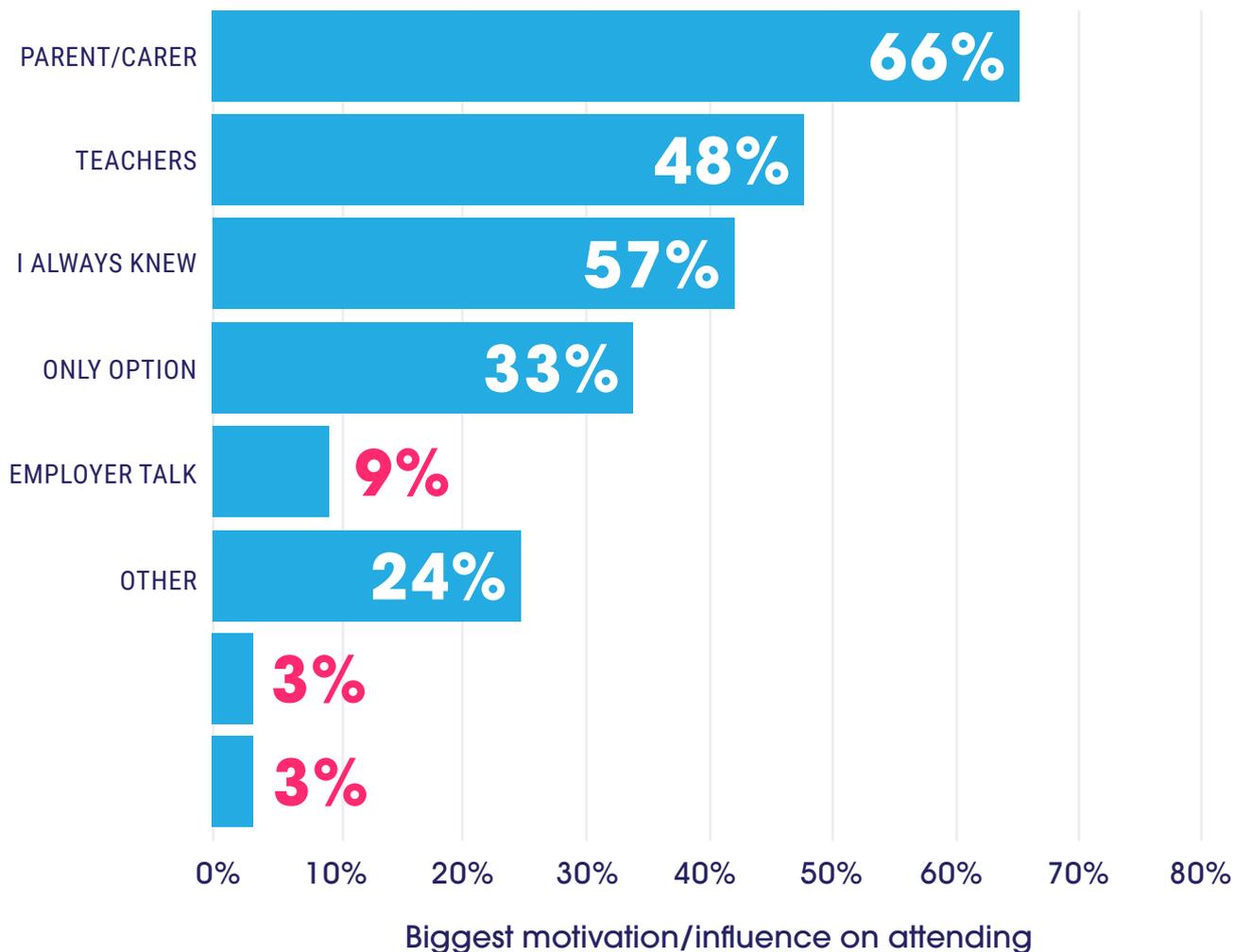
**73%** HAD A JOB  
**9%** HAD NOT  
**18%** WERE UNSURE

## Influencers

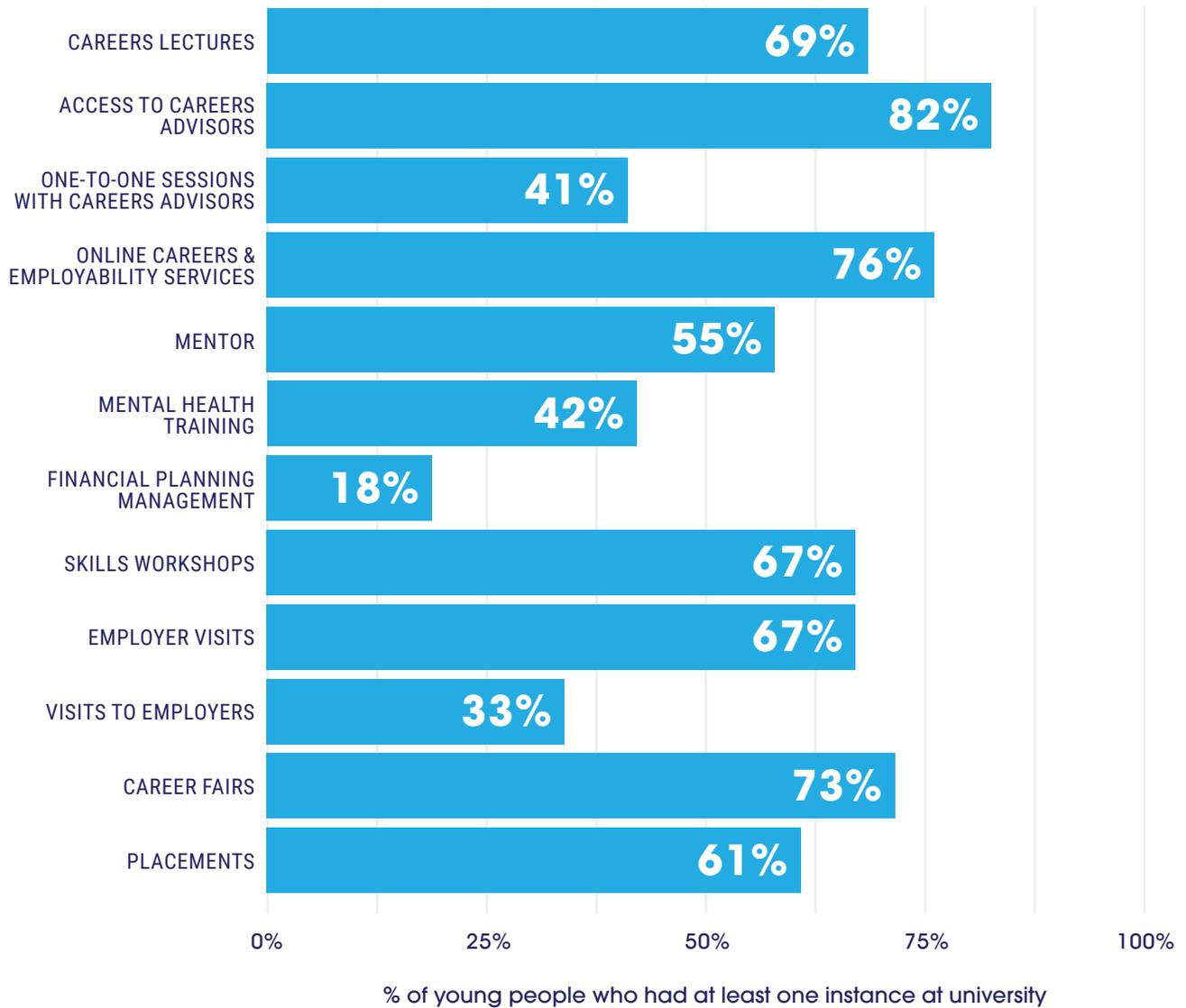


When asked for their biggest influence on attending university, young people were most likely to state that they always knew that they were going to go there.

We also asked young people who was the most useful when choosing to attend university, gaining insight on who young people might be engaging with to make these decisions.



### Careers education at university



Visits to employers are up 10 ppt on last year’s figures, and instances of careers lectures were up 7 ppt on last year too. Whilst one to one sessions with careers advisors were down by almost 20 ppt, we can see that 82% of those in university had access to a careers advisor.

## Work experience at university

**30%** | were offered work experience

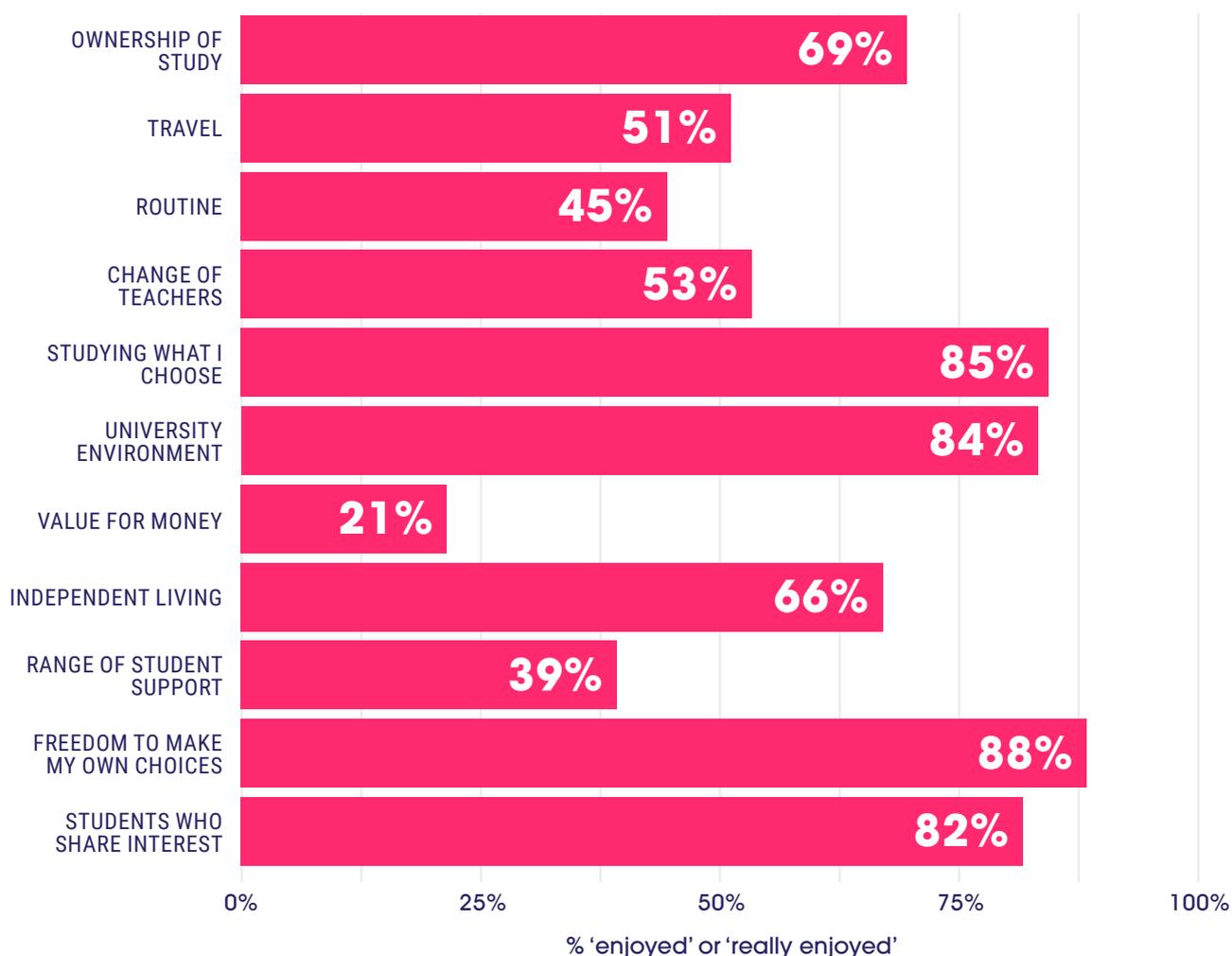
**75%** | of those who undertook work experience rated it 'good' or 'excellent'

For those who undertook work experience, 30% undertook it as a requirement of their course and 20% had undertaken it on a teacher recommendation. 20% of respondents had initiated and found the work experience themselves.

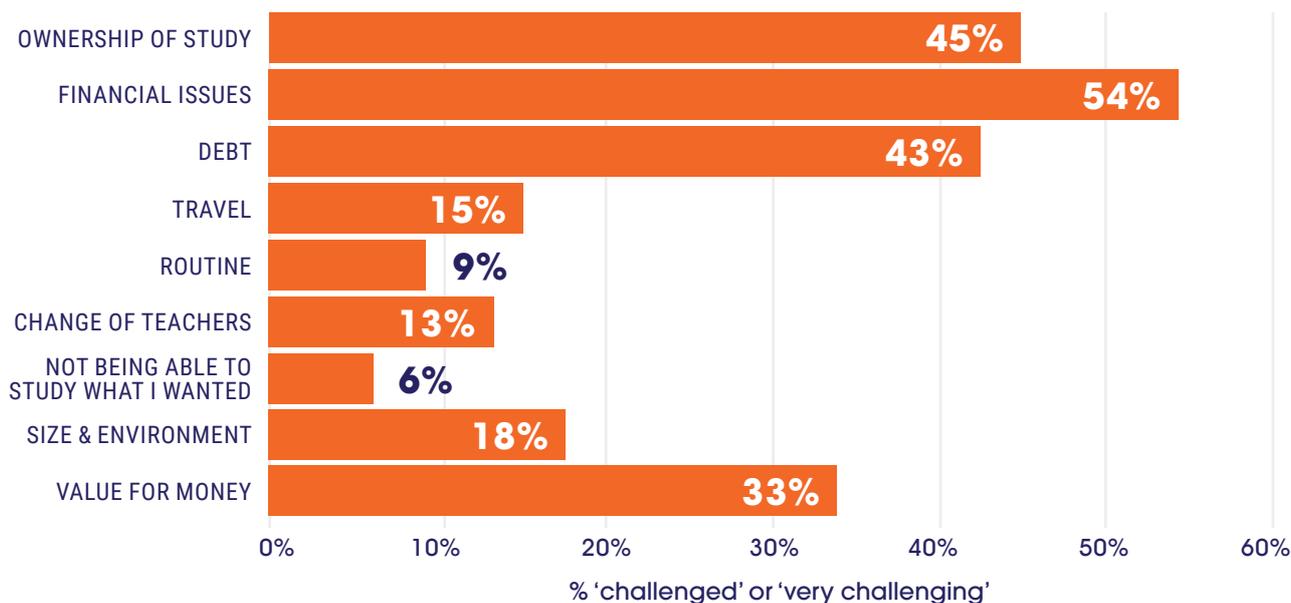
73% of those at university had a job whilst they were studying.

## Benefits and challenges

### WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED MOST?



**THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE?**



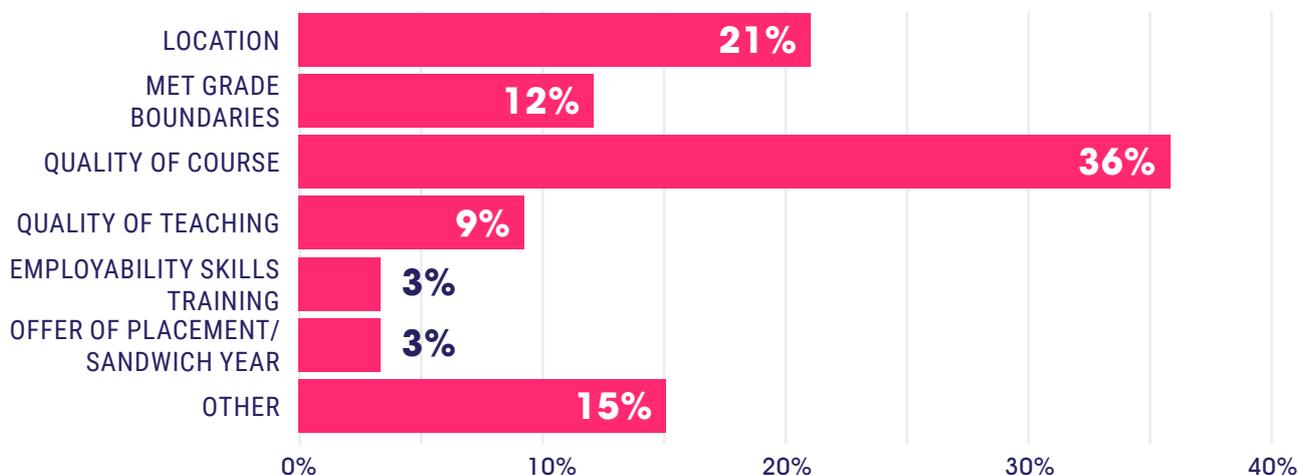
Respondents were most likely to be troubled by financial and debt challenges at university, and value for money featured highly. Freedom, ownership of study and studying what they chose were strong benefits to attending university.

**Choosing where to study**

*Young people prioritised the quality of the course and the location over other factors.*

We added a new question for university students this year to explore the reasons behind choosing individual universities.

**WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO ATTEND THIS UNIVERSITY?**



Other reasons given were: reputation, league tables and the university being the only place that offered the course.

## What's next?

**46%** | *of those attending university knew what they wanted to do after university*

**55%** | *of respondents rated university as 'helpful' or 'very helpful' in preparing them for their next step*

When asked what university could have done to prepare them for their future career, young people most commonly mentioned summer placements, and a desire to have been learning about accessing careers in the industry they were studying in as well as getting general career advice.

*“ Give access to more side qualifications. ”*

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*“ I need to make more use of the careers service. ”*

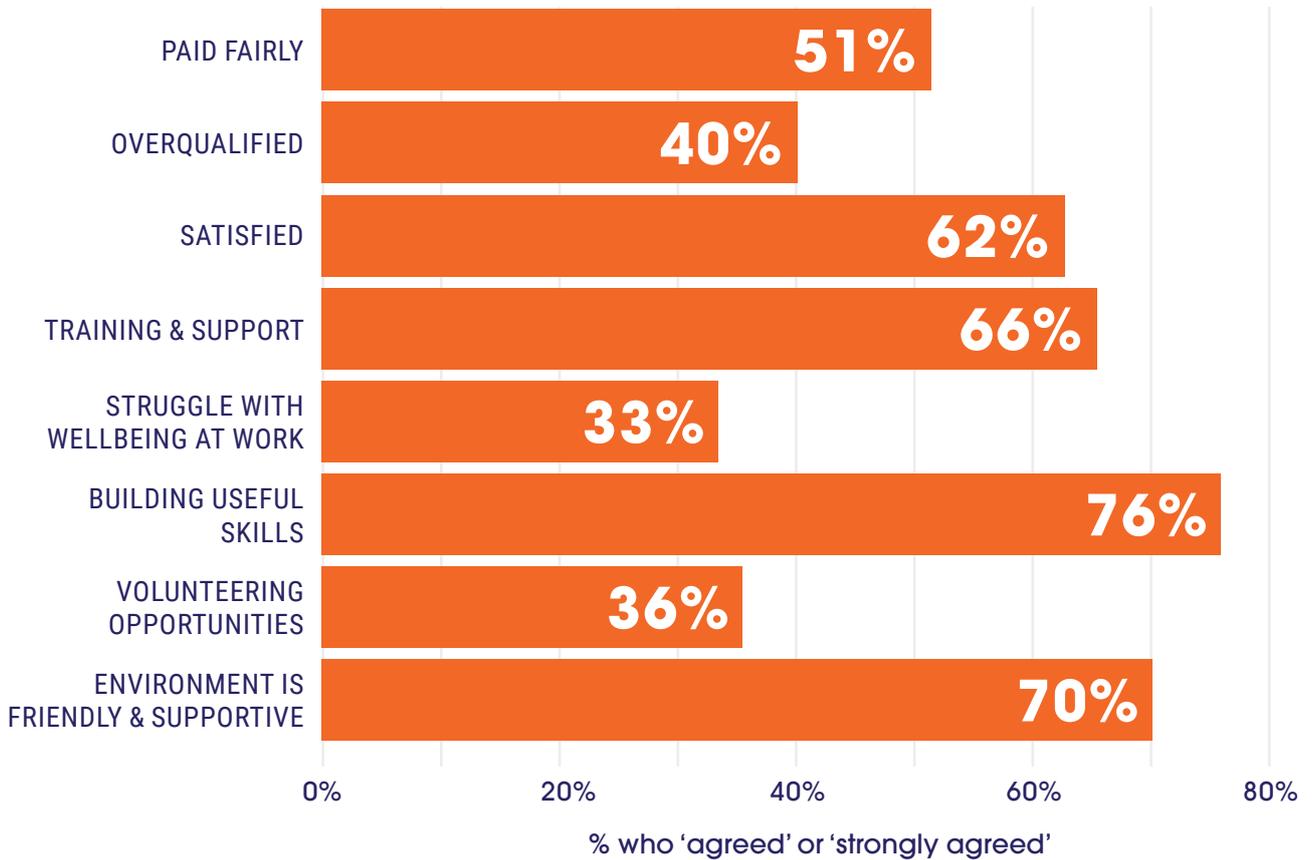
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*“ Given me the skills to get into the industry. ”*

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*“ Invested in more access to mental health provision for struggling students, clearer signposting of careers related information. ”*

# IN WORK



**HAPPINESS**  
**59%**  
'Happy' or 'Very Happy'  
in their current role

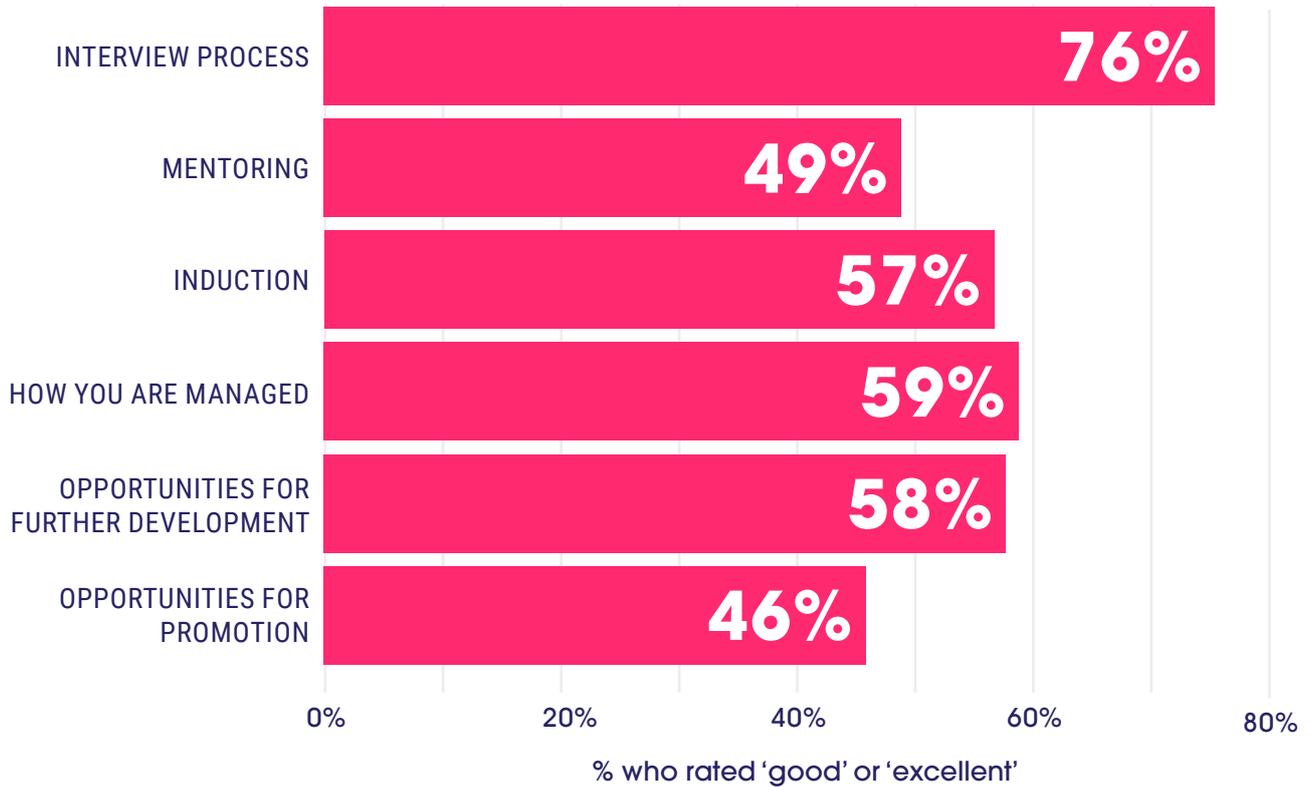
**YOUTH FRIENDLY**  
**64%**  
'Likely' or 'Very Likely'  
to rate their employer  
as Youth Friendly

Whilst numbers are slightly down on last year, being in work has some of the most positive engagement scores across the Youth Voice Census. Overall, those in work are happy.

## Onboarding and induction

We added additional questions this year to understand more about the hiring and induction process young people are experiencing.

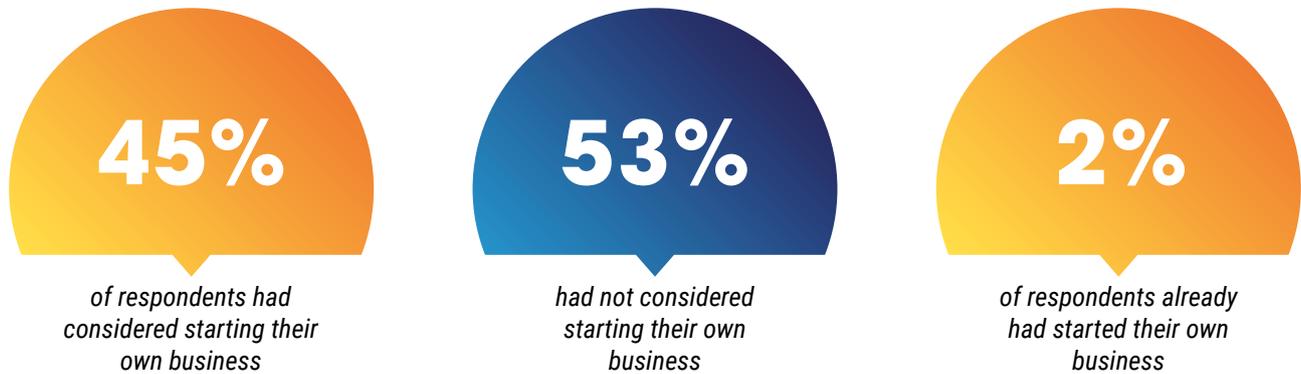
### THINKING ABOUT YOUR CURRENT EMPLOYER PLEASE RATE:



6% of young men rated their interview process as 'very bad', compared to 0% of young women. Young men were also more likely to state how they were managed was 'bad' – 26% thought this compared to 9% of young women.

29% of young women rated mentoring as 'excellent', compared to 6% of young men.

# STARTING A BUSINESS



Young men were more likely to answer that they had considered starting their own business with 51% thinking this compared to 41% of young women.

## Support for young people starting their own business

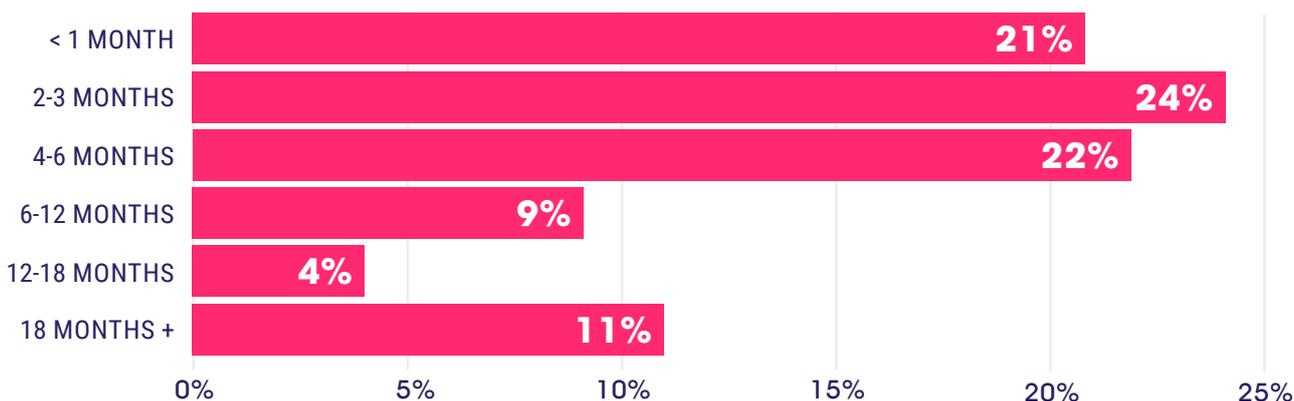
We asked young people that had considered starting their own business and those who already had started their own business what support they had received.

Jobcentre	<b>5%</b>
Financial support	<b>10%</b>
Parents/carers	<b>50%</b>
Careers advisors	<b>0%</b>
Employability programme	<b>5%</b>
Mentor	<b>5%</b>
Social media	<b>15%</b>
Work coach/Youth worker	<b>5%</b>
Other	<b>35%</b>

*Other included parents, accountants, colleagues and other employers*

# UNEMPLOYMENT

## LENGTH OF TIME SPENT NEET



13% of respondents had spent some time not in education, employment or training (NEET). 21% of those who had spent time NEET had additional needs, 10% more than those without additional needs.

77% of those not eligible for free school meals had not spent time NEET, compared to 68% of those who were eligible for free school meals.

### Length of time NEET

7% of those with additional needs spent one month NEET compared to 27% of those without additional needs. On further investigation it appears that this is because those with additional needs are more likely to spend more time NEET than those without. Those with additional needs had the highest percentage of being NEET for 18+ months, 19% compared to 7% of those without additional needs.

29% of those with additional needs were claiming universal credit (or benefits) compared to 10% of those without additional needs.

### What services are being used?

We asked young people which of these most commonly known services they had engaged with.

% of respondents who had used the service:



## Young people rate their biggest barriers to employment

Young people were asked to select up to three options from the following:

Lack of work experience	<b>45%</b>
There are no jobs here	<b>31%</b>
I have no contacts	<b>17%</b>
Anxiety	<b>35%</b>
Criminal record	<b>1%</b>
Cost to get to work	<b>9%</b>
Losing benefits	<b>1%</b>
Impact on family	<b>1%</b>
Being a single parent	<b>3%</b>
Not having the right skills	<b>25%</b>
Depression	<b>15%</b>
Mental health issues	<b>17%</b>
Physical disability	<b>5%</b>
Carer responsibilities	<b>4%</b>
Alcohol or drug dependency	<b>3%</b>
Racial discrimination	<b>5%</b>
Sexual orientation discrimination	<b>2%</b>
Travel/location	<b>21%</b>
Lack of reasonable adjustments by employers	<b>8%</b>
Other	<b>11%</b>

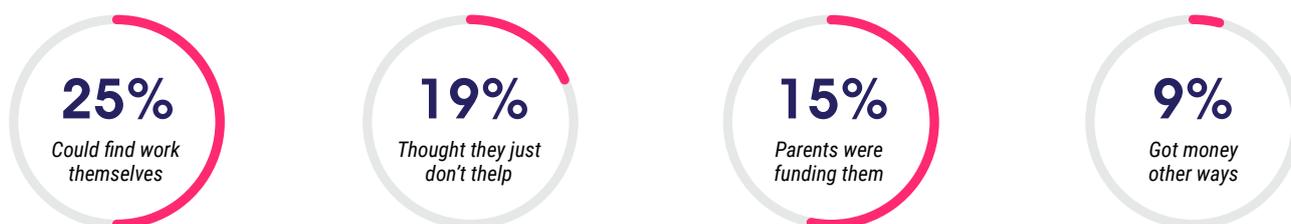
*Other = no degree, cost of living in london, language*

30% of those eligible for free school meals suggested depression was one of their biggest barriers to getting a job. This compares to 8% of those not eligible for free school meals.

30% of those with additional needs suggested mental health issues were one of the biggest barriers to getting a job. This compares to 8% of those without additional needs.

We asked young people who had decided not to engage with the Jobcentre while they were unemployed their reasons for this.

### Why aren't you engaging?



32% of young women stated that they were not using the services as they could find work themselves; this compares to 10% of young men who thought the same.

In free text commentary, young people told us that there was a real sense of stigma in their area about using the Jobcentre. Others were self-funding or simply not aware that they could use the Jobcentre.

*“ It has a massive stigma about it and when I mentioned i was thinking about using it one day my friends (who I don't talk to anymore) laughed. ”*

*“ I have little information about them. ”*

*“ When I was NEET for about 6 months, I didn't feel comfortable claiming universal credit and I didn't feel like I needed to as I was and still am living with my family. ”*

## What more could be done?

We asked those who had spent time NEET what more could be done to support them getting a job. Overriding themes were more access to work experience and quality careers advice.

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*“ More programmes for building confidence and gaining work experience. Better teaching at school and college in the first place. It would be good if some volunteer placements in my area didn't have the same requirements as a normal job, because now I can't volunteer to get experience either. ”*

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*“ More life-skills taught whilst in education. Functional skills like tax and money management. ”*

---

*“ Help finding a new place to rent close to the new job. ”*

---

*“ Sixth form, access to better educational and study resources, more local jobs and apprenticeships, guidance towards training and qualifications including training providers e.g. cscs. ”*

---

*“ Entry level jobs (By this I mean jobs you can get with no or very little experience) that are meaningful, not just working in Tescos for a couple of months etc. ”*

---

*“ More direct paths to employment instead of being tasked with the path all on your own. More support in relation to mental health issues caused by lack of employment. ”*

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*“ More understanding about my own skills by default and how they could be used to take the first steps to getting my dream job. ”*

---

*“ More employer training on reasonable adjustments Funding to help with travel if on a low income. ”*

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# SPONSORS

**bp plc**

*We are delighted to be supporting the 2020 Youth Voice Census. This is an important piece of research that help us all to understand young people's experience of entering the labour market.*

*As we embrace our purpose of reimagining energy for people and our planet, we need to engage and inspire talented people from all backgrounds to rise to this challenge together.*

*This census began before the dramatic and potentially long-lasting impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and its insights reflect the uncertainty that existed even then. It will be important for businesses, government and wider society to work together to rebuild our economy and creating a more sustainable future.*

**Simon Ashley, senior vice president trading & shipping and culture, bp plc**



At bp our purpose is reimagining energy for people and our planet. We want to help the world reach net zero and improve people's lives.

We want to be an energy company with purpose; one that is trusted by society, valued by shareholders and motivating for everyone who works at bp.

We believe we have the experience and expertise, the relationships and the reach, the skill and the will, to do this.

[bp.com/reimagine](https://bp.com/reimagine)

## The Careers & Enterprise Company



*The Youth Voice Census provides us with valuable insights into young people's attitudes to work, education and related issues. This year, the Census captures a timely snapshot of the state of play just before the full impact of the COVID-19 lockdown hit.*

*It also provides a reminder of the importance of careers education for young people soon to transition into a post-COVID-19 economy. Much of that insight is positive – young people tell us they were enjoying more work experience opportunities, that they value meaningful work experience, and that they feel it has helped them prepare for the world of work.*

*But the sudden closure of schools, colleges and businesses across the country has changed everything. The challenges now facing young people about to enter the workforce are unprecedented. Nobody can predict with confidence what the next 12 months will hold. But it will undoubtedly present significant challenges to those about to embark on the beginnings of their career journey.*

*There is no doubt whatsoever that all of us that work in this field will have to re-double our effort if we are to rise to this challenge. Research like the Youth Voice Census allows us to hear directly from young people about a way forward. It tells us how much they value meaningful work experience, one-to-one support, and personal careers guidance, for example.*

*The next year will be challenging for all of us, but particularly for young people. But by listening to the voices of young people, and acting on what they say, we will find a way forward.*

The Careers & Enterprise Company is a government backed social enterprise whose mission is to prepare and inspire young people for the fast-changing world of work.

We support schools and colleges by linking them to employers and helping them deliver world class careers support for all young people. We do this by:

- Building Networks: Linking schools and colleges to employers and other external careers providers
- Supporting Careers Leaders: Providing training and support for Careers Leaders in schools and colleges.
- Backing the Gatsby Benchmarks: Supporting implementation of a best practice standard for careers support, the Gatsby Benchmarks, with tools and targeted funding.

**Pearson**



**Pearson**

*This year's Youth Voice Census is published against a backdrop that will have a significant impact on the way we live and work. And young people will not be immune to its effects. Far from it. That is why this annual survey is so important, sharing the hopes, fears and needs of young people as they prepare to enter the world of work.*

*Having the voice of younger people heard, especially around education and employment, is vital if we are to provide them with the platform for future success in their lives and careers. That is why we at Pearson are, once again, delighted to sponsor the Youth Voice Census, and the excellent work of Youth Employment UK.*

*Whatever the future holds, amidst talk of a 'new normal', some things will not change. Young people will still require an education system that provides them with the right choices and flexibility to build successful careers. To support and enhance young people's employability, a mix of academic curriculum, a career-focussed route and more specialised technical option is key. In addition, good quality advice and guidance must be accessible to support informed choices about their futures.*

*Getting these things right, and learning from the way in which policy makers, providers and employers have adapted will go some way in allaying the anxieties of young people voiced within this survey. They are acutely aware of what they need to be able to realise their potential and to be successful.*

*The message is clear, even if the future isn't. And so, it is up to everyone involved in education to listen and to consider what we are being told. That way we can prepare the next generation for their future lives and careers – helping them to make progress and realise their potential, their ambitions and aspirations.*

We are the world's learning company with more than 22,500 employees operating in 70 countries. We provide content, assessment and digital services to learners, educational institutions, employers, governments and other partners globally. We are committed to helping equip learners with the skills they need to enhance their employability prospects and to succeed in the changing world of work. We believe that wherever learning flourishes so do people.

[Learn more about Pearson](#)

## The Skills Builder Partnership



*The Youth Voice Census gives us an important insight into how young people are thinking about their employability and prospects. It's vital that these perspectives inform how we support every young person to build the essential skills that they need to succeed.*

*What is clear from this Census is that there is a lot more work to do. Not enough young people think that they have an understanding of what employers are looking for when it comes to employability skills. Likewise, too often they do not feel that they have had a chance to build them, and lack confidence in using them.*

*The work of the Skills Builder Partnership is to increase clarity and transparency about the essential employability skills that everyone needs, and to provide the tools to support them to be built. This Census demonstrates why that focus is so important.*

Skills Builder Partnership works to ensure that one day, everyone builds the essential skills to succeed. These eight skills include teamwork, leadership, creativity, problem solving, leadership, teamwork, aiming high, and staying positive.

We bring together more than 750 organisations to use a shared language and approach to building these skills. These organisations cover education, employment and opportunities to build essential skills in wider life too.

Find tools to understand and build your essential skills at [www.skillsbuilder.org](http://www.skillsbuilder.org)

