

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY
Written evidence
Contents

Government, parliamentary groups and devolved administrations	7
Department for Education – Written evidence (SMO0055)	8
Department for Education – Supplementary written evidence (SMO0143).....	26
Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland – Written evidence (SMO0034)	35
OFSTED – Written evidence (SMO0047)	45
The Scottish Government – Written evidence (SMO0042).....	51
The Scottish Government - Supplementary written evidence (SMO0140).....	63
The Welsh Government – Written evidence (SMO0021).....	66
Local Government and regional bodies	79
Careers South West – Written evidence (SMO0095)	80
City of London Corporation – Written evidence (SMO0130)	85
Herefordshire Council – Written evidence (SMO0020)	88
Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and Youth Connexions Hertfordshire – Written evidence (SMO0026)	91
Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council, and Youth Connexions Hertfordshire – Written evidence (SMO0026)	103
High Peak Borough Council & Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – Written evidence (SMO0068).....	104
Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership – Written evidence (SMO0049).....	109
Local Government Association – Written evidence (SMO0011).....	116
London Councils – Written evidence (SMO0057)	123
New Economy (on behalf of Greater Manchester Combined Authority) – Written evidence (SMO0088).....	146
Northamptonshire Enterprise Partnership – Written evidence (SMO0094).....	152
Telford and Wrekin Council – Written evidence (SMO0009)	155
Youth Connexions Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire County Council, and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership – Written evidence (SMO0026)	161
International Governments	162
Government of Austria – Written evidence (SMO0129)	163
Royal Danish Embassy – Written evidence (SMO0108).....	166

Government of Finland – Written evidence (SMO0127).....	168
Ministry of Social Development, Government of New Zealand – Written evidence (SMO0032).....	179
State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (part of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research), Swiss Confederation – Written evidence (SMO0117).....	182
Employers and business organisations	201
BAE Systems – Written evidence (SMO0114)	202
Barclays PLC – Written evidence (SMO0115).....	206
BBC – Written evidence (SMO0126)	211
Crossrail – written evidence (SMO0139).....	216
EMC – Written evidence (SMO0086)	219
EY – Written evidence (SMO0134)	223
KPMG – Written Evidence (SMO0121)	239
Pinetree Enterprises Ltd – Written evidence (SMO0015)	246
Pret A Manger – Written evidence (SMO0041).....	248
Other Public and Third Sector Groups (including Think Tanks and non-governmental organisations)	250
Ambitious about Autism – Written evidence (SMO0039).....	252
ASDAN – Written evidence (SMO0054)	259
Aspire Group – Written evidence (SMO0007)	273
Baker Dearing Educational Trust – Written evidence (SMO0136)	278
Barnado’s – Written evidence (SMO0128).....	285
Barnardo’s Focus Group – Written evidence (SMO0133)	296
Barnardo’s Focus Group – Supplementary written evidence (SMO0138).....	298
Barnardo’s Participation Service – Written evidence (SMO0112)	321
The Big Academy – Written evidence (SMO0116).....	323
British Youth Council – Written evidence (SMO0142)	327
The Brokerage Citylink – Written evidence (SMO0035)	330
Career Ready – Written evidence (SMO0074).....	337
Carers Trust – Written evidence (SMO0033)	342
Centrepont - Written evidence (SMO0051)	350
Capp – Written evidence (SMO0069)	357
Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (Inclusion) and National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) - Written evidence (SMO0076).....	369
The Challenge – Written evidence (SMO0098).....	370

City Year UK – Written evidence (SMO0079).....	376
Develop – Written evidence (SMO0003)	384
The Edge Foundation – Written evidence (SMO0024)	387
Eurofound – Written evidence (SMO0144).....	401
Fair Train – Written evidence (SMO0067)	414
FIRST Face to Face Limited – Written Evidence (SMO0100).....	424
The Found Generation – Written evidence (SMO0101)	427
Futures Advice Skills Employment Ltd – Written evidence (SMO0028).....	432
The Gatsby Charitable Foundation – Written evidence (SMO0037).....	438
Institute for Social and Economic Research – Written evidence (SMO0058).....	441
Inclusion Trust – Written evidence (SMO0107).....	446
Impetus Private Equity Foundation – Written evidence (SMO0066)	464
Intern Aware – Written evidence (SMO0099)	469
Joseph Rowntree Foundation – Written evidence (SMO0023)	472
Learning Revolution Trust – Written evidence (SMO0022)	483
The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Commercial Education Trust (CET) – Written evidence (SMO0059).....	490
MiddletonMurray – Written evidence (SMO0013).....	493
Nacro – Written evidence (SMO0123).....	511
National Literacy Trust - Written evidence (SMO0014).....	519
National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (Inclusion) - Written evidence (SMO0076).....	525
New Meaning Limited – Written evidence (SMO0031).....	534
The Prince’s Trust – Written evidence (SMO0040).....	536
Prospects Services – Written evidence (SMO0091).....	545
PSHE Association – Written evidence (SMO0016).....	553
Pupils2Parliament – Written evidence (SMO0132).....	559
Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership – Written evidence (SMO0038).....	568
The Sutton Trust – Written evidence (SMO0111).....	572
STEMNET – Written evidence (SMO0109).....	581
Step Up To Serve – Written evidence (SMO0029)	585
Thinkforward – Written evidence (SMO0092).....	590
TQ Training – Written evidence (SMO0004)	595
UK Commission for Employment and Skills – Written evidence (SMO0001).....	600
The Who Cares Trust – Written evidence (SMO0050).....	620

WhyTry – Written evidence (SMO0064)	625
YMCA England – Written evidence (SMO0085).....	631
YMCA Training – Written evidence (SMO0077)	637
Young Enterprise – Written evidence (SMO0122).....	647
Young Womens Trust – Written evidence (SMO0046).....	653
Youth Employment UK – Written Evidence (SMO0118).....	659
Unions and membership bodies.....	666
Association of Accounting Technicians – Written evidence (SMO0102)	667
Association of Colleges – Written evidence (SMO0087)	681
Association of National Specialist Colleges (Natspec) – Written evidence (SMO0093)	690
Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) – Written evidence (SMO0084)	695
British Chambers of Commerce – Written evidence (SMO0103)	704
Careers England – Written evidence (SMO0044).....	708
Emfec – Written evidence (SMO0113)	715
Federation of Small Businesses – Written evidence (SMO0096).....	719
Forum of Private Businesses – Written evidence (SMO0048).....	728
The National Association of Special Schools (NASS) – Written evidence (SMO0110).....	730
National Union of Students – Written Evidence (SMO0080).....	734
NHS Employers – written evidence (SMO105)	748
Recruitment and Employment Confederation – Written evidence (SMO0075)	753
The Royal British Legion – Written evidence (SMO0072)	757
The Science Council – Written Evidence (SMO0120)	766
Trades Union Congress (TUC) – Written evidence (SMO0104).....	775
Professional bodies	782
Access to the Professions – Written evidence (SMO0124)	783
The Chartered Insurance Institute – Written evidence (SMO0106)	789
Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) – Written evidence (SMO0043)	794
ICAEW – Written evidence (SMO0063)	806
Institution of Mechanical Engineers – Written evidence (SMO0070)	814
Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists – Written evidence (SMO0065).....	817
Academics and experts.....	821
Gaby Atfield, Professor Anne Green, Professor Phil Mizen, Professor Kate Purcell, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)	822
Dr Liz Atkins – Written evidence (SMO0018).....	823

Professor Saul Becker and Dr Joe Sempik – Written evidence (SMO0137).....	840
Professor Karen Evans and Professor Ingrid Schoon – Written evidence (SMO0056).....	850
Professor Alison Fuller and Professor Lorna Unwin – Written evidence (SMO0010)	857
Professor Alison Fuller and Professor Lorna Unwin – supplementary written evidence (SMO0147).....	870
Professor Anne Green, Professor Phil Mizen, Gaby Atfield, Professor Kate Purcell, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)	877
Professor Ann Hodgson and Professor Ken Spours – Written evidence (SMO0012)	878
Dr Deirdre Hughes – Written evidence (SMO0045)	892
Professor Yaojun Li and Professor Fiona Devine – Written evidence (SMO0062).....	900
Mary Alice McCarthy– Written evidence (SMO0141).....	901
Professor Phil Mizen, Gaby Atfield, Professor Anne Green, Professor Kate Purcell, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)	910
Professor Kate Purcell, Gaby Atfield, Professor Anne Green, Professor Phil Mizen, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)	911
Dr Simon Reddy – Written evidence (SMO0006).....	923
Professor Ken Roberts – Written evidence (SMO0002).....	928
Professor Ingrid Schoon and Professor Karen Evans – Written evidence (SMO0056).....	930
Dr Joe Sempik and Professor Saul Becker – Written evidence (SMO0137).....	931
Professor Ken Spours and Professor Ann Hodgson – Written evidence (SMO0012)	932
Dr Michelle Stewart – Written evidence (SMO0005).....	933
Professor Phil Mizen, Gaby Atfield, Professor Anne Green, Professor Kate Purcell, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)	934
Professor Lorna Unwin and Professor Alison Fuller – Written evidence (SMO0010)	935
Professor Lorna Unwin and Professor Alison Fuller – supplementary written evidence (SMO0147).....	936
Further Education	937
The Manchester College – Written evidence (SMO0053).....	938
Northampton College – written evidence (SMO135).....	940
Schools	943
Mr Anthony Ryan (Head teacher, Chiswick School)– Written evidence (SMO0017)	944
Higher Education.....	946
Cascaid Ltd – Written evidence (SMO0061).....	947
Centre for Vocational Education Research, London School of Economics – Written evidence (SMO0081).....	952
Middlesex University London – Written evidence (SMO0036)	966

National Foundation for Educational Research – Written evidence (SMO0082).....	973
University Alliance – Written evidence (SMO0027)	985
Awarding bodies	989
City & Guilds – Written evidence (SMO0073).....	990
OCR – Written evidence (SMO0060).....	997
Pearson Education – Written evidence (SMO0089)	1005
Individuals.....	1023
Matteo Calogiuri – Written evidence (SMO0008)	1024
Charlie Doherty – Written evidence (SMO0025).....	1026
John Taylor – Written evidence (SMO0146)	1027

Government, parliamentary groups and devolved administrations

Department for Education – Written evidence (SMO0055)

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility – written evidence from government

Introduction and policy context

1. The government is pleased to provide written evidence to support the Lords Social Mobility Committee's inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14- to- 24-year-olds. This paper explains the context for the government's planned policy developments which support social mobility and looks, in turn, at each of the questions posed by the Committee in its call for written evidence. We look forward to a dialogue with the Committee and with other interested parties.

2. A high quality education and skills system is central to the delivery of social justice and equality of opportunity for all, as well as to tackling productivity underperformance. Through our programme of reforms we want to level the playing field, allow young people to develop their talents, and to give every young person the opportunity to reach their potential, regardless of socio-economic background.

3. This government and the previous Coalition government have made good progress on this over the last 5 years:

- 90,000 more primary school children are achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and maths in 2014/15
- a record 82% of schools are now deemed 'good' or 'outstanding'
- 82% of further education colleges and providers are also deemed 'good' or 'outstanding'
- thousands of poor quality qualifications that did not enable progression to further study or employment have been removed from performance tables
- we have the lowest level of 16- to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training since consistent records began
- over 2.3 million people have started an apprenticeship
- 2 million more people have moved into work.

4. However, there is more to do to tackle inequality and to ensure that all young people get the support they need to prepare for adult life. Too many young people are still falling behind, and failing to reach their potential. Our focus is to ensure that every young person is given the tools they need to develop and learn and to make effective transitions, through high quality education and training routes into work and fulfilling careers.

Responses to the Committee's questions

Question 1: What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

5. There is a range of factors that affect the ability of young people to enter the job market and to build careers. These are considered in turn below.

Level of qualification achieved

6. Evidence suggests that the level of qualification attained is one the most important determinants of a successful career. Data from the Labour Force Survey¹ show us that more qualified individuals earn more and are more likely to be in work. For example, there is a large lifetime productivity benefit from completing two or more A levels compared to holding 5-7 good GCSEs. The marginal lifetime productivity gain is around £90,000 for men and £76,000 for women (£58,000 for men and £43,000 for women average returns). The higher lifetime returns for this group are largely due to them earning higher wages from holding A levels, rather than them spending more time in employment.

7. Apprenticeships also yield significant benefits. Compared with lower or equivalent qualifications the lifetime productivity benefit from completing level 2 apprenticeships are particularly large for men, at close to £140,000, but are also sizeable for women (£67,000). For men level 3 apprenticeships confer around £175,000 in lifetime productivity benefits compared to those with any level 2 qualification. Returns to women are also large at £78,477.

8. Pupils from economically deprived family backgrounds are less likely than their non-disadvantaged peers to achieve the expected academic standard at the end of primary and secondary school. To help tackle this, the government provides schools with additional pupil premium funding – totalling £2.5 billion in 2015-16 – for each pupil who has been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years. Schools are held to account for how they use this funding through the focus in Ofsted inspections and school performance tables on the progress and attainment of their disadvantaged pupils. The National Audit Office recently concluded that while it will take time to gauge the full impact of the pupil premium, early indications are that many schools are using it to help disadvantaged pupils in useful ways; and if these schools' early performance can be sustained and built upon, the pupil premium has the potential to bring about a significant improvement in outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.²

A broad and balanced curriculum

¹ Methodology: Labour Force Survey (LFS) data from Quarter 1 2006 to Quarter 1 2013. Estimates use wage and employment returns to simulate total productivity gains over an individual's life-time. Estimates do not differentiate between value of qualifications gained at different ages.

² <http://www.nao.org.uk/report/funding-for-disadvantaged-pupils/>

9. We want all children to leave primary school having achieved the standards they need to be able to make a successful start in secondary school. That is why we are introducing more challenging end of key stage 2 tests and will be holding schools to account in 2016 against a higher expected national standard.

10. Evidence points to the importance of young people pursuing a broad and rigorous core curriculum up to the age of 16 before beginning to specialise. The government's goal is for all pupils starting year 7 in September 2015 to study the English Baccalaureate³ to GCSE level. Young people without good grades in English and maths at GCSE will continue to study the subjects up to the age of 18. The introduction of the Progress 8 measure from 2016 will show the progress a pupil makes across 8 subjects from the end of key stage 2 to the end of key stage 4 compared to pupils with the same starting point. By focussing on progress across 8 subjects rather than achievement of 5 A*-C grades, schools will be incentivised to offer a broad and balanced curriculum and will be held to account for the performance of all pupils, not just those at the C/D borderline.

Participation post-16

11. Despite the improvements in post-16 participation, the UK is still behind many developed countries in the proportion staying in education and training. The UK's participation rate at age 17 (87%)⁴ was below the average participation rate of 34 OECD countries (90%) in 2012. In contrast, 100% of 17-year olds are enrolled in secondary or tertiary education in Belgium and participation is almost universal in Hungary, Sweden, the Netherlands and Greece. Although the UK rates are much higher than countries such as Mexico (53%) and Turkey (61%), our participation rate places us joint 26th out of the 34 OECD countries. That is why we have raised the participation age in England so that all young people are required to continue in education or training until at least their 18th birthday. The increase from 2012 to 2014 of 3.4ppts in the proportion of 16-year-olds participating in education and work based learning suggests that this policy is working by embedding an expectation that young people should continue to participate, and we anticipate that over time we will improve our international position as a result.

High quality qualifications that employers value

12. A rigorous academic curriculum until age 16 is the best way to ensure that every child succeeds regardless of their background and allows us to be ambitious for everyone and to keep options open. We have reformed GCSEs so they are more rigorous and provide a better preparation for further study and employment. The English Baccalaureate will give every child

³ English, maths, science, one foreign language and either history or geography

⁴ OECD (2014) *Education at a Glance 2014*, table C1.1b

access to an academic core curriculum. Some students will take qualifications other than GCSEs at age 16, with high quality courses available in subjects ranging from business and finance to engineering. Having mastered the basic core at 16, we then want to give young people the chance to choose the future path for them. High quality post-16 education is vital for ensuring that every young person will leave education capable of getting a good job, a place at a university or an apprenticeship.

13. For some young people, professional and technical education will be the route they take. It is clearly essential that young people study for qualifications that support successful progression to further study and employment rather than low grade qualifications that employers don't value. In Professor Alison Wolf's 2011 report⁵ she identified that vocational education offers a successful pathway into employment or higher education for many, but schools were enrolling students on low quality qualifications to boost their performance table attainment and there were at least 350,000 16- to- 19-year-olds working towards vocational qualifications that were of very limited value, either to them or to employers. To address this, the government has reformed school and college performance tables in order to steer students towards the qualifications that have higher labour market returns. To be approved, qualifications must meet strict quality standards and have recognition from employers or higher education providers that they provide access to employment or higher education.

14. As a result, we are already seeing a significantly increased focus on qualifications that promote progression to further study. At key stage 4, 96% of the available qualifications have been removed from the secondary school performance tables, leaving only those of a demonstrably high quality which promote progression. A recent study by the Institute for Public Policy Research⁶ found that 60% of the schools surveyed had either already reduced the number of level 2 vocational qualifications on offer or were planning to do so. The study stated that "66% of those who said their schools were reducing their vocational offer said that the reason for this was changes to the school performance tables."

15. Three new categories of technical and applied qualifications have been introduced for 16- to- 19-year-olds, to be reported in performance tables alongside academic qualifications. Tech level qualifications provide a technical alternative to A levels for students wishing to enter a skilled occupation. Applied general qualifications, often taken alongside A levels, enable progression to higher education. Technical certificates are intermediate qualifications that enable students to progress immediately into trades and occupations that recognise entry at this level. They also provide access to tech levels for further skills development. All tech levels and technical certificates are supported by employers.

⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180504/DFE-00031-2011.pdf

⁶ http://www.ippr.org/files/images/media/files/publication/2013/01/league-tables-vocational_Jan2013_10247.pdf?noredirect=1

16. Students may combine a tech level with an advanced (level 3) maths qualification and an extended project in a technical baccalaureate ('TechBacc') programme. The TechBacc is a new 16-19 performance table measure and seven 'TechBacc Trailblazer' schools and colleges⁷ have been working with local employers since September 2014 to pilot these new programmes.

17. The government's productivity plan⁸ confirms our ambition for a professional and technical education system that provides individuals with clear, high-quality routes to employment and that supports the government's overall fiscal and economic objectives. As a first step the government has increased the rigour of professional and technical qualifications and streamlined the offer as set out above so that individuals have a clear set of options which allow for progression to higher level skills. We plan to increase further the involvement of employers in developing the curriculum and qualifications involved in these pathways, as well as in providing work experience and employment opportunities. The government will set out further details on these reforms in the autumn.

Family background and other cultural factors

18. Research⁹ also shows that education success can be transmitted across generations: children whose parents performed well at school age 11 are more likely to perform well at school themselves. The risk of being NEET at age 17 for young people from non-professional parents is about four times higher than for young people with professional parents (11 per cent compared with 3 per cent)¹⁰. But more complex multivariate analyses¹¹ have shown that the relationship between socio-economic group and NEET is largely reduced once performance at GCSE is taken into account, indicating that most of the impact of coming from a lower socio-economic group on NEET is indirect and works through differences in GCSE performance, which in turn is based on prior attainment. However, even controlling for prior attainment there remains a difference in NEET rates by economic group.

19. Other factors identified by studies¹² as barriers to making the best possible transitions include cultural expectations; early ambitions and aspirations not being translated into high achievement; and lack of work experience and decision-making skills. Our policies on careers advice, guidance and inspiration (see paragraph 48) will help to address these issues.

⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/tech-awards-to-boost-vocational-education-for-14-to-16-year-olds>

⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fixing-the-foundations-creating-a-more-prosperous-nation>

⁹ Blanden, J., Gregg, P., and Macmillan, L. (2006) Explaining Intergenerational Income Persistence: Non-cognitive Skills, Ability and Education CMPO Working Paper No. 06/146.

¹⁰ DCSF: Youth Cohort Study and Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: The Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds: England (2008)

¹¹ Cebulla & Tomaszewski, 2009; Chowdry et al, 2009

¹² Sissons & Jones, 2012; CAYT, 2010; CAYT, 2011 unpublished; Crawford et al, 2011

20. The government is committed to addressing gender equality and has produced 'Your Daughter's Future' in partnership with the PSHE Association, an online guide which is aimed at parents, and provides information on what choices their children will face and when. It supports parents to challenge the gender expectations and stereotypes that can limit choices. The gender pay gap is at the lowest it has ever been and we want to continue to make sure that girls are able to choose from the broadest possible range of careers, and that they are not hindered by stereotypes suggesting that some jobs are 'for boys' or 'for girls.'

21. The 'Opening Doors' project is working with two regional clusters of schools to develop best practice and guidance to encourage and support girls to take up science subjects. This is due to be published in the autumn. The government want schools to create an environment that gives all students the confidence, opportunity and encouragement to progress as far as they want within any subject, regardless of gender.

22. The study of STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and maths) is essential for a wide range of careers and carries a wage premium: those working in science or technological careers are paid, on average, 19% more than other professions . Science is seen as a male subject with popular scientists and mathematicians tending to be white, middle-class men. 'Your Life' is a three year campaign to help young people build the skills needed to succeed in the competitive global economy. It connects existing initiatives to inspire and promote better opportunities and aims to increase the number of students taking maths and physics A level by 50% over the next three years. It has the support and backing of more than 200 organisations from business, educators, civil society and government.

23. The figures in paragraphs 6 and 7 show that different qualifications affect the earning potential - and therefore the social mobility - of men and women in different ways. This is also true in regard to people from different ethnic groups. We know also that women and people from certain ethnic minorities are over-represented in many poorly-paid careers. We need to take account of this in looking at how we improve the pathway from school to work for those not going on to higher education, raising aspirations and making clear that no career should be considered off limits to anyone because of their gender, race or background.

Question 2: There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

24. Latest ONS data¹³ (covering April to June 2015 and published in August) shows that 12.7% of 16- to 24-year-olds in the UK were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) - the lowest figure for this quarter since consistent records began. 53% of 16- to 24-year-olds were in work; while the rates for young people of this age in work fell following the recession, they are now at similar rate to pre-recession employment rates. The same source also shows that 46% of 16- to 24-year-olds are in full-time study (although some of them will also be in some form of employment and are therefore also included in the above figure). We do not publish data on the entire 16- to 24-year-old cohort who are not pursuing the A level and higher education route and not NEET, broken down by gender, ethnicity, disability, social class and region. As the Committee is particularly interested in this aspect they may wish to review published FE data¹⁴ on characteristics of young people under 19 and 19- to 24-year-olds, though this excludes those in schools and in employment.

25. Latest DfE data¹⁵, published in June 2015, shows that the proportion of 16- and 17-year-olds in education or work based learning (apprenticeships) at the end of 2014 in England was 90.8% - a rise of 1.3ppts compared to 2013. This is the highest participation figure since consistent records began in 1994 and suggests that Raising the Participation Age policy (whereby young people are now required to participate in education or training until at least their 18th birthday) is having a positive impact.

26. After compulsory schooling young people make choices as to what to study. The latest position for 16 year olds is set out in the table below.

Participation in education and work-based learning of 16 year olds by highest qualification aim, 2014¹⁶

• Type of education or training	• Number	• Proportion
• Level 4 or above	• 500	• 0.1%
• 'A' levels and qualifications at Level 3	• 415,300	• 65.5%
- 'A' levels	• 319,100	• 50.3%
- Other Level 3 qualifications	• 96,200	• 15.2%
• Level 2	• 103,400	• 16.3%
- GCSEs	• 44,200	• 7.0%

¹³ UK Labour Market, August 2015, ONS : <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/august-2015/statistical-bulletin.html>

¹⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/351432/1213_E_D_-_Main_Tables_FINAL_XLS_September_14.xls

¹⁵ Participation in education, training and employment: age 16 to 18 in England, SFR19/2015 : <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/participation-in-education-training-and-employment-age-16-to-18--2>

¹⁶ Source: Statistical First Release, Participation in Education and Training of 16 to 18 year olds, June 2015.

- <i>Other Level 2 qualifications</i>	• 59,200	• 9.3%
• Level 1	• 40,900	• 6.5%
• Other courses	• 17,600	• 2.8%
• Work-based learning	• 22,500	• 3.5%
- <i>Advanced Apprenticeships</i>	• 5,100	• 0.8%
- <i>Apprenticeships</i>	• 17,400	• 2.7%
• Total population of 16 year olds	• 633,900	• 100%

27. As explained in response to question 1, the government’s reforms to 16-19 qualifications mean that more young people are taking courses of high value which support progression to further study or a good job. The evidence points to an emerging trend whereby more young people are staying on and achieving level 3 through high quality vocational qualifications. These include tech levels, which were introduced in September 2014 and are level 3 qualifications which are endorsed by employers and lead directly into a skilled occupation or to further study within an occupational area. For the most able students, as mentioned above, we have introduced the TechBacc measure, which requires achievement of a tech level, advanced (level 3) maths and an extended project qualification. This will provide bright young people with a first-class alternative to the more traditional A level route, ensuring they have the technical ability employers want.

28. The 2014 Statistical First Release¹⁷ shows that there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils achieving tech level qualifications - 11% of 19 year olds in 2014 had achieved a qualification, since designated a tech level, which is 1.6 ppts more than in 2013. The pattern looks set to continue, with 8.7% of the 19 in 2015 cohort having achieved a tech level by age 18 compared to 7.3% of the 19 in 2014 cohort at the same age. 2.6% of the age 19 in 2016 cohort had achieved this level by age 17 which is 0.5 ppts more than the previous cohort at the same age. The SFR also shows that the proportion of 16- to- 19-year-olds reaching level 3 via a vocational qualification is rising - 17.7% of 19-year-olds attained level 3 via a vocational qualification outside of an apprenticeship which is 0.9 ppts higher than the previous year.

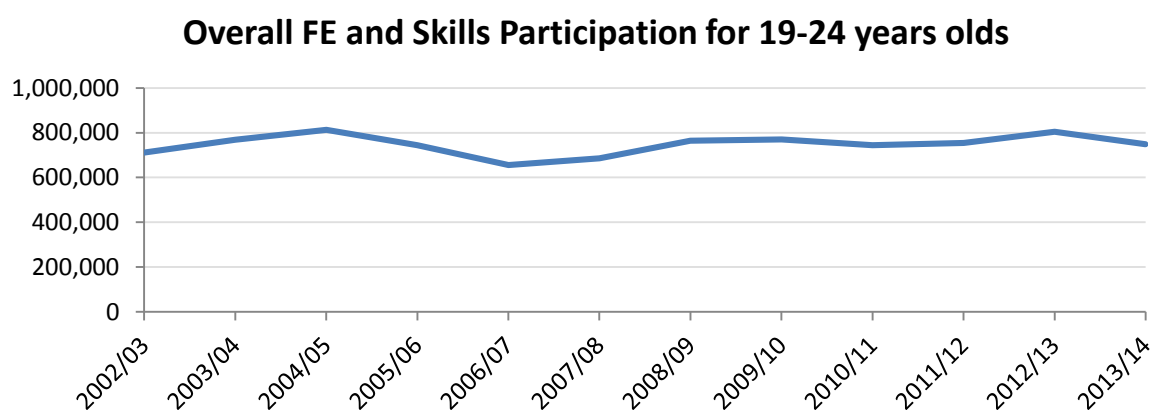
29. In terms of 19- to- 24-year-olds figures for the 2013/14 academic year show that:

- 748,400 learners aged 19-24 participated in further education and skills. This is around a quarter (25.5%) of all adult (aged 19+) learners participating in 2013/14

¹⁷ [Statistical First Release: Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people in England – Attainment by age 19 in 2014](#)

- 308,900 learners aged 19-24 participated in apprenticeships, over a third (36.3%) of all learners (all ages) participating in apprenticeships in 2013/14.
- 159,100 learners aged 19-24 started at apprenticeship.

30. As the following chart shows learner volumes for this age range have remained at around the same level. As a percentage of all learners, the share of 19-24 learners has increased over time. It was at around 15% in 2002/03, reaching nearly 18% in 2011/12 and over 19% in 2013/14.



31. As well as broad work preparation courses learners undertook courses across all sectors of the economy including agriculture, health care and information technology. Our evidence shows that returns to further education can be substantial with an earnings return of 11% for completion of a full level 2 qualification and 9% for completion of a full level 3.¹⁸

32. Our reforms to apprenticeships also ensure that young people have a prestigious work-based route to follow. Employers are designing quality apprenticeships to meet their skills needs. Employers will also have more say over the value for money and relevance of the training they buy. Giving employers ownership of developing new apprenticeship standards will make it easier for them to offer more apprenticeships in the future. We are growing higher and degree apprenticeships that combine higher level skills or a world class degree and offer young people a real alternative to university. Provisional data show that there have been over 1 million apprenticeship starts for the 18-24 age group since May 2010.

33. Many young people are highly motivated to get an apprenticeship or other sustainable employment, but need to improve their skills in order to progress to such opportunities. That’s why we’ve introduced traineeships, to give young people (16- to- 24-year-olds) the skills and work experience they need to be able to compete for an apprenticeship or other

¹⁸https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/383646/Estimation_of_the_labour_market_returns_to_qualifications_gained_in_English_Further_Education_-_Final_-_November_2014.pdf

sustainable employment. Traineeships last for up to 6 months, providing a work experience placement with an employer; work preparation training; and English and maths where required. Traineeships are growing fast – with 10,400 participants reported in the first year (2013/14); and provisional data showing 15,100 starts in the first three quarters of the 2014/15 academic year.

Progress through the system: longitudinal data

34. Some of the best data available on how young people progressed through the education and training system are drawn from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE)¹⁹. The group of young people involved were 16 in 2007 so while information about their experience is still useful, the patterns of participation will not reflect more recent trends. A successor study is in progress which will give more up-to-date data on post-16 learners in 2016.

35. Research shows that whether young people continue in education after the age of 16, and the route they take, is strongly influenced by their GCSE attainment. The LSYPE shows that a little over half of those who did not attain five good GCSEs stayed on in full-time education in 2007, compared to 88% of those who did. Figures from 2008²⁰ show that at 16, 61% of the cohort had attained level 2, and by the age of 17 a total of 69% had achieved this level. This means that just over one in five of the young people who hadn't achieved level 2 at 16 had gone on to do so by the age of 17.

36. The LSYPE also shows that young people from lower socio-economic classes tend to have lower levels of academic attainment at age 16 compared to the higher socio-economic classes. This gap extends to the age of 17 as those who had not achieved level 2 at 16 from the lower socio-economic classes were less likely to have gone on to achieve it at 17 than young people from the higher and lower professional socio-economic classes. Young people from Indian backgrounds were the strongest performing ethnic group reported on in the research of 16-year-olds in 2007.

Improving information and data to support learners

37. The government is putting an increasing emphasis on understanding wage returns and destination data as information that will shape young people's choices and inform policy development. Currently, the government publishes data showing the destinations of young people at national, local and institutional level after key stage 4 (KS4), and after key stage 5 (KS5) for those who studied for a level 3 qualification. The data are also broken down by

¹⁹ [DCSF: Youth Cohort Study and Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: The Activities and Experiences of 16 Year Olds: England 2007](#)

²⁰ [DCSF: Youth Cohort Study and Longitudinal Study of Young People in England: The Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds: England 2008](#)

characteristics of students - gender, ethnicity, eligibility for free school meals in year 11, disadvantaged pupils who would have attracted the pupil premium at the end of the academic year (for KS4 pupils), and those with special educational needs (and learning difficulties and disabilities for KS5 students). This enables users to compare the destinations of different groups of young people.

38. The government plans to improve destination measures to develop our understanding of how young people move through the system and the relationship between sustained employment outcomes, wage returns and the routes and choices taken by young people.

39. The most recent publication of destinations data (January 2015)²¹ shows the percentage of young people progressing to specified destinations in 2012/13. These are young people in key stage 4 (KS4) and key stage 5 (KS5) in 2011/12. 71% of young people were recorded in a sustained education employment or training destination the year after taking A level or other level 3 qualifications at a state-funded mainstream school or college; 12% did not remain in education or employment or training for the required two terms. But the destinations of 17% of the group were unknown. We hope to reduce the number of unknown destinations and improve the robustness of the measures in the future by matching HMRC and DWP data to our data. This has only recently become possible through the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act.

40. In future use of this matched data will also allow differentiation between the returns to different qualifications and employment routes. We do not currently have destinations data relating specifically to young people who do not study A levels.

41. For courses for adults funded by the Skills Funding Agency, we are now able to access information for every learner about post-training destinations; earnings; and whether the learner was previously on benefits. This data will be used to produce new outcome based success measures:

- sustained employment: whether a learner was in employment including an apprenticeship for five of the six months from October to March of the next academic year (i.e. we are focusing beyond immediate end-of-course performance: we are looking at outcomes over an extended period of time)
- sustained learning: whether a learner was in further training in the six months from October to March of the following academic year
- sustained employment for learners on benefits: whether a learner was claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) or Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) the day before the start of learning

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/destinations-of-key-stage-4-and-key-stage-5-pupils-2012-to-2013>

- progression: whether a learner is studying for a qualification at a higher level
- earning: earnings one year after completion of the course.

42. We will consult further in autumn 2015 on how the new outcome measures will be used by government to hold providers to account and how we can best present the information to prospective learners, employers, LEPs, other local stakeholders and providers themselves. The new measures will help learners make better choices, help local players understand what is working well and less well in their areas, help providers shape their offer and give government a more rounded picture of provider performance on which to base intervention decisions.

Question 3: Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

43. As set out above, young people are more likely to make successful transitions if they have the qualifications and skills that employers value. The government has taken steps to improve the way the system supports young people who do not follow the A level and higher education route, including reforms to professional and technical qualifications following Professor Alison Wolf's review.

44. As of August 2013, all 16- to- 19-year-olds are expected to follow a coherent study programme that is based on their prior attainment at key stage 4 and focused on enabling them to achieve their career ambitions. Study programmes include substantial qualifications (which can be A levels or larger vocational qualifications) or, where appropriate, a traineeship, or extended period of work experience and employment preparation.

45. Professor Wolf emphasised the importance of English and maths in her review: *“English and mathematics skills are extremely important for labour market entry, and continue to have a significant impact on career progression and pay. Individuals with very low literacy and numeracy are severely disadvantaged in the labour market. English and Maths GCSE (A*-C) are of critical importance for employment.”* The government therefore included an English and maths requirement in study programmes: students who fail to achieve an A*-C GCSE in maths and English by age 16 will continue to work towards achieving these qualifications as part of their study programme. As set out above, there is also more focus on getting learners who study professional and technical qualifications to study those qualifications that are supported by employers and included in the performance tables criteria.

46. Those on the work-based route will follow an apprenticeship or a traineeship. We are continuing to focus on the quality of apprenticeships by insisting that they all must be real

paid jobs; have a minimum duration of a year; include substantial off the job training; and must include English and maths for young people who have not achieved good GCSEs in those subjects.

47. For those not yet ready for an apprenticeship, traineeships remove barriers by providing work experience, English and maths and work preparation training so that young people are equipped to compete for an apprenticeship and other employment opportunities.

48. The government believes we should set high expectations for every young person regardless of their background or social context. This is reflected through our reform programme which aims to simplify and streamline routes so that there are no 'dead ends' and individuals can move between academic, professional and technical routes and into higher education and employment. This is a shared project between the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) and the Department for Education (DfE). Our ambition is to create clear routes which extend beyond level 3 into tertiary education, leading through to degree level opportunities. The ability to take a professional/technical route as a viable alternative to academic study in tertiary education is a feature of most other advanced economies' education systems, across variations in the way the economy and labour market operates.

49. Our goal in this parliament is to build on the Wolf reforms, simplifying and streamlining professional and technical education so that young people are able to identify the routes they need to follow to gain employment in their chosen career, including through the development of higher level skills that rival the best university degrees. These professional and technical routes will sit alongside academic routes to university, and enable young people to develop the skills that employers really value.

50. Our approach draws on what works in high performing countries, where typically young people study mathematics until 18. However, higher uptake of maths, especially at more advanced levels, is not simply a question of it being compulsory in these countries. Other factors, such as attainment at earlier levels, the breadth of the curriculum and/or possible options, and university entry requirements are thought to be the key drivers behind higher uptake.

51. In addition to studying for qualification will open up possibilities for their futures, young people need access to high quality and impartial careers information and work experience to inform their choices and routes into work. We have given schools and colleges a legal responsibility to provide independent careers guidance for every 12- to- 18-year old. To support the effective fulfilment of this duty the government has invested £20m to set up an independent Careers & Enterprise Company that will strengthen links between schools and colleges, employers and careers and enterprise organisations. More contact with employers

will help to raise the aspirations of young people who have few successful role models, either at home or in their local communities, to consider jobs they may not otherwise have heard of. More information about the action we are taking to ensure that all young people have access to high quality careers advice, guidance and inspiration is at question 4 below.

Question 4: How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

52. We know that the demand for the employment of young people in the labour market in general has declined in recent years and was in decline even before the recession after 2008. This has provided an added challenge to young people and our priority is to ensure that young people have the opportunity to acquire the skills, qualifications and attributes that employers require. In addition to the qualifications reforms described above, we will support schools to offer a curriculum which includes the development of character and resilience alongside high quality careers programmes which give young people exposure to a range of employers.

53. The DfE and BIS recently published a statement²² that sets out plans to reform the post-16 education and training institutions sector through area based reviews. The two main objectives that will be delivered through those reforms are:

- clear, high quality professional and technical routes to employment, alongside robust academic routes, which allow individuals to progress to high level skills valued by employers
- better responsiveness to local employer needs and economic priorities.

54. The main focus of the area based reviews will be on FE and sixth-form colleges. The statement sets out the scope to carry out those reviews, which, according to a national framework, will help to enable greater specialisation. This will create institutions that are genuine centres of expertise, able to support progression up to a high level in professional and technical disciplines, while also supporting institutions that achieve excellence in teaching essential basic skills – such as English and maths. With more specialised institutions more young people will have the skills needed to transfer to the workplace.

55. The government has plans in line with the ambitions set out in the productivity plan to create a professional and technical education system that provides individuals with clear, high-quality routes to employment. As explained above, to achieve this, the government plans

²² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/446516/BIS-15-433-reviewing-post-16-education-policy.pdf

to simplify and streamline the number of qualifications so that individuals have a clear set of routes which allow for progression to high level skills, rather than thousands of qualifications.

56. We are making the whole education system much more closely linked to the world of work to ensure children develop the character and resilience they need to succeed in life in modern Britain. We are placing more emphasis on mastering vital skills, more relevant, respected qualifications, and greater employer influence over course content. Apprenticeship reforms are seeing employers leading the way by designing apprenticeships to meet their skill needs. We know that the benefits of apprenticeships are well known amongst those who offer them - 84% of employers who are involved in the apprenticeships programme are satisfied. We want to do more to raise awareness of the benefits, and the strongest advocates are businesses themselves led by the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network.

57. Traineeships have also been well received by employers with 94% of employers considering them to be an effective way of increasing young people's chances of finding paid jobs and apprenticeships²³. We are currently looking at the programme to ensure traineeships remain relevant in the context of the apprenticeship target and Youth Obligation.

58. Work experience is now a requirement built into all study programmes, including traineeships. Alongside this schools and colleges are increasing direct employer involvement as part of effective careers strategies right through from age 11 and even primary education – this involves more systematic engagement with local employers. Employers cite work experience as very important when they are recruiting. There is good evidence that young people with direct experiences of the labour market either through contact with employers or part-time employment go on to achieve better employment outcomes²⁴. However, only 44% of employers are involved in providing individuals with work experience placements or conducting 'work inspiration' activities with people in education²⁵.

59. Preparing students for success in adult life will be a top priority for this government, with a particular focus on improving the quality of careers advice and employer engagement for 12- to- 18-year-olds. Work experience and the links between education and employers play a vital part in this. Schools and colleges are required to secure independent objective advice for young people; we provide statutory guidance for schools and non-statutory advice for colleges with a clear framework for what good looks like.

60. While there is a wide range of organisations that help link schools with employers to ensure pupils are inspired by the careers opportunities available to them, we know that the pattern of careers provision has been patchy in the past and this has been highlighted by

²³ *Traineeships: First Year Process Evaluation* (March 2015)

²⁴ Education and Employers Taskforce

²⁵ UKCES (2014)

Ofsted. In response we have established the new Careers & Enterprise Company to provide the support for schools to exercise this duty more systematically. The company will be a key vehicle for building on existing networks for employer engagement in education. They will be introducing local advisers to broker increased direct employer involvement in schools. This programme will be rolled out to schools from September 2015.

61. The government has also piloted a series of 'School Business Partnerships' with the British Chambers of Commerce to explore different approaches to setting up self-sustaining local partnerships between schools and business. Guidance is due to be published this autumn identifying how best to use business involvement to promote a wide range of career opportunities, particularly to girls.

62. Good labour market information (LMI) can inform choice, shape responsive provision and inform the design of rigorous relevant routes into employment in order to address skills gaps in the economy. The government's approach is to give information and involvement more directly to employers and individuals. For example the LMI for All project provides detailed LMI that can be presented in ways that engage young people in thinking about the different paths they can take.

63. The government supports the increasing focus by local areas and regions in the development of local LMI and its use to inform decisions about education and training. The National Careers Service displays information from Local Enterprise Partnerships about important skills and sectors in their local areas and the main areas for growth. As part of the work to reshape FE provision in the devolution deals for Manchester, Sheffield and Leeds, those city-regions are drawing on the LMI for All as well as developing additional sources of local data.

64. The adult skills budget will reflect local decisions as part of the devolution deals (outside of apprenticeships, where we are devolving to the level of the individual employer). This means that allocations will be capable of being better attuned to local labour market needs and to local growth plans, and better local targeting.

65. These measures should all help build closer links between employers and education and training, and help strengthen the employability of young people. This in itself should help overcome the key barriers to employers recruiting more young people, but to help further the government abolished Employer National Insurance Contributions for those under the age of 21 in April 2015 (with the exception of those earning more than the Upper Earnings Limit). From April 2016, employer National Insurance contributions for apprentices aged under 25 will be abolished on earnings up to the upper earnings limit.

Question 5: Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

66. The government has a key role in making changes to the overall set-up and structure of the system where this is not meeting the needs of young people. This is why we have taken steps to implement the Wolf Review, improve the accountability regime for both schools and post-16 providers and remove unsuitable qualifications from performance measures, and create the framework for study programmes incorporating work experience. It is why we are instituting the approach of area based reviews and planning further improvements to the framework for professional and technical education and will go further to improve the routes through post-16 education and training for all young people. The legal framework and funding framework are the responsibility of Parliament and the government.

67. When it comes to improving services on the ground however, it is the responsibility of all the organisations working to support the transition of young people from school into the world of work to improve their contribution and to work together where possible to improve the system.

68. Statutory and publicly funded bodies have clear responsibilities here. Schools and colleges are responsible for supporting their own students into further education and training or into employment. Their success can be judged through the new accountability framework, in particular through destination measures. The government is supporting schools and colleges to exercise their statutory duty to provide independent and objective advice to young people on their future choices through the new Careers & Enterprise Company.

69. Local authorities have duties to support and encourage young people to participate, and to track their participation. They are also responsible for leading the process to deliver the September Guarantee, that all young people aged 16 and 17 who want one receive an offer of a place in education or training. To help local authorities review their own performance, and to help others see the progress they are making, the Department for Education has published a comparative NEET Scorecard bringing together a number of key indicators on each local authority.²⁶

70. Employers themselves also have a key role to play. We know that greater contact between young people and employers while still at school is associated with higher employment and earnings later on²⁷. As well as getting involved themselves, some employers have led the way by developing new programmes which others can participate in, like LifeSkills created by Barclays.

²⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/young-people-neet-comparative-data-scorecard>

²⁷ E.g. *Employer engagement in British secondary education: wage earning outcomes experienced by young adults*, Anthony Mann & Christian Percy, Education and Employers Taskforce, Feb 2013.

71. Finally, the charity and voluntary sector can also make a big difference to individual young people and can meet individual needs and innovate to develop and test out new approaches. The government is working to stimulate this, including through developing the use of Social Impact Bonds – opportunities for social investors to get involved in funding action to tackle difficult issues, and being paid according to the results achieved. For example, through the Youth Engagement Fund we are supporting a number of projects involving social investors, charities, local authorities and other local stakeholders, which began work earlier this year with the aim of preventing young people becoming NEET.

14 September 2015

Department for Education – Supplementary written evidence (SMO0143)

Supplementary evidence submitted by the Department for Education

- 1. On the subject of 200,000 public sector apprenticeships, what is the thinking about how Whitehall can take in young people at level 2 and level 3 and have a progression alongside the fast track? The Secretary of State agreed to share the numbers in the DfE on how many apprentices there are in the central department, and how many are being taken on as part of the announcement. Could you share the exact figures with us please? It would be helpful to have the figures for all departments, if available (or even if just approximate numbers).**
- 2. Further information from the Government on their own internal policies to the recruitment of the group of young people we are looking into with this inquiry. What is HMG's current practice? What consideration has been given to recruitment of people who have not done a degree? If possible, it would be helpful if this included what the stance on offering apprenticeships and work experience is, and what qualification requirements are sought (or if other skills are sought) in job roles across departments. Further, do any of the Government's procurement contracts encourage the employment of apprentices or young people without degrees?**

The Civil Service is leading the way for the public sector on apprenticeship growth by agreeing a single Civil Service target from 1 January 2016. This will be in place far ahead of a legislative target for all public bodies with a workforce of 250 or more employees in England coming into force through the Enterprise Bill in autumn 2016. The target has been set at 2.3% of the workforce in England and demonstrates our commitment to radically increase numbers of apprenticeships in the Civil Service.

There are broadly four main ways that the Civil Service plans to radically increase numbers to achieve this ambition:

- Maximising numbers through planned external recruitment
- Short term contracts to maximise skills in the wider economy
- Converting existing roles to apprenticeships
- Increasing numbers in our current apprenticeship schemes to build the talent pipeline

The strategy will offer a viable alternative route into the Civil Service for people without a degree, whilst offering opportunities for existing staff to upskill and retrain. It is positioning apprenticeships as an integral part of our workforce strategy, which encourages departments to take the stance that apprenticeships are the default route for recruitment. The offer will be wide ranging, as the recent apprenticeship reform requires apprenticeships based on a job role. As a consequence we will offer apprenticeships from level 2 upwards and at a range of different grades. This will mean that the qualification requirement will be varied, for example, our current level 2 and 3 Operational Delivery Apprenticeship Scheme has no minimum qualification required and provides the option of working towards level 2 English and Maths; whereas the level 4 Fast Track requires 5 GCSE's (A*-C) or equivalent. Both are recruited on a fair and open basis to individuals over the age of 16,

Apprenticeship growth will include the development of routes within professions, which will offer progression alongside the Fast Track and as an alternative to the Fast Stream. This widens opportunities for individuals without a degree and will ensure the Civil Service is providing high quality and transferable skills. As part of the strategy departments are promoting apprenticeships within their wider public bodies and in the sectors of the economy they lead.

The approximate number of apprentices in Whitehall is as follows:

Type of apprenticeship	1 June 2015 totals	Estimated total by 31 March 2016
Departmental	1,934	4,180*
Fast track	288	791
Operational delivery	0	289
Surge and rapid response	50	200
Overall numbers	2272	5460

This numbers should be taken with caution as the Cabinet Office is leading a reporting exercise from April 2016 which will provide the final count of apprenticeship starts from May 2015, and thereafter.

The Department for Education currently employs 75 apprentices. A further 14 apprentices will join the Department in January and February following a recruitment round in December. We have made a commitment to recruit at least 75 apprentices each year for the remainder of this parliament. We have already put in a bid for 48 fast-track (Executive Officer grade) apprentices in 2016/17, and we will be recruiting more at Executive Assistant and Executive Officer grade. We are recruiting to apprenticeships in business administration, finance, commercial and digital. We will have apprentices in all 6 of our main offices – Coventry, Darlington, London, Manchester, Nottingham and Sheffield.

- 3. On a unique learner number, could you confirm that it exists, even if it is not really being used at the moment? It would be useful to have the Secretary of State’s evaluation of that number. How is it used? What are the challenges in using it? How accurate is the data collected via it?**

Unique Pupil Numbers (UPNs)

The unique pupil number (UPN) was introduced in 1999 and identifies each pupil attending a maintained school in England. The number is allocated at the point of a pupil’s first entry into the maintained schools sector. This is usually when a pupil joins a nursery or primary school/academy, but can be another date if entry into the maintained sector is later in a pupil’s school career. The number remains with the pupil throughout their school career regardless of any change in school/academy or local authority.

UPNs support the transfer of attainment data through the maintained school system in England. The system was introduced to enable accurate and timely data sharing between

schools/academies, local authorities and central government. It contributes to the raising of standards by strengthening procedures for target setting and monitoring, policy evaluation and monitoring.

UPNs are used within the national pupil database (NPD), an education service information source combining school census data with the results of pupils' end of key stage assessments, external examinations and other accredited qualifications.

The UPN is generated using a nationally specified formula – a unique 13 digit number which comprises the local authority code and DfE establishment number of the school/academy allocating the UPN, and year of allocation. When the UPN was introduced the Department agreed certain measures with the Information Commissioner (ICO, known as the Data Protection Registrar at the time of the agreement) in order to minimise any potential risks to the personal privacy of individuals, the most relevant of which being:

- the UPN to lapse when pupils leave schooling (at 16 unless pupils attend maintained school post-16 provision);
- the UPN be a 'blind number' – held by schools on the pupil's electronic record and only output when required to provide information to the LA, Department or other central agencies OR to another school to which the pupil is transferring. The UPN should not appear on any publicly available record or document relating to the pupil meaning schools should generally not advise pupils (or their parents) of their UPN unless asked;
- the UPN be designated a 'general identifier' under the Data Protection Act 1998 rendering its use for any purpose unrelated to education illegal.

The Department for Education published a guide to the unique pupil number for schools and local authorities in September 2013:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/270560/Unique_Pupil_Numbers_-_guidance.pdf.

Unique Learner Numbers (ULNs)

In the mid-2000s, the 'Diploma' programme was introduced for learners aged 14 to 19 and with it the Learner Records Service (LRS, then Managing Information Across Partners (MIAP)) had a requirement for a unique learner identifier to support this initiative. There was a need for this identifier to support an individual's 'Personal Learning Record' (PLR) which required an identifier to be public facing (to allow individuals to access their PLR) and also extend beyond the age of 16 to support lifelong learning which, given the agreement with the ICO, made the UPN unfit for this purpose and necessitated the introduction of a new identifier, the Unique Learner Number (ULN).

ULNs are assigned to all learners aged 14 or over in publicly funded education and training. The ULN is a 10-digit reference allocated and managed by the learning records service (LRS) and will remain with the individual for their lifetime, whatever their level of learning and wherever they choose to participate in education, training and learning.

Unlike the UPN, the ULN is a public identifier owned by the learner and will appear on the learner's exam certificates or qualifications. The ULN is used by individual learners and education providers to access the PLR which will include the details of all learning achievements and verified qualifications achieved from the age of 14.

The ULN is intended to help learners throughout their lifelong learning, particularly when accessing careers advice and benefits both learners and learning providers by allowing higher education applications and course registrations to be processed without applicants having to provide paper qualification certificates.

4. On data handling, we are aware that there are still some legal issues in sharing the earnings part of the ILR/HMRC data. The linked data set on earnings can be made available to researchers only if they are funded by BIS or DfE. What are these legal barriers?

The section within the Small Business, Enterprise and Employment Act 2015 that allows us access to HMRC data amends an existing power in the Education and Skills Act 2008 to enable HMRC to share tax-related information for the purpose of enabling the Secretary of State or a devolved authority, including persons providing services to the Secretary of State or devolved authority, to evaluate the effectiveness of education or training. It enables data to be shared for those persons in schools, as well as those in higher education and further education. Therefore, only researchers working on behalf of the Secretary of State can have access to this information.

5. How are staff trained on the application of the Data Protection act?

Comprehensive arrangements are in place across government to ensure that all staff are adequately trained on the application of the Data Protection act.

For example the Department for Education requires all staff, including those working within its Executive Agencies, to undertake mandatory online training called '*Responsible for Information - General User including Government Security Classifications 2014*' via the Civil Service Learning website. This course is designed by the Cabinet Office and trains staff who handle information and need to share and protect it. On completing this course, staff understand how to protect information in the workplace, on the move and online, and how to share information fairly and lawfully.

There are four levels within the 'Responsible for Information' e-learning course, each one correlating with a particular role and level of responsibilities:

- General User
- Information Asset Owners (IAO)
- Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)
- Non-executive and Board Level Directors (NEDs)

The Department for Education also has a dedicated corporate data protection team which provides verbal and written data protection advice and guidance to all staff both proactively and reactively and in particular on data sharing. The team also provides regular training sessions to all DfE staff on how to comply with the Data Protection Act ensuring that the department's data handling policies comply with the terms of the Act and, in particular, sharing data with third parties fairly and lawfully. This advice and training is available across all of the department's sites and takes place either as 1:1 sessions or bespoke workshops.

6. On the Sainsbury Review, could you please update us on the approach being taken by Lord Sainsbury, the timelines involved and the scope the Review has to make with its conclusions and recommendations?

Under the coalition government we delivered substantial reforms to apprenticeships, stripped out thousands of low value qualifications, increased accountability and tackled poor quality provision. However, compared to other countries, technical and professional education is still too complex, confusing for young people, and fails to adequately deliver the employees of the future that business needs. The Government's ambition is to deliver a technical and professional education system that provides all young people with clear, high-quality routes to skilled employment, whatever their background. This was set out in the Government's Productivity Plan, published in July 2015.

On 5 November, Skills Minister Nick Boles announced plans for ground-breaking reforms to technical and professional education (TPE). These will set England's system on a par with the best in the world. The Government will work closely with an independent expert panel, head by Lord Sainsbury (former Minister of Science and Innovation). Members of the panel are:

- Professor Alison Wolf, author of the Wolf Review of Vocational Education
- Simon Blagden, the Non-Executive Co-Chairman of Fujitsu
- Steve West, Vice-Chancellor of the University of the West of England
- Bev Robinson, a leading FE College Principal.

A joint Department for Education and Department for Business, Innovation and Skills secretariat will support the Panel.

The TPE reforms will focus on simplifying the currently over-complex system, working in direct partnership with employers to ensure the new system provides all young people with the skills most needed for the 21st century economy.

The Panel will advise Government on the design principles that will underpin the development of the new technical and professional routes. They will consult widely with interested parties, including professional bodies and employers.

The first Panel meeting was held in November 2015 and the Panel will meet several times together. Panel members will also attend bilateral meetings and roundtables with key stakeholders.

To inform the final policy proposals, the Panel will consider extensive evidence and analysis and will make recommendations to Government in spring 2016 on how to reform the technical and professional education system.

7. The Secretary of State mentioned the work Lord Maude of Horsham did on getting data sets out and on open government. Could you share with us more detail on this work and how/if it is being continued in this Parliament?

The Cabinet Office coordinates transparency work across government through our participation in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and development of our OGP National Action Plan.

The OGP is a multi-stakeholder initiative focused on improving government transparency, accountability and responsiveness to citizens. OGP brings together government and civil society champions of reform who recognise that governments are much more likely to be effective and credible if they open their doors to public input and oversight. Since its launch in 2011, OGP membership has grown from 8 to 69 participating countries, with hundreds of civil society organisations working through OGP at the country-level. OGP countries represent one third of the world's population and have made more than 2,500 open government reform commitments.

The OGP is the primary means by which we are able to connect to people committed to government reform around the world. Having the opportunity to share experiences and challenges is transforming the energy with which we pursue this work domestically. The UK is a co-founder of the OGP and a member of the Steering Committee. In this role (fulfilled at both Ministerial and working level), we provide advice and guidance on the development of the partnership, how support is offered to participating countries, and how to strengthen the OGP as a platform for meaningful reform.

A key element of membership to the OGP is the National Action Plan, which contains commitments to open government that are developed and implemented in partnership with civil society organisations and independently assessed. The UK is currently developing its third [National Action Plan](#), due to be published in spring 2016.

In addition, the Prime Minister has championed open government in the UK with a manifesto pledge to make this government “the most open and transparent in the world”. His [speech in Singapore](#) outlined a series of reforms to help deliver on open government and the fight against corruption. The Prime Minister is chairing an anti-corruption summit in May 2016.

Open data:

Matthew Hancock, Minister for the Cabinet Office, has described open data as “the new raw material of the 21st century” the value of which lies in “holding governments to account; in driving choice and improvements in public services; and in inspiring innovation and enterprise that spurs social and economic growth” ([Open Data Institute speech](#))

The UK is a recognised global leader in open data. Public sector data is being used to help drive ubiquitous transport apps, improve efficiency and innovation in sectors such as construction, retail and engineering, and enable cutting-edge cross-departmental data science work which will enable the next wave of public service transformation.

Through our data.gov.uk open data portal, citizens are now able to access over 20,000 published datasets, and over £188bn of public expenditure is now open to scrutiny. Defra have committed to the release of [8,000 datasets](#) to drive improvements in food, farming and the environment. We have also developed our [National Information Infrastructure](#), through collaboration between government and the open data community to ensure it responds to users' needs and feedback.

In September this year, the UK launched its [Government Data Programme](#) to transform how government uses data to drive benefits to citizens. The Government Data Programme is being supported through a new data team in the Government Digital Service that will make better use of data for public benefit, support the creation of a modern, networked data infrastructure and provide data policy, strategy and governance across the programme.

8. On the Careers and Enterprise Company, could you share more information on how it is funded and what its priorities are for the Parliament? What is its relationship with the Government?

The Careers & Enterprise Company is an independent company that was announced in December 2014 by the Secretary of State for Education. The company is chaired by Christine Hodgson and has two deputy chairs in Lord Young and Steve Holliday. The company delivers a programme of work agreed with the government under the terms of its funding agreement. Company representatives, ministers and government officials meet on a regular basis to review progress.

The company is funded through a government grant. It has an allocated budget of £20m for the financial year 2015-16. The funding is part of the government's One Nation commitment to improve the life chances of all young people, regardless of their background or circumstances.

The company will deliver its objectives through the following programme of work:

- **On-the-ground support and brokerage programme:** setting up a network of enterprise advisers to broker strong and extensive links at local level between schools and colleges and employers, focusing on areas where provision will have the most impact;
- **Investment fund:** using a minimum of £5 million to fund activities that directly result in more and higher quality careers, enterprise and employer engagement activity;
- **Enterprise passport:** developing and piloting a passport that will record young people's achievements beyond the curriculum, helping them to develop their

enterprise skills, boost their appeal to employers and incentivise them to participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities; and

- **Research:** mapping and reporting on employer engagement in schools and colleges; development and dissemination of a fact base around 'what works' to help schools and employers prioritise activity and maximise impact.

The Secretary of State for Education wrote to all MPs on 10 December 2015, a year after the announcement of the Careers & Enterprise Company, to outline the progress that the company has made in leading the transformation of careers and enterprise in secondary schools and colleges across England. A copy of the letter is enclosed.

9. What is the timeline for the publication of the comprehensive careers strategy the Secretary of State mentioned? How has this been developed?

The aim of the publication is to set out the government's strategy for improved careers education and guidance for young people. It will provide a roadmap for this parliament and set out a clear vision of where we want to get to by 2020. We are working to build a lasting consensus across the system to meet the scale of the challenge. The narrative will be based around a strategic approach that brings all of the key contributors together – The Careers & Enterprise Company, education and training providers, teachers, employers, careers professionals and parents – so that every young person, no matter where they live or which school they go to, has access to top quality provision. Enabling young people to achieve their potential is not only vital for individuals but also contributes to the health of the economy: the careers strategy will provide government recognition of the central importance of careers provision to our overall growth productivity agenda, as well as to social justice.

The strategy is being developed in consultation with the sector. The Minister responsible for careers guidance, Sam Gyimah, has hosted roundtables with school leaders, employers and education and careers sector organisations. Those discussions have informed the development of the strategy and a further round of workshops are planned to test and refine strategy proposals. Subject to cross-government agreement we plan to publish the strategy in spring 2016.

10. The Secretary of State mentioned that passes has gone up by 4,000 for English and 7,500 for maths for over 17s. is this 4,000/7,000 in the last year? Is this over a longer period? Up from what numbers?

We require all 16-19 year olds who do not hold GCSE A*-C in English and/or maths to continue their study of these subjects to give all students the best chance of achieving a good standard of English and maths by the time they leave full time education. From August 2014, this became a condition of funding for post-16 institutions.

In 2014, 29,958 students aged 17 and over achieved A*-C GCSE English and 39,128 achieved A*-C GCSE maths. In 2015, these numbers increased by 4,146 to 34,104 for those studying GCSE English and by 7,762 to 46,890 for those studying GCSE maths. This is the first real indication of attainment changes as a result of the English and maths funding condition, which was introduced in September 2014. [Source: JCQ release 'GCSE Full Course Results by Age Group 2015' <http://www.jcq.org.uk/examination-results/gcses/2015>].

27 January 2016

Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland – Written evidence (SMO0034)

1. Youth Policy and Strategy

The Department for Employment and Learning's Youth Policy and Strategy Division was set up in 2014 with the aim of developing a comprehensive service offering for young people in the 16-24 year old age group. The intention is to help them realise their full potential in terms of skills, qualifications, employment potential and career progression.

There are three policy areas of work being taken forward in the division that potentially link to the Select Committee's inquiry into social mobility, in the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds.

1.1 United Youth Programme

The United Youth Programme is a good relations programme that will provide flexible, high-quality, young-person-centred opportunities for 16-24 year olds who are not in education, employment or training. It is a key component of the Northern Ireland Executive's Together: Building a United Community Strategy.

Through an extensive stakeholder feedback and co-design process the Department produced a draft Outcomes and Principles Framework for the programme.

The outcomes (in the form of capabilities young people should be supported to achieve through participation on the United Youth Programme) are concentrated around four key areas: social, emotional, personal development and soft skills; good relations; citizenship; and employability.

A pilot phase targeting up to 365 young people aged 16-24 across Northern Ireland who are not in employment, education or training commenced in August 2015 and will run until March 2016. The pilots will test a range of approaches that will inform and shape the full United Youth Programme when it rolls out, allowing testing of the Outcomes and Principles Framework. Following independent evaluation of the pilots, it is anticipated that the full United Youth Programme will roll out in 2016.

The United Youth Programme will have a positive impact on social mobility as it aims to ensure that young people who are not in employment, education or training are given the opportunity to develop the skills they need for life and for work. It will target and support those who are the most vulnerable and hardest to reach, many of whom may experience significant barriers, including (but not limited to) mental health issues and involvement with the criminal justice system.

1.2 Review of Youth Training

The new youth training system for Northern Ireland, as outlined in ‘Generating our Success: The Northern Ireland Strategy for Youth Training’, was published by the Department on 30 June 2015.

The new system will promote progression and greater social mobility by preparing young people for higher-value opportunities and the jobs of the future. It will better match the needs of, and provide a range of benefits to; young people, parents and guardians, employers and the wider economy.

It will be an innovative and revised system of professional and technical learning at level 2, providing young people aged 16-24 requiring skills at level 2 with the opportunity to access the youth training system, irrespective of employment status, expanding youth training beyond its present parameters.

In essence, young people, who traditionally may have found themselves trapped in low paid jobs, will now be able to access a pathway to progression allowing them to move forward, should they wish to do so.

Given the expected increased demand for higher level skills in the Northern Ireland economy, young people who leave school without achieving at level 2 will be at risk of disengaging from the labour market, with no route into higher level education and training options, including apprenticeships.

Failing to address this gap between supply and demand in the skills economy could have wider implications for social mobility, social cohesion and the quality of life for a generation of young people. The Northern Ireland Strategy for Youth Training will directly address this gap through fundamentally reforming youth training at level 2.

It is expected that this new youth training system in Northern Ireland will commence in September 2016.

1.3 Review of Apprenticeships

In February 2013, The Minister for Employment and Learning announced a review of apprenticeships, giving a commitment to make it a top priority and to help deliver the Northern Ireland Executive’s priority to rebalance and rebuild the economy. The Department subsequently published, ‘Securing our Success: The Northern Ireland Strategy on Apprenticeships’, in June 2014.

The strategy articulated the blueprint for the future of apprenticeships in Northern Ireland. It aims to have a transformative impact on the supply of skills, particularly at higher levels for employers and, at the same time, inspire all who participate in an apprenticeship programme.

Apprenticeships provide an excellent means by which employers can obtain the skills they require, as well as being assured that across the economy there is a critical mass of people with strong technical and good employability skills.

In addition, apprentices will know that they have the skills that are needed by employers and relevant to the local economy, and as such, will have enhanced prospects for social mobility through improved prospects for good earnings and sustained employment.

2.0 Employment Service

The Employment Service assists people, including those in the 16 to 24 year old age range, to become more socially mobile by helping them into work and assisting employers to fill vacancies.

2.1 Employer Engagement

The Employer Engagement Team assists 16 to 24 year olds to enhance their social mobility and contribute to their smooth transition from school to employment, by improving the linkages between employment programmes and skills development with labour market needs. The team also support employers to grow their businesses, by ensuring that people of all ages and socio economic backgrounds are given individually tailored advice and guidance to gain the relevant qualifications and achieve the appropriate skills and experience to make them more employable.

The Employer Engagement Team has established positive and constructive relationships with a wide range of employers, support organisations and the Community and Voluntary Sector across Northern Ireland, to help people of all ages gain good quality employment. To further improve the services to employers and advocate on behalf of clients, the Employment Service recently introduced a new streamlined approach to employer engagement which is designed to implement a single point of contact, eliminate duplication of services, and make services readily available. This new three tier approach allows the Employment Service to actively match employers' recruitment criteria and deliver a customised recruitment service. This is done at both local office level and at a regional level by dedicated employer account teams.

The Employer Engagement Team provides a link between the Employment Service and employers by engaging with the business community to promote Department for Employment and Learning programmes and services and to assist with recruitment. A key focus of this work is to encourage employers to make available work experience placements for 18 to 24 year olds who are particularly vulnerable in the labour market.

To meet the ever increasing employer demand for more skilled young recruits, the Employment Service oversees the social clause contractual requirements of contractors and subcontractors to ensure accurate validation and inclusion of the long term unemployed, apprentices and student placements in ongoing social clause contracts and to match the unemployed with job opportunities and work experience opportunities.

The Employer Engagement Team hosts a number of successful Job Fairs and Advice Forums throughout Northern Ireland each year. These events bring employers, support organisations and jobseekers together under one roof. A wide range of vacancies are available at each

event, including opportunities in priority sectors such as Information Technology, Hospitality and Media and Creative Industries. The Job Fairs have something for all age groups whether in work, unemployed or those who want to improve their social mobility by considering other education and training options and re-skilling opportunities.

2.2 European Employment Service (EURES)

To ensure that people in Northern Ireland are afforded the opportunity to access career opportunities further afield, EURES promotes the free movement of labour, both inward and outward, throughout the EU member states. EURES also provides information and advice to jobseekers who are interested in working abroad.

2.3 Other Employment Service offerings

To help people of all ages to enter the workforce successfully, the Employment Service offers free online services such as Employers Online and the award winning Jobcentreonline. These services provide a high quality vacancy management service for employers that is easily accessed by jobseekers.

3.0 Higher Education

3.1 Access to Success

The Department's vision is that any qualified individual in Northern Ireland should be able to gain access to higher education that is right for them, irrespective of their personal or social background. Ensuring fair access to higher education is viewed not simply as a matter of social justice, but also as an economic imperative.

Access to Success is the Department's regional strategy to widen participation in higher education among those groups which are currently under-represented, in particular students from disadvantaged backgrounds and students with disabilities and learning difficulties. It was launched in September 2012 and has a strong focus on the creation of a more accessible sector in which the people who are most able but least likely to participate are given every encouragement and support to apply to, and to benefit from, higher education. The strategy sets out a programme which includes:

- a single, centralised and co-ordinated higher education awareness and aspiration raising campaign to better communicate the benefits of higher education to under-represented sections of the community;
- an expansion in the range of aspiration and educational attainment raising programmes at school, college, community and the workplace;
- the development of agreed regional programmes for a standardised route of exceptional application to higher education for the most disadvantaged applicants; and
- the development of additional support measures by higher education providers for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to sustain their participation.

At almost 50% participation among young people in 2013/14 (49.5% as measured by the Northern Ireland Age Participation index), Northern Ireland has one of the highest participation rates in higher education in the United Kingdom.

Participation in higher education is normally measured using United Kingdom Performance Indicators (UKPI) data provided by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The latest HESA collated UK Performance Indicators on participation in Socio Economic Classifications (SEC) were published in February 2015. Data for the 2013/14 academic year shows that 39.5% of Northern Ireland's young full-time first degree entrants were from Socio-Economic Classes 4-7, compared with 33.1% in England and 26.8% in Scotland. The corresponding figure for Wales was 30.2%.

4.0 Skills and Industry

4.1 Careers Service

In Northern Ireland, the careers service is an integral part of the Department for Employment and Learning and is therefore directly accountable to the Minister. Careers advisers are civil servants and professionally qualified. All year 12 students (final year of statutory schooling) are offered one-to-one face-to-face impartial guidance. Currently over 95% of the cohort avail of this offer and many have subsequent interviews.

Reliable labour market information is a key component of the guidance process and all advisers spend at least 5 days per year in a key employment sector. A Careers adviser will actively support an allocated caseload of young people through their careers decision making in the final year of compulsory education, until the pupils are settled in a positive destination. This ensures there is continuity between school and the post 16 options available, and that every child has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

Both of the lead departments; the Department of Education and the Department for Employment and Learning, have extended the post 16 offer in both education and training to include a wide range of technical, professional and academic options to suit the needs of all pupils. In addition, the Third Sector is funded through European Social Fund and other NI Executive match-funding to provide specialist support to those who need additional help before they are ready to access mainstream provision.

In summary, key factors in the NI systems for supporting young people in the category in question include;

- a broad range of provision;
- an impartial careers service which has the flexibility to respond quickly to policy commitments, and
- effective partnership arrangements and a shared vision between the two lead Departments, through a joint careers education and guidance strategy.

Following an independent review of the careers system commissioned by both Ministers in 2014, both Departments will implement a range of measures over the next few years which include:

- developing an accountable and quality assurances framework to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of what the careers system can offer and what it is trying to achieve;
- improving access and efficiency through better use of technology including social media;
- establishing a central work experience platform to reduce the administrative burden on employers, to improve the quality of, and equality of access to, work experience opportunities; and
- providing additional help to those young people and their parents who are at risk of becoming disengaged from education, training or employment.

It is in the best interests of everyone, the individual, the economy and wider society, if young people experience a successful transition from school to working life. Nurturing talent and inspiring ambition are key to ensuring that the skills and qualifications gained through education and training systems produce personal, social and economic returns.

In NI the vast majority of young people return to school or transfer to a further education college, following their final year of compulsory education. For others, some have the option to return but chose not to, and some opt for vocational and professional training instead. Irrespective of the route chosen, it is vital that decisions made reflect the abilities and aspirations of the individual, informed by the current and future needs of the economy. The role of the body responsible for improving the transition process will be to balance these two elements to ensure that young people can find and sustain fulfilling employment contributing to social mobility, and employers can access the employees they need; improving productivity and economic growth.

Key elements include;

- ensuring that all pathways available post 16 have an expectation of careers progression;
- monitoring the quality of provision in terms of qualifications achieved, drop-out rate and progression into employment /sustained employment appropriate to their attainment level; and
- providing impartial advice and guidance throughout the working life to ensure that decisions which incur public expenditure are informed and to encourage upskilling, balancing careers aspiration with the needs of the economy.

Key factors affecting those transitioning from school to adult life include the availability of suitable employment, the readiness of the young people for that employment, and employers' expectation of what young people coming straight from school can offer. While the economic climate obviously impacts on the availability of jobs, other factors like under employed graduates and changes to pensions meaning that people are staying in work longer, can mean there are fewer jobs available for this client group.

5.0 Statistics

5.1 Department for Employment and Learning clients and areas of multiple deprivation

The graphs below show whether the Department is attracting a proportionate share of clients from deprived areas. Areas have been banded into five groups each representing 20% of deprived areas. In many cases there is an approximate equal proportion of people from the most to the least deprived areas availing of Department for Employment and Learning related provision. However, in work-related provision there tends to be an over-representation of people from the more deprived areas; in Further Education provision there tends to be an equal representation and in Higher Education provision there tends to be an over-representation of people from the least deprived areas.

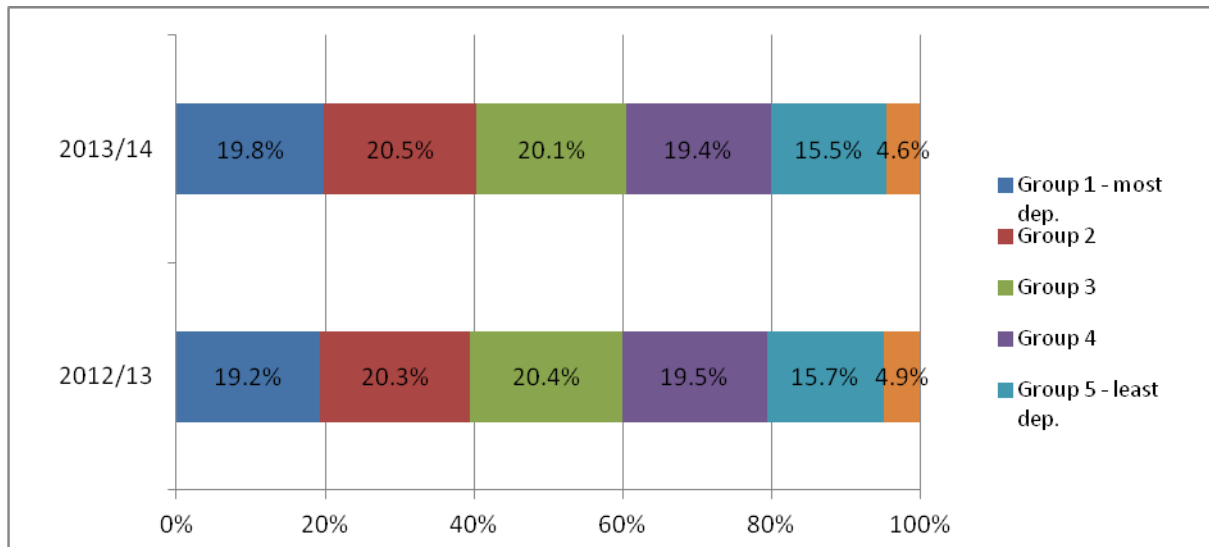
Retention rates are generally very high across all areas, as are achievement rates i.e. the proportion of final year completers gaining a qualification. The variation between retention and achievement rates within areas will be driven by subject chosen, and satisfaction with that choice, as well as other factors relating to motivation, parental support and quality of teaching.

People from the most deprived areas tend to have lower retention and achievement rates but given that these figures are 'raw', in the sense that no consideration has been given to material differences between the groups, e.g. distance travelled, satisfaction with subject chosen, literacy and numeracy level of students etc., the performance between groups is remarkably similar. However there is a tendency for the poorest clients to lag behind the more affluent and the extent of this lag can be quantified.

A logistic regression analysis (Ramsay, A. Department for Employment and Learning Labour Market Bulletin, 2015) of the performance of students from different social backgrounds shows that compared to those from the most deprived areas other students can be expected to perform better. For example, the more affluent the areas in which a final year enrolment lives, the better their chances of success, after taking into consideration other student and college characteristics. The chances of final year enrolments from the most deprived area succeeding is between 2 and 5 percentage points below that of enrolments (who have similar characteristics) from more affluent areas.

The charts below show that those who enrol in Further Education or achieve qualifications (Level 2 and 3) are proportionately represented across the deprivation spectrum, apart from the 20% least deprived areas, where there are fewer than expected. This is because young people from the least deprived areas are more likely to enter the Higher Education system. The 5% or so unknown postcodes are equally spread across all areas.

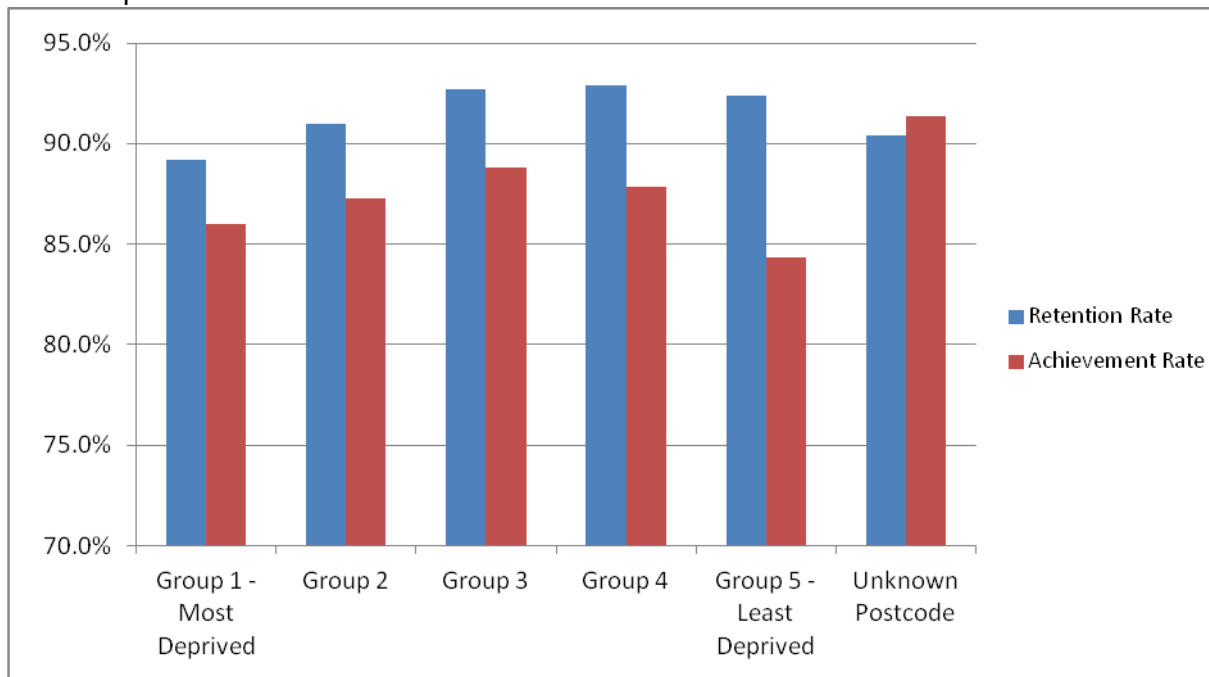
Mainstream Level 2 and Level 3 Further Education qualifications by Deprivation Quintiles



Source: Further Education Leavers Survey 03/04 to 12/13 and Consolidated Data Return 13/14

Mainstream Further Education Level 2 and Level 3 retention and achievement rates by Deprivation Quintile (2013/14)

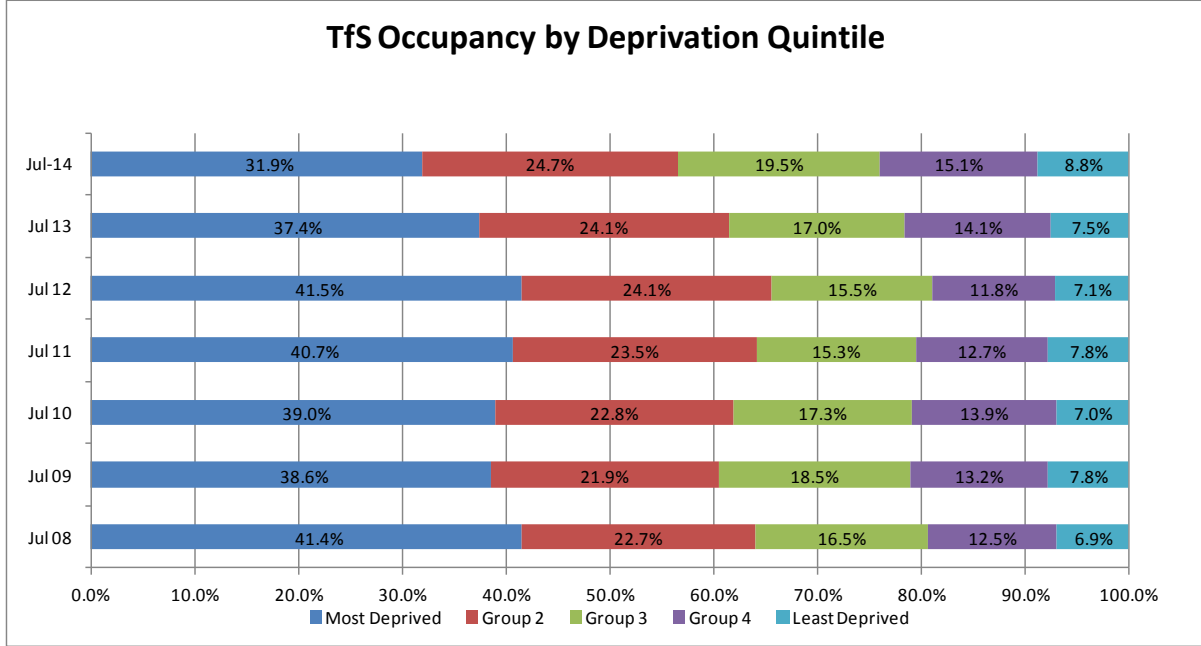
Ordering areas from the most deprived fifth to the least deprived fifth shows that retention and achievement rates are high across all areas. There is some annual variation in these figures due to, for example, small differences in quality of intake, but the stable feature is that regardless of the deprivation level of the area the vast majority of students are retained and achieve qualifications.



Source: Further Education Leavers Survey 03/04 to 12/13 and Consolidated Data Return 13/14

Training for Success (TfS): Occupancy by Deprivation

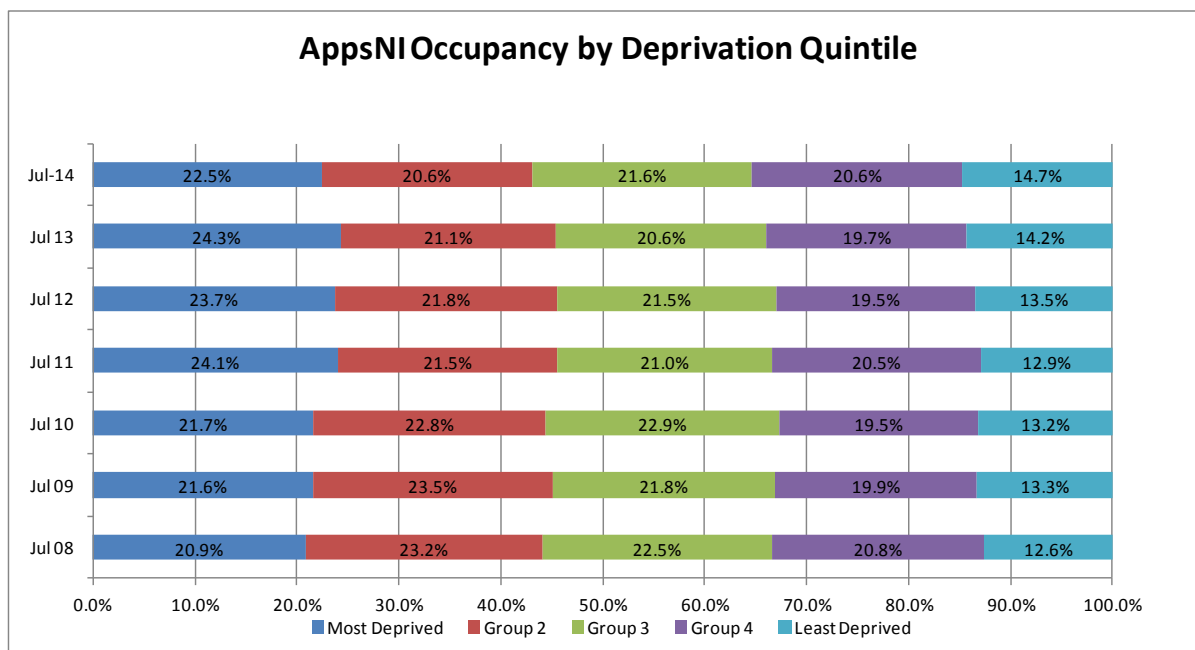
Ordering areas from the most deprived fifth to the least deprived fifth suggests that training for success places come disproportionately from the most deprived areas.



Source: Department for Employment and Learning Client Management System

ApprenticeshipsNI (AppsNI) Occupancy by Deprivation

Ordering areas from the most deprived fifth to the least deprived fifth suggests that ApprenticeshipsNI places are distributed in proportion to their population share – apart from the highest fifth where the shortfall will be due to the tendency for those young people to enter Higher Education.



Source: Department for Employment and Learning Client Management System

5.2 Summary

The Department for Employment and Learning client base is over-represented by disadvantaged students in the areas of Training for Success, and ApprenticeshipsNI. Training for Success has around 40% of its clients from the most deprived areas and ApprenticeshipsNI 24%.

Department for Employment and Learning clients from deprived areas are over-represented in work related provision and proportionately represented in Further Education provision. In Higher Education provision students from the most disadvantaged areas are under-represented.

There is good evidence of targeting of Department for Employment and Learning provision on the most educationally disadvantaged who tend to be within Training for Success and essential skills type provision. There is proportionate representation of Further Education students across the deprivation spectrum, although this is less apparent within Higher Education provision. Nevertheless, Northern Ireland attracts a higher proportion of students from the lower socio-economic groups than other UK regions. Data for the 2013/14 academic year shows that 39.5% of Northern Ireland's young full-time first degree entrants were from Socio-Economic Classes 4-7, compared with 33.1% in England and 26.8% in Scotland. The corresponding figure for Wales was 30.2%.

11 September 2015

OFSTED – Written evidence (SMO0047)

House of Lords Committee on Social Mobility: call for evidence

Evidence submitted by Ofsted

Ofsted is pleased to submit written evidence to the Social Mobility Committee to help inform its inquiry on this subject. This submission sets out Ofsted's knowledge of the significant factors affecting social mobility outcomes for young people, who these young people are and how the transition system from learning to employment can be improved.

Question 1: What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1. Good careers guidance is crucial for young people to help them make informed choices about their future as they progress at the age of 16 and beyond. However, inspections have shown that schools do not adequately provide all young people with the information, advice and guidance they need to make informed choices about their future careers.
2. As a result, too many young people, especially those not on A Level courses, progress at 16 to learning programmes that may not be sufficiently challenging, especially those below level 2²⁸. In addition, school sixth forms and colleges are not ensuring that young people know their progression route when they finish their current course. Inspectors have found that this often means that young people are not motivated to achieve or are more likely to drop out of their course.
3. National data on learners' destinations as they progress to further education (FE), training and employment at the age of 16 has improved considerably and is generally accurate. However, data on learners' destinations when they leave a post-16 provider is weak. There are several reasons for this.
 - When learners drop out of a course or leave a provider mid-course, the providers do not always pass this information onto the local authorities.
 - The local authorities have the duty to collect these data for learners up to the age of 18, but they do not have the power to demand them from providers.
 - National data on learners' destinations post-16 are only collected for learners from courses at level 3 and not for those studying below level 3; inspections have shown that the quality and accuracy of the data collected by individual providers varies considerably.
4. At the end of 2014 the proportion of young people whose destination was unknown was 9%. The figure varied across the country from 5% in the North East to 12.5% in the South East.
5. If providers do not collect accurate data on all their learners' destinations they cannot effectively evaluate how well their provision is preparing learners for future employment.

²⁸ Equivalent to at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics

6. For many young people a lack of direct experience in the workplace is a barrier to progressing to further employment and reaching their potential. For example, inspections have identified that employers are reluctant to take on young people as apprentices because they do not have the attitudes and behaviours required for work.

Question 2: There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

7. For many of the young people who get good examination grades at the age of 16, there is a well-understood path through A levels and other academic qualifications to university. However, for those who do not achieve five good GCSEs²⁹ including English and mathematics, the education and learning paths available to them are less clear. This makes it difficult for them to transition into meaningful and valued employment.
8. In 2012/13, approximately 552,000 young people completed Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11 in most schools). Of these, about 50% progressed to a school sixth form or sixth form college, where a very high majority are likely to have studied A Levels or vocational provision at level 3. About 34% attended further education courses, where about one third study for A levels and other qualifications at level 3. Only 5% took up an apprenticeship.
9. Those who do not progress to A Levels or vocational courses at level 3 are generally those who complete Key Stage 4 without achieving five GCSEs, including English and mathematics at grade C or above. In 2013/14, this cohort accounted for approximately 242,300 young people. The most common destination for these learners was to progress to 16 to 19 study programmes at level 2 or below at FE colleges, independent learning providers or charitable organisations.
10. In terms of what we know about these learners:
 - A lower proportion of White British pupils were in a sustained education destination than almost any other ethnic group (87%).
 - A lower proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) were recorded in a sustained education destination than non-FSM eligible (80% FSM, 90% non-FSM).
 - Further education colleges were the most common destination for FSM eligible pupils, compared to school sixth forms for non-FSM pupils.
11. Young people with low level skills in English and mathematics face a significant barrier to progressing to sustained employment. In 2013/14, the proportion of pupils who left schools with five GCSEs at grade A* to C including English and mathematics was 56.6%. This equates to 316,079 young people.

²⁹ We define good as a GCSE at grade C or above

12. However, provision in English and mathematics is often the weakest aspect of FE and skills providers. This means that young people who failed to gain GCSEs in English and mathematics in schools often struggle to do so later on. In 2012/13, just one in six young people who had continued into the post-16 sector subsequently gained GCSE grades A* to C or equivalent in English and mathematics by the age of 19.
13. This significantly hampers their ability to transition into employment or further study and affects young people from disadvantaged backgrounds disproportionately.
14. Inspections have found that apprenticeships can provide a worthwhile pathway to secure future employment. However, too many of them are at a low level and do not provide sufficient good quality training, especially in the service industries such as retailing and care. Also, the recent increase in the number of apprenticeship places have been filled by those over 25 years old.

Question 3: Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

15. Ofsted has found that a number of initiatives designed to help young people transition into sustained future employment are currently falling short.
16. **Careers guidance:** In September 2012, schools were given the statutory duty to provide impartial and independent careers guidance to pupils in Years 9 to 11. The following year, this was extended to those in Year 8 and all young people up to the age of 18, including in further education colleges. Ofsted's survey on careers guidance³⁰ identified that schools were slow to implement this statutory duty.
17. Ofsted has concerns that young people are still not receiving sufficient information on the full range of career options available to them to ensure that they are making informed choices about their next step at the age of 16.
18. **16 to 19 study programmes:** In September 2013, the government introduced the 16 to 19 study programmes³¹ for all young people in education and training, apart from those on apprenticeships³². They provide a very clear structure to ensure that every young person has a challenging individualised learning programme, designed to support their development and progression in line with their future career plans.
19. Ofsted's survey³³ into the early stage of implementation of this new provision found little evidence of the transformational 'step change' intended with the introduction of the 16 to 19 study programmes.

³⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-in-schools-going-in-the-right-direction>

³¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/16-to-19-study-programmes-advice-on-planning-and-delivery>

³² Apprentices are all employed, so the requirements of the study programmes do not apply to them.

³³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/transforming-16-to-19-education-and-training-the-early-implementation-of-16-to-19-study-programmes>

20. **Planning local provision to meet local needs:** Ofsted's Further Education and Skills Annual Lecture 2014³⁴ identified that strategic planning for post-16 provision was increasingly disparate and fragmented, with unclear accountabilities. This has meant that it is difficult to ensure that there are sufficient suitable courses for 16- to 19-year-olds in a specific geographical area.
21. Ofsted has recently carried out reviews of provision for this age group in several cities and local authority areas to explore the effectiveness of education and training in these locations. These reviews highlighted some key messages:
- It was difficult to identify the combined curriculum offer for these young people in each of the areas visited.
 - Apart from a few excellent examples, there was little systematic collaboration among providers to reduce duplication and unnecessary competition in the provision offered locally. This can often confuse young people when making choices about their future.
 - There were no mechanisms in place to check that the range of provision was preparing young people for career pathways that were in line with the needs of employers and of the economy.

Question 4: How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

22. Inspectors have found that schools with governors, leaders and managers that show commitment to careers guidance are those where young people are clearer about their options for their future and what they need to do to achieve them - whatever their ability or background.
23. The best examples of provision inspectors have identified involves a multi-faceted approach to careers guidance from Year 8 or even Year 7 in which pupils, and often their parents, are:
- Inspired – by teachers, careers specialist, employers, past pupils, multimedia technology – to spark off their thinking about their future careers.
 - Informed by local providers and specialist careers advisers about the full range of options for further education and training options available to them locally.
 - Advised by specialist careers advisers and other professionals about what is available, and what the implications of different careers may be for them; this will also help them develop their skills in managing their careers for the future.
 - Guided by specialists and other professionals so that they make informed choices about the progression at the end of year 11 and beyond.

³⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/further-education-and-skills-annual-lecture-2014-securing-a-better-future-for-all-at-16-and-beyond>

24. Vocational training is still seen for those not able to cope with an academic course. Able learners are therefore often not given the opportunity to excel in an apprenticeship and those that do go into an apprenticeship or vocational training may not see this as an achievement. Inspectors have found that practical or technical skills are not recognised or promoted by schools or employers as a worthwhile pathway to sustained employment.
25. Inspections have shown that direct experience of the world of work can raise aspirations and broaden pupils' horizons. The most effective way is through work experience or employer-supported projects that pupils can build on as they progress through school. Interviews with pupils for our careers survey showed that a one-off work placement for two weeks in Year 10 or one-week project often had little long-term impact for the pupils, unless they were links to other activities to develop their employability skills and plan their future careers.

Question 5: Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

26. Ofsted, through its recent survey reports, has made a number of recommendations to the government, schools, employers and local authorities in this area.
27. The DfE, working with other government departments and agencies, where relevant, should:
- Put reliable systems in place to monitor all learners' core aims and their destinations, as they progress, to different provision at levels 1, 2 and 3 from the age of 16 up to and including the age of 19. This should include those who transfer to other programmes or providers midway through their study, and enable the data to be analysed at provider level.
 - Develop a system of brokerage and support to enable a far greater proportion of small- and medium-sized businesses to be involved in providing work experience and apprenticeships.
28. Schools and providers should:
- Ensure that learners working who are not ready to take a substantial qualification have work experience and work preparation as their core aim, alongside English and mathematics. They need to make sure they are well placed to progress into traineeships, apprenticeships, further training or employment.
 - Make sure that vocational training is recognised and promoted as an equal route to the academic route.
29. Employers' organisations and local enterprise partnerships should:
- Define 'employability skills' clearly, with agreed sets of core and supplementary skills, so that learners and providers know they are looking for.

- Identify and overcome the barriers that prevent more employers from providing work-experience placements, including for learners on traineeships and supported internship programmes, and learn from existing highly effective partnerships.

30. Local authorities should:

- Work with all local providers to ensure up-to-date mapping of all 16 to 19 provision across the full range of study programmes. This information should be available to all pupils from Year 8, their parents, all schools and academies, providers, employers and any other stakeholders.

31. Ofsted's new common inspection framework places greater emphasis on the inspection of careers guidance. Ofsted will therefore ensure that inspectors take greater account of the quality of careers guidance and of students' destinations in judging the effectiveness of a school's or provider's leadership and management, children's and learners' personal development, behaviour and welfare and outcomes for children and learners.

14 September 2015

The Scottish Government – Written evidence (SMO0042)

House of Lords Social Mobility Committee - Call for Evidence

Submission from the Scottish Government: Directorate for Fair Work: Youth Employment Division – 11 September 2015

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

The Scottish Government (SG) recognised the disproportionate impact that weak economic conditions have had on young people, particularly those who are furthest from the labour market. We also recognised that staying in learning or training is the best way for young people to develop the skills they need to progress towards and into employment. That is why the SG has developed and continues to develop appropriate measures, based on the principles of early intervention, to enable Scotland's young people make a positive transition from education to employment. These measures also involve wide ranging partnership working by national and local government, government agencies, the education community, training providers, employers and the third sector.

Developing Young Workforce

In January 2013 the SG commissioned Sir Ian Wood to undertake a fundamental examination of how we provide, promote, and value a range of vocational learning which leads to a wide variety of jobs. It also examined equalities in education and employment to ensure that all young people could have fair access to these opportunities.

In reporting their expert review of Scotland's approach to vocational education and youth employment, the Commission laid out a compelling set of challenges to national and local government, to the education and training system, to employers, and indeed to young people themselves and all who support and influence them. It identified the factors that prevent young people from fulfilling their potential and made recommendations on the changes that needed to be made to develop Scotland's young workforce. A copy of the report can be found at <http://www.gov.scot/resource/0045/00451746.pdf>

In December 2014, we published its refreshed Youth Employment strategy and a seven year national implementation programme to deliver the Commission's recommendations. A copy of the report is available via <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/12/7750>

We acted immediately to make clear our level of commitment, and to begin the process of implementing the recommendations in constructive partnership with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) and Scotland's education and employer communities. An initial £12m was announced by SG Ministers for implementation in 2014-15 and a further £16.6m in the 2015-16 draft budget.

Transitions

We are aware that the transition from school towards employment is not the same for every young person. Our aim is to enable all young people to access and progress in learning and to equip them with the skills, knowledge and positive attitudes they need to participate and progress, where possible, to employment. In this way we look to improve the life chances of all of our young people, including those with additional support needs, through the provision of learning and training opportunities and the personal support they need to help them achieve and progress. That is why the SG, working with local authorities and other partners, developed a post-16 transition planning policy and practice framework (16+ Learning Choices) to support young people as they move beyond the compulsory school leaving age (16) and to ensure that an offer of further learning, training or employment was in place prior to leaving school. This Framework can be found at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/03/30180354/0>

The SG extended this transition planning process through the Opportunities for All commitment to an offer of a place in learning or training to every 16-19 year old who is not currently in employment, education or training. The earlier Framework was adapted to support delivery of this commitment and it can be found at <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0040/00408815.pdf>

Through Opportunities for All, we work with key national and local partners to ensure:

- earlier identification of need, through needs-led assessment (where appropriate) leading to staged intervention and a continuum of appropriate support;
- a clear rationale for a young person pursuing any learning/training route, with a defined end point, outcomes and identified progression route, taking account of and managing expectations of young people and their parents/carers;
- that learning is appropriate to local, regional and national labour markets and contributes to local economic development;
- that all learning is planned and accredited as appropriate;
- that provision offered by colleges and our national training programmes are prioritised for 16-19 year olds, paying particular attention to those at risk of disengaging after school; and that any offer is appropriate and offers progression;
- tracking and monitoring by key partners of young people as they move through the learning system: this will be supported by Skills Development Scotland (SDS) but led by individual institutions improving data collection, collation and sharing;
- in delivering provision for young people, partners comply with the Additional Support for Learning Act and reflect the Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) Practice Model to ensure consistent, timely, post-16 transition planning;
- that relevant local and national delivery partners work together to make Opportunities for All available to young offenders, in particular to ensure their transition from custody to community is appropriately supported; and
- that outcome measures and related funding recognise the need for more tailored provision and, often, longer timescales for the desired outcomes to be achieved.

Careers, Advice & Guidance (CIAG)

Our national skills agency, Skills Development Scotland (SDS), delivers a high quality careers service not only to our young people but to people of all ages in Scotland.

We recognise that it is vital that careers information advice and guidance (CIAG) is informed by up-to-date information on the jobs that are available, and where. To support this SDS have developed Skills Investment Plans (SIPs) in partnership with industry to set out the key skills each sector requires to support its future growth. The SIPs help individuals understand the skills they will need to pursue the career of their choice and ensure our skills system aligns with the needs of industry, ultimately supporting this Government's primary focus of sustainable economic growth.

We want young people to be able to access high quality CIAG when they need it as they move through school and in to further learning and training. This is demonstrated by our commitment to publish a Careers Education Standard in Autumn 2015 which sets out the experiences and opportunities each young person should have in school to help them progress in to the world of work. Employers are an integral part of that standard and it is their role to ensure young people are making appropriate learning and training choices to pursue the career of their choice but based on the skills and qualifications employers in that sector need.

Gender stereotyping was one of the equality issues identified in the Wood Commission. STEM education in our schools is also vital, for young people's participation in the economy, as well as modern life. It is vital that they, in particular women, are encouraged and are made aware of the opportunities open to them. Through the CareerWISE programme young woman are being made aware of STEM MAs opportunities and Equate Scotland, who are delivering this programme, are working with employers to take action to address gender diversity in MAs.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

The SG recognises that there are many routes to employment and that for some young people making the transition to employment may take longer.

Many agencies involved in supporting young people towards work adopt a pipeline approach to skills and employability support. We consider this to a useful model when considering the range of support required for different groups of young people on the journey toward and into sustained employment. It is important that each young person starts at the stage of the pipeline that is right for them and that they are supported to progress through a route toward work which works for them as individuals. This is a critical contribution that many professionals working with young people are in a position to make. More information about the pipeline can be found at <http://www.employabilityinscotland.com/employability-pipeline/the-employability-pipeline/>

Identification of Young People

With the introduction of 16+ Learning Choices in 2010 this Government placed an emphasis on learning and training organisations to share information accurately and timeously in order to support vulnerable 16 – 19 year olds to participate in learning, training and work. This led to the development of a Participation Measure.

As part of this process we introduced the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Act 2013. The legislation places a duty on named organisations to share their information to help identify young people who require support and/or an offer of learning or training. This sharing of information by key stakeholders; including SDS, Local Authorities, Scotland's Colleges, Student Awards Agency, Scottish Funding Council and Department for Work and Pensions, has allowed the Scottish Government and SDS to develop a Participation Measure. This measure will for the first time provide detailed information on activity for 16 to 19 year olds rather than just school leavers, who only account for a quarter of the 16 to 19 year old population.

It will allow the SG and partners to more effectively focus their resources and policies to help young people aged 16-19 make a successful transition towards employment.

Activity Agreements

Through our Opportunities for All commitment we are working with Opportunities for All coordinators in each local authority to ensure that every 16-19 year-old not in employment, education or training has access to a suitable place in learning or training. For some young people we recognise a direct transition from school to further learning or training or employment would not be possible without additional support.

To address this for those young people identified by professionals as being furthest from the labour market Activity Agreements were developed and piloted in 2009. As a result of the successful pilot they have been rolled out across Scotland. Further information about Activity Agreements can be found at <http://www.youthlinkscotland.org/Index.asp?MainID=12711>.

[Please see also the statistics appended to this submission.](#)

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

As previously mentioned the newly developed Participation Measure will provide a meaningful form of measurement that allows this Government and relevant partners to identify which 16-19 year olds are not participating in learning, training and work and to measure the success of our interventions.

CIAG

As previously stated CIAG has an important role to play in the transition process that is why, as part of the DYW Implementation plan, this Government announced, on 26th August 2015, £1.5 million for a new pilot scheme which will offer earlier careers advice to pupils in a

number of local authorities in the coming school year. This pilot is part of the Government's move towards better preparing young people in S1 for work, and brings forward the current offer of careers advice from S3.

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)

The Scottish Government is committed to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) programme and values its contribution in helping young people overcome financial barriers to access learning. The First Minister's recently made a commitment regarding extending the scheme. This will involve increasing the eligibility threshold and extending the scheme to part time college students. This Government believes that these changes will help more young people stay on in education which will ultimately help them make a more successful transition into employment.

Currently the income thresholds are £20,351 for households with one dependent child and £22,403 for households with more than one dependent child. As of 1 January 2016, the income thresholds will increase to £24,421 for households with one dependent child and £26,884 for households with more than one dependent child.

To date students in receipt of an EMA must be studying a full-time non advanced course. The changes will mean that college students up to the age of 19 who meet all the current eligibility criteria but are studying a non-advanced course of learning can receive EMA support from 1 January 2016.

Activity Agreements

Youthlink Scotland published a report which highlighted the positive impact that Activity Agreements (AA) have had on systems and planning for transitions. In 2014/15 there was been an increase in the progression to positive destinations, of the 2,840 young people who left their AA, 70% moved into a positive destination and increase on the 68% in 2013/14. It is envisaged that the development of the new Participation Measure will allow us and partners to monitor and review the effectiveness of progression pathways the young people take as they progress towards employment.

Community Jobs Scotland

Community Jobs Scotland (CJS) is an employment training programme, available across all 32 Local Authority areas, aimed at supporting unemployed and vulnerable young people aged 16-24 into employment. CJS creates paid job training opportunities through the Third Sector and is delivered by the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) in partnership with the SG.

Full and part time job training opportunities for vulnerable and disadvantaged young people, including carers, care leavers and those with a disability or long term health condition, aged 16-24. Eligibility from day 1 of unemployment with opportunities lasting between 6 and 18 months for a minimum of 16 or 25 hours per week. Participants are paid at least the National Minimum Wage (NMW) with the possibility of earning the higher Living Wage depending on the third sector organisations circumstances. It also gives young people the opportunity to contribute to their local communities.

From 2011 to date we have invested over £35 million in CJS which has now created more than 5,500 job training opportunities in addition to providing financial support for around 600 third sector organisations.

Evaluation of Phase 1 and 2 of CJS concluded that CJS was a valuable programme well received by both young unemployed and employers and our continued investment is making a difference to the lives of young people. A wider ranging updated evaluation is being finalised to capture outcomes and learning for the completed Phase 3 CJS places and Phase 4 pilot programmes for care leavers and young people with convictions.

CJS creates positive results for young people and outcomes have shown positive destinations for each Phase which are in excess of 50%. The most up to date figures are from Phase 3 (2013/14) outcomes, which show a job entry rate of 56% and a positive destinations rate of 68%. More information regarding CJS can be found at <http://www.scvo.org.uk/jobs-employability/cjs/>

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

The SG focus is on creating, promoting and incentivising opportunities that avert the risk of young people becoming unemployed. However this Government will also do all it can to continue to provide targeted individual support to young people who are not in work helping them to be successful in the labour market. A significant section within the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) implementation plan is about how we can incentive employers to recruit young people.

Scotland Employer Recruitment Incentive (SERI)

In line with the DYW recommendations – we took a different approach to developing a new Employer Recruitment Incentive that would:

- Simplify the access and the offer for employers
- Encourage small and micro businesses to employ MAs and
- Encourage private and third sector to employ a vulnerable young person

Scotland Employer Recruitment Incentive (SERI) has been available since 1 July 2015 and offers employers around £4,000 over the course of the first 12 months of employment to offset the additional costs of recruiting and employing a young person. An additional £500 supplement is available to encourage employers to pay the living wage.

SERI is administered by SDS and delivered by LAs. The ERI is available to employers recruiting young people, including MA's, into sustainable employment and is targeted at young people aged 16-24 with barriers to employment. This age criteria is extend up to 29 for young people with additional support needs, and this includes young care leavers, carers and people with criminal convictions. Further information about the SERI is available at

<https://www.ourskillsforce.co.uk/funding-for-skills/employer-recruitment-incentive/>

In conjunction with the SERI the Scottish Government is also funding an In Work Support package.

This offer will provide funding of up to £500 per young person for additional in work support tailored to meet the specific needs of young people with a disability, care leavers, carer's and young people with criminal convictions aged 16- 29 years. The support offered will, amongst other things, offer specialist support such as: accredited training; enhanced monitoring and in work support; independent travel training; job coaching and workplace reviews; purchase of basic workplace clothing and equipment; mentoring employers and their staff in support strategies; benefit/in work benefit checks.

SDS have contracted out the delivery of this to an expanded 'Open Doors' consortium, including Action for Children, Barnardo's, Young Carers Trust, Workers Educational Association and Cornerstone. The package of support is available from 1st July 2015 until 31 March 2016. More information about the package of support can be found at <https://www.ourskillsforce.co.uk/funding-for-skills/employer-recruitment-incentive/#odc>.

Foundation Apprenticeships

While not only promoted only to those who would not go on to study A-level or higher education, the introduction of Foundation Apprenticeships pathfinders in the senior phase of school will allow young people the opportunity to undertake blended work based learning alongside more traditional school studies.

Foundation apprenticeships are being developed to create better links between young people, education and employers. They are designed to meet real training needs and fit with economic demand. They fit with Curriculum for Excellence and support the Scottish Government's Youth Employment Strategy indirectly contributing to the headline aim to reduce youth unemployment by 40% by 2021.

Those young people who have complete foundation apprenticeship will be able to progress into year 2 of Modern Apprenticeship, making them attractive to prospective employers.

72 pupils started a foundation apprenticeship through the initial engineering pathfinder in 2 local authority areas in 2014/15. The model is being rolled out to more local authorities and industry sectors in 2015/16 with 400 young people starting a foundation apprenticeship. The longer term ambition is that all 32 local authorities will be engaged in the delivery of foundation apprenticeships from 2016/17 and they will be part of every school's offer from 2020/21.

DYW Regional Groups

One of the key DYW recommendations called for the establishment regional industry-led groups across Scotland to provide leadership and a single point of contact and support to facilitate engagement between employers and education.

In its response the Government committed to the establishment of Regional Invest in Young People Groups (now to be known as DYW Regional Groups) providing a central resource for employers, schools and colleges in their region. The Developing the Young Workforce programme plan sets a milestone for the establishment of the groups by the end of 2015/16.

Through the establishment of the groups employers will begin to inform our approach to education and youth employment locally and nationally as well as encouraging and supporting employers in their region to engage with schools and colleges and to recruit young people.

As at end of August 2015, three DYW regional groups have been established, proposals for a further three have been approved by the DYW National Group (see below) and partners in every other region of Scotland are currently working up proposals to put to the National Group.

DYW National Group

In line with the original recommendation a DYW National Group has been established to oversee the establishment and development of Regional Groups.

The National Group is chaired by Rob Woodward, Chief Executive at STV. Over the next 3 years the National Group will oversee and support the establishment of Regional Groups across Scotland. This is part of the wider Developing the Young Workforce Programme being taken forward in partnership by Scottish Government and COSLA.

The National Group meets every two months to consider proposals and subsequently advises Ministers on their establishment.

Key principles which inform the establishment of the Regional Groups are:

- Regional Groups should be led by private sector employers;
- membership of the group should include representation from the relevant education and economic development bodies in the region;
- Regional Groups will build on local strengths and will take full account of current and planned services and provision;
- they will demonstrate an on-going commitment to a close working relationship with regional colleges, local authorities, employer organisations, local civic partners and national agencies as appropriate;
- Regional Groups will set out plans to increase the number of employers involved in activity to support the development and employment of young people including a clear commitment to target micro and small employers.

A small executive team from the SG is supporting the work of the National Group and is working with partners across the country to support the development of proposals.

Investors In Young People accolade for employers

Another DYW recommendation was that a nationally defined Invest in Youth Accolade should be developed to recognise industry's engagement in the development and employment of

Scotland's young workforce. Accordingly, in July 2014 SG launched the Investors In Young People (IIYP) framework and accolade.

IIYP supports organisations from across the private, public and third sectors to meet their business objectives by engaging and developing a talent pipeline for the future. The framework and the outcomes within it can be used by employers to build and focus their activity around youth employment. This can help to ensure success by placing organisations' youth employment strategies on firm foundations of good practice. It can also be used by organisations to evaluate the effectiveness of current youth employment activities and to celebrate success as recognition of an organisation's achievements.

As at end of August 2015, 177 employers across Scotland had achieved the IIYP award and over 100 others were working with the IIYP framework towards accreditation.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

The Scottish Government placed an all-Government, all-Scotland response to rising youth unemployment at the top of its agenda from the onset of the economic downturn which followed the 2008 global financial crisis. This involved innovative approaches, based on the principle of early intervention, and wide ranging partnership working by national and local government, government agencies, the education community, training providers, employers and the third sector.

These and a range of other measures over the past 6 years represent our quick, strong and effective response to tackling youth unemployment.

Going forward and continuing with the partnership theme the Youth Employment Strategy and the 7 year implementation plan clearly spell out who is responsible for delivering each of DYW recommendations and the timeframes for the delivery.

Employers also have a key role in preparing young people for the world of work. The primary purposes of the industry-led DYW regional Groups (see above) are to encourage and support employers to engage directly with schools and colleges; and to challenge and support employers to recruit more young people into their workforce. The Regional Groups are intended to 'build a bridge' between employers and education. This will enable employers more easily to influence the education system, play an active part in its delivery and remove some of the real barriers to employing young people.

Appendix

Proportion of all 16-19 year olds not on A-level pathway and not NEET

Proportion of all 16-19 year olds not on A-level pathway and not NEET, 2014	
UK	52.8%
Scotland	44.1%

Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec, ONS

Employment Rate (16-19) by Qualification Level

		All 16-19 year olds	Level 2 Qualifications	Low or No Qualifications	Other Qualifications
Scotland	2004	53.5%	53.9%	38.2%	*
	2008	49.9%	52.1%	28.9%	*
	2014	39.2%	35.6%	20.7%	*
UK	2004	46.3%	50.5%	30.4%	34.1%
	2008	41.8%	43.7%	24.2%	44.0%
	2014	33.0%	31.9%	13.4%	24.5%

* Estimate is below reliability threshold

Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Notes:

Level 2 qualifications - SVQ Level 2 qualifications (Credit Standard Grades or equivalent)

Low or No qualifications - SVQ Level 1 qualifications or lower (General Standard Grades or equivalent or below)

Other qualifications - includes foreign and work/profession related qualifications

Employment Rate (16-19) by Qualification Level by Gender

			All 16-19 year olds	Level 2 Qualifications	Low or No Qualifications	Other Qualifications
Scotland	2004	Male	52.1%	53.8%	35.7%	*
		Female	55.0%	53.9%	41.9%	*
	2008	Male	49.6%	55.3%	31.0%	*
		Female	50.2%	48.8%	26.1%	*
	2014	Male	37.7%	35.4%	*	*
		Female	40.7%	35.9%	*	*
UK	2004	Male	45.7%	50.0%	31.8%	37.5%
		Female	46.9%	51.1%	28.8%	30.3%
	2008	Male	40.6%	43.0%	27.1%	43.7%
		Female	43.1%	44.5%	20.7%	44.4%

	2014	Male	30.9%	31.2%	13.7%	*
		Female	35.3%	32.6%	12.9%	*

* Estimate is below reliability threshold

Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets, ONS

Notes:

Level 2 qualifications - SVQ Level 2 qualifications (Credit Standard Grades or equivalent)

Low or No qualifications - SVQ Level 1 qualifications or lower (General Standard Grades or equivalent or below)

Other qualifications - includes foreign and work/profession related qualifications

Employment Rate (16-19) by Qualification Level by Age

			All 16-19 year olds	Level 2 Qualifications	Low or No Qualifications	Other Qualifications
Scotland	2004	16	36.4%	40.8%	28.5%	*
		17	55.0%	57.5%	47.2%	*
		18	57.6%	65.2%	45.9%	*
		19	65.5%	69.8%	*	*
	2008	16	30.7%	35.1%	*	*
		17	50.5%	60.3%	*	*
		18	60.1%	64.0%	*	*
		19	57.8%	67.7%	*	*
	2014	16	15.8%	15.0%	*	*
		17	33.8%	33.4%	*	*
		18	47.2%	50.9%	*	*
		19	57.8%	70.4%	*	*
UK	2004	16	26.6%	36.7%	19.2%	*
		17	47.2%	48.0%	37.3%	*
		18	54.4%	58.8%	41.9%	*
		19	58.1%	65.9%	51.8%	44.6%
	2008	16	20.5%	26.2%	24.2%	*
		17	40.8%	41.9%	14.2%	*
		18	51.2%	54.7%	28.5%	42.6%
		19	54.8%	64.6%	36.3%	52.4%
	2014	16	12.9%	17.3%	6.9%	*
		17	29.2%	29.2%	15.4%	*
		18	39.1%	40.9%	22.3%	*
		19	50.1%	55.8%	31.1%	44.1%

* Estimate is below reliability

threshold

Source: Annual Population Survey, Jan-Dec datasets,
ONS

Notes:

Level 2 qualifications - SVQ Level 2 qualifications (Credit Standard Grades or equivalent)

Low or No qualifications - SVQ Level 1 qualifications or lower (General Standard Grades or equivalent or below)

Other qualifications - includes foreign and work/profession related qualifications

11 September 2015

The Scottish Government - Supplementary written evidence (SMO0140)

Additional Evidence - Scottish Government Youth Employment Programme

The Scottish Government is committed to offering a range of opportunities for unemployed young people, including **Modern Apprenticeships**.

We established a Modern Apprenticeship scheme in April 2011 and since then we have directly recruited 348 MAs into the Scottish Government and our Main Agencies. The majority are 1 year apprenticeships and include a SVQ 2 in Business Administration. However, we also have apprentices undertaking specialised SVQ 3 apprenticeships in Information and Communication Technology, Laboratory and Associated Activities and Procurement; these last for 20 months. We are looking to introduce additional specialisms in the future i.e. Digital and Finance.

Recruitment criteria include being resident in Scotland, unemployed or underemployed (less than 16 hours a week) and aged between 16 and 24; we do not ask for qualifications, but we do not discourage graduates.

Our Directorates have been asked to identify suitable permanent administrator posts to enable the Scottish Government to meet its commitment to employ Modern Apprentices. We source suitable unemployed young people by advertising on the Skills Development Scotland website <http://www.myworldofwork.co.uk/section/get-a-job>. The site is also available to careers officers, schools, JobCentrePlus (DWP) and applicants can use key phrases i.e. Scottish Government. We have contacted umbrella organisation within the LBGTI, Disabled and BME communities to ensure diversity within our MA intake. Modern Apprentices are initially offered a one or two year fixed term appointment at AO grade which will lead to permanent employment if the Modern Apprentice successfully completes probation, passes a Level 2/3 SVQ and a competitive, competency based interview at the end of the apprenticeship.

In addition to this, we offer 1 week Pupil Placement to provide work experience opportunities for school pupils; around 40 a year. We also provide 2 week internships to those just leaving school as part of the Whitehall Internship Programme (14 to-date) and provide both mentors and work experience placements to school pupils in years 5 and 6 under the Career Ready Programme - 10 in 2015.

The **Scottish Government's Community Benefits in Public Procurement Programme** contributes to achieving the Government's national outcome of more and better employment opportunities for people. It has enabled a range of public bodies to maximise social benefits from public spending. Scotland has been recognised as a leader in this work.³⁵ We do not exclude graduates opportunities under this programme.

Scotland is at the forefront of promoting social and economic benefits to communities through its public procurement. Since 2008, and with the support of four Cabinet Secretaries, these clauses have increasingly been used in public contracts across the public sector to

³⁵ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/tackling-poverty-procurement>

deliver thousands³⁶ of targeted training and recruitment opportunities. The policy is now enshrined in the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014. By supporting the use of these clauses, the Scottish Government has opened up opportunities for local organisations - including the supported employment sector and other social and community enterprises – to compete and to provide goods and services across Scotland’s public sector. Research has shown that Community Benefits principally contribute to 4 national outcomes. These national outcomes and examples of typical outcomes that relate to them are outlined in the table below:

NATIONAL OUTCOMES THAT CB CLAUSES CONTRIBUTE TO		
2	We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people	Recruitment from priority groups. Apprenticeships from priority groups. Opportunities in the supply chain for SMEs and third sector organisations (will generate further employment outcomes).
3	We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation	Work placements Training (to meet market needs)
4	Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens	Apprenticeships and job opportunities targeted at young people. Work experience placements for young people at school, college and university. Support to young people to become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens – including school visits, mock interviews and assistance with CVs.
7	We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society	Clauses targeted at specific groups (e.g. long term unemployed, residents of deprived areas) – thus contributing to a reduction in inequality.

EVIDENCE OF POLICY IMPACT

Recent research,³⁷ (conducted by the Training and Employment Research Unit at the University of Glasgow), shows that the use of community benefit clauses has resulted in a high level of jobs and training opportunities that would not have happened otherwise. Specifically, across a sample of 24 projects:

- Over 1000 individuals from priority groups³⁸ were recruited. Where data was available, 38% of the job opportunities for priority groups were estimated to be additional (i.e. would not have

³⁶ <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/02/13140629/0>

³⁷ <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/06/6812>

³⁸ Each procuring organisation sets its own priority groups but these are commonly unemployed people or young people not in employment, education or training. The report makes recommendations for defining priority groups more precisely with a view to capturing, for example, those captured by the protected characteristics of Equality legislation.

been recruited without the CB clause) and 75% were sustained (i.e. employed at the time of the research).

- Over 200 apprentices from priority groups were recruited. Where data was available, 78% of the apprentices were estimated to be additional and 100% were sustained.
- More than 650 work placements were offered to priority groups. Where data was available, 72% of the work placements for priority groups were estimated to be additional (i.e. would not have been offered without the CB clause).
- More than 6700 individuals from priority groups were trained. Where data was available, 31% of the training was estimated to be additional.

The report has identified that while Community Benefit clauses are increasingly used in public sector contracts across Scotland there is scope to continue building awareness and understanding of the use of clauses, particularly in service contracts.

John Petrie
Scottish Government
People Directorate

17 December 2015

The Welsh Government – Written evidence (SMO0021)

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

Response to call for written evidence

Date: 7 September 2015

Introduction

We welcome the opportunity to provide written evidence to the Committee's inquiry on social mobility for 16-24 year olds. The National Assembly for Wales' Enterprise and Business Committee has recently completed a similar inquiry, looking at how young people are assisted into work, and we have incorporated relevant evidence into our response. Many of the issues highlighted by the inquiry are familiar ones, reflecting individual barriers to participation including financial constraints, lack of self-confidence and skills deficits. However, there are some more fundamental structural issues that need to be addressed, including the availability of clear, objective advice and guidance, and parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes.

It should be noted that, while there is certainly a need to address barriers to participation and to strengthen transition processes, we do not believe that it is helpful to view learners who are not taking an academic route as a single, homogenous group. Between A Level learners and young people not in education, employment or training, there is an extremely diverse range of young people; it does include those with lower levels of skills and those at risk of disengagement, but also many individuals who are highly motivated and skilled. We do not believe that vocational learning should be viewed in any way as a 'lesser' route than academic learning. Our further education (FE) and work-based learning (WBL) sectors deliver high-quality, successful programmes which have nurtured WorldSkills competitors, Apprenticeship Awards winners and many other highly skilled, dedicated young learners. We recognise that there is still a great deal to be done to ensure that vocational learning opportunities are more widely recognised by learners, parents and teachers, and seen as an equally credible and valued alternative to A Levels.

A) What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace?

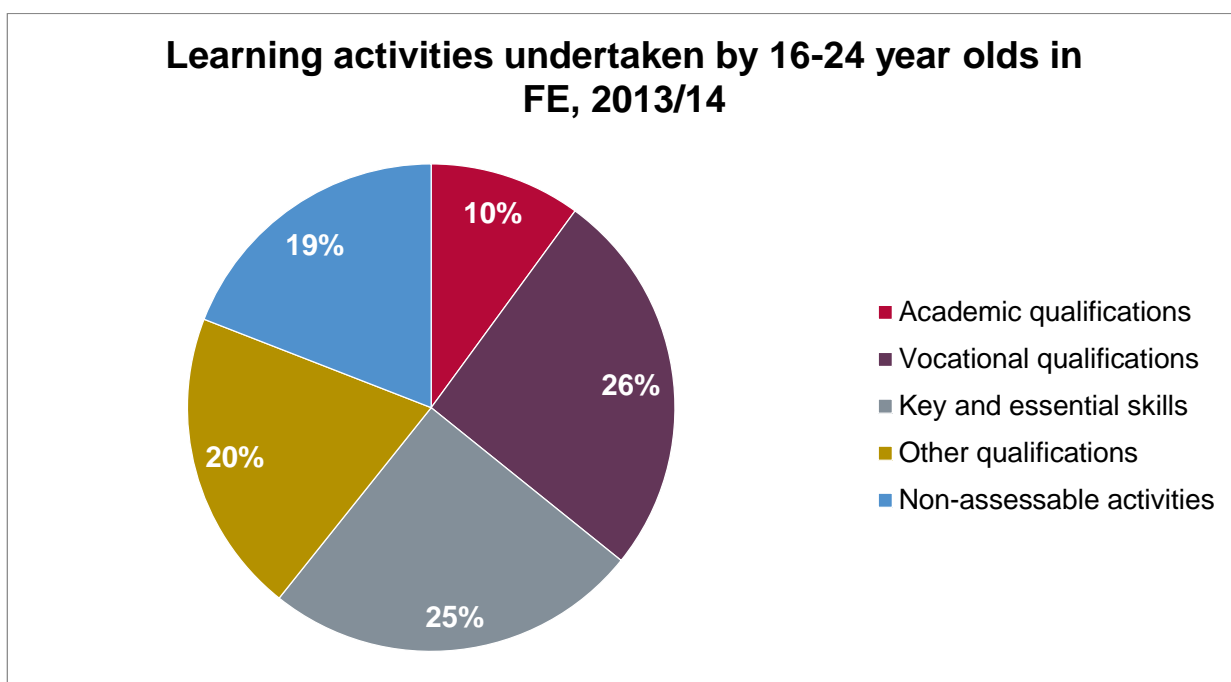
1. The National Assembly for Wales' Enterprise and Business Committee has recently completed an inquiry into assisting young people into work. The main purpose of the inquiry was to identify the main barriers young people in Wales face when entering the labour market and to ascertain which support mechanisms are most effective. The [report](#) was published on 19 March 2015 and outlined 16 recommendations of which Welsh Government accepted seven, accepted in principle six and rejected three.
2. The Committee identified a range of factors which affect young people's ability to find work:

- Personal issues such as a lack of confidence, lack of qualifications and lack of experience; evidence from Careers Wales suggested that these issues were the biggest barrier preventing young people accessing employment and training.
 - The lack of essential skills of literacy and numeracy and “soft” or “work ready” skills, such as punctuality, reliability and knowing how to behave around colleagues.
 - Several respondents said that some young people lacked an understanding of the labour markets including how to find and apply for jobs. Many also highlighted the important role good work experience can play in preparing young people for the workplace.
 - Estyn³⁹ has found that overall, schools do not make effective use of labour market information to effectively support children and young people to make informed decisions about their futures.
 - The cost, frequency and reliability of public transport were cited as a major barrier to employment for young people. Many witnesses said that public transport may not fit in with the needs of employers, for example shift work, part-time evening work or at weekends.
3. In terms of financial support and breaking the links between low education attainment and deprivation, an [evaluation](#) of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) was undertaken in October 2014 to review the efficiency and effectiveness of the scheme in contributing towards widening participation within further education in Wales. The EMA is a financial allowance available to 16, 17 and 18 years olds living in Wales to incentivise them to continue education after compulsory school leaving age. It is currently a weekly allowance of £30 per student, linked to satisfactory attendance and achievement of agreed learning goals. EMA is available to young people who live in a household earning £20,817 (if they are the only dependent child) or less or £23,077 or less (if there are one or more dependents).
 4. The evaluation found the scheme is well established, with the majority of recipients being females who are less likely to have achieved relatively high levels of attainment at GCSE level. EMA recipients who undertook qualifications other than AS/A levels within further education were more likely to achieve a level 3 or higher award than non-recipients of the scheme. The report highlighted an overwhelming need for the scheme with a good level of awareness across both schools and the FE sector. It recommended that the scheme should be maintained at its current levels, with some streamlining of the application process and strengthening of learning agreements and attendance monitoring.
 5. More recently, the significant barrier of public transport costs has been recognised in a [statement](#) from the First Minister on 22 July 2015 which outlines a new Welsh Young Persons Discounted Travel (WYPDT) Scheme designed to help young people travel to and from training and employment.

³⁹ Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Education and Training in Wales

B) What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

6. We believe that young people who are neither NEET nor following an academic route are not a single, homogenous 'group'; they are diverse in their abilities, aspirations and motivations. We would argue strongly that vocational learning should not be seen as in any way inferior to academic study; indeed, the costs of university education mean that, increasingly, young people may consider vocational routes, including 'earn while you learn' options such as apprenticeships, as more attractive.
7. An analysis of 2013/14 learning activity in Wales illustrates this diversity. The chart below shows a breakdown of learning activities undertaken by 16-24 year olds in FE; only 10% of activities were 'academic' (A/AS Levels, GCSEs and Access to FE/HE), whilst over a quarter were vocational qualifications including QCF awards, certificates and diplomas, and NVQs. The vast majority of full-time learners are studying essential skills including literacy, numeracy and digital literacy as part of their programme.



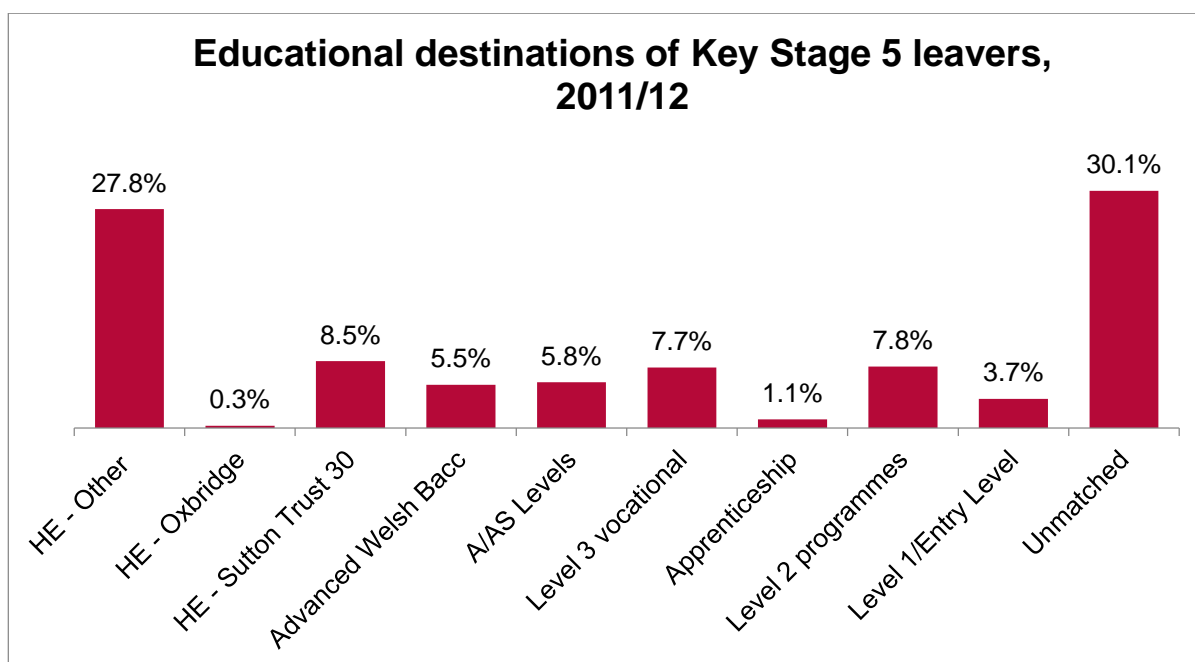
Source: Lifelong Learning Wales Record

8. Our analysis also shows that, in 2013/14:
 - Almost 29% of FE learners were from deprived (Communities First) areas, and 33% of WBL programmes were pursued by learners domiciled in deprived (Communities First) areas.

- 93% of FE learners were white and 5% from other ethnic backgrounds (the remainder being in the ‘not known/information refused’ categories). In WBL, 97% of programmes were undertaken by white learners.
- In FE there was an almost equal gender split, with 51% of learners being male and 49% female. In work-based learning there was a slightly more pronounced split, with 55% of programmes undertaken by males.

Destination outcomes

- Identifying the ‘career trajectories’ of learners is more challenging. We currently lack reliable data on the destinations of learners once they leave their programmes, and this hampers our ability to assess the relevance and value of the learning we fund. As a result we are developing new destination measures for further education and sixth forms as part of our post-16 consistent measures project.
- In December 2014, we published a [statistical release](#) detailing educational destinations of Key Stage 5 leavers (those studying at Level 3 in schools and colleges), utilising matched data on school, post-16 and HE learners. The analysis identified educational destinations for 70% of leavers, summarised in the chart below.



Sources: Pupil Level Annual Schools Census, Lifelong Learning Wales Record, HESA Student Record

11. We are aiming to measure employment destinations and earnings, and have initiated discussions with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills on potentially linking to their work in this area. We anticipate that the approach will also be based on data matching, utilising DWP and HMRC data on earnings and benefits. This will allow analysis of the labour market performance of former learners. However, this approach has its limitations; the data does not include information on hours worked to distinguish full- or part time status; as well as a lack of information in terms of sector or occupational area which would further allow us to analyse the relevance of course of study to the employment outcome. In order to obtain an in-depth understanding of learners' progression routes, further research and longitudinal tracking is likely to be needed.

C) Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

12. As indicated in our response to part (A) above, there is evidence that many young people do face significant barriers to participation in post-compulsory education and training. We have a range of strategies to support successful transition into the workplace, summarised below.

Learning and Skills Wales Measure 2009

13. The Learning and Skills Wales Measure 2009 sets out that all learning providers in Wales must offer learners 25 course choices including 3 vocational courses in their key stage 4 local curriculum offer and 30 course choices including 5 vocational courses in their 16-18 local curriculum offer (one of the vocational courses at 16-18 must be in a STEM subject).
14. The requirement to include vocational courses in the local curriculum offer requires schools and colleges to offer a broader range of subjects to learners. It is anticipated that by offering a broad and balanced curriculum at key stage 4 and at 16-18 all learners will be afforded the opportunity to study courses that they will find interesting which will help to them to achieve their long term career goals. In 2012 Children, Young People and Education (CYP&E) Committee undertook an inquiry into Learning and Skills Wales Measure 2009. The report and the Welsh Government response can be accessed from the link attached below:

<http://www.senedd.assembly.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=500000020>

The school curriculum

15. Therefore one of the aims of the school curriculum in Wales is to prepare young people for the challenges, choices and responsibilities of work and adult life. Secondary schools in Wales have a responsibility to deliver careers education under the Careers and the World of Work Framework for 11 to 19 year-olds. Schools are responsible for ensuring students learn and understand about the world of work by comprising a combined approach of careers education, work-focused experiences as part of the curriculum and impartial careers information advice and guidance. Following compulsory education, young people are then given the opportunity to select their chosen career pathway whether that is to continue their study at tertiary level, undertake an apprenticeship or seek direct employment.

Youth Engagement and Progression Framework

16. Some young people will face challenges and setbacks which directly impact on their ability to succeed in school, college or at holding down a job. The [Youth Engagement & Progression Framework](#) (YEPF) implementation plan, launched in October 2013, was developed to support those at risk of not making a positive transition when they leave school. The purpose of the framework is to provide a systematic mechanism for local authorities to identify those in need of support, to establish the support available and to track the progress of young people as they make the transition into further education or employment.
17. As well as providing an overall framework for the work of local authorities and other stakeholders in supporting young people to stay in education, training or employment, the YEPF introduced two significant new commitments:
 - The allocation of single point of contact (a lead worker) to the most at-risk young people to help ensure that support is delivered in a joined up and coordinated way and that works to meet their needs.
 - The [Youth Guarantee](#), which will ensure the offer, acceptance and commencement of a suitable place in education or training for all young people leaving compulsory education at 16. A 'suitable offer' for a young person is one that is appropriate to their individual needs. This means it must be at the right level; geographical location; occupational sector and learning method and engages them in education, training or other activities which will progress them towards sustainable employment.
18. We recently published a [formative evaluation](#) of the YEPF. The overall finding was that all local authorities have made progress with implementing the framework since it was launched in October 2013. Many of those interviewed praised the framework as the best guidance/strategy related to young people produced by the Welsh Government. Most interviewees believe that the framework has made a difference to the collaboration between all partners as well as the engagement of the key organisations' leaders. We are currently using the recommendations from the formative evaluation to develop further actions and guidance in order to maintain the momentum of progress

made to date. There are also a range of case studies within the report that will be used to share best practice.

Traineeships

19. Traineeships is a flexible programme which requires the development of an individual plan of learning at Entry Level and Level 1, forming part of a broader range of options available for school leavers. The primary objective of the programme is to equip young people with the skills, qualifications and experience to enable them to progress at the earliest opportunity to employment or learning at a higher level. The programme provides an opportunity for young people who are motivated by work to develop the breadth of skills, qualifications and experience they need to be attractive to employers.

Post 16 planning and funding framework

20. The Welsh Government's new post-16 Planning and Funding Framework commenced in 2014/15, based on programme delivery. A programme of learning provides a cohesive package of learning designed around clear progression and ensures that learners are able to develop the skills needed for employment. Programmes can also include work ready skills and include specific employer needs. Programme-based funding, rather than funding qualifications directly, should influence the offer and choices made by individuals and make links between funding, outcomes and destinations easier to determine.

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

21. The current statutory framework relating to the education of children and young people of school age with Special Educational Needs (SEN) is set out in the Education Act 1996, underpinned by the [SEN Code of Practice for Wales](#) (2002). At Year 9 (age 14), a Transition Plan is drawn up for learners with statements of SEN, and reviewed at every subsequent annual review meeting until the learner leaves school. Representatives of all relevant agencies including Careers Wales and Social Services are invited to be present at the Year 9 review with the young person and their parents, and to contribute to the joint planning process. All young people with a statement of SEN are entitled to individualised, independent careers information, advice and guidance from a Careers Wales adviser from Year 9 onwards and up to age 25 if required.
22. For learners with statements of SEN who are expected to progress to post-16 education and training, an assessment is carried out on behalf of Welsh Ministers by Careers Wales, involving the learner and his/her parents with appropriate input from the other relevant agencies. The assessment takes the form of a written report, known as a Learning and Skills Plan, which sets out the learner's post-16 educational and training needs. For most post-16 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, appropriate learning can be delivered at an institution within the further education

sector, funded through the institution. However, where the Learning and Skills Plan identifies that a learner's education/training needs can only be met by a specialist establishment outside of the further education sector, Careers Wales will make an application for funding on behalf of the learner to the Welsh Ministers.

Welsh Baccaulaureate

23. The Welsh Baccaulaureate is a flagship programme of learning, designed to give young people a fully rounded, coherent learning experience, and equip them for future employment. In September 2015, a revised suite of Welsh Baccaulaureate programmes at Levels 1, 2 and 3 is being rolled out, with a target of universal adoption (other than for some closely defined exempt groups) by all schools and colleges by 2020.
24. The programme includes skills challenges focused on enterprise and employability skills which is being encouraged by all schools combined with careers advice and relevant work experience to help prepare learners for the world of work. To achieve the full Welsh Baccaulaureate, learners are required to achieve GCSE grades A*-C in English/Welsh and Mathematics (Levels 2 and 3), or Essential Skills qualifications (Level 1).

D) How can the transition from school to work be improved for these young people? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

25. There are many examples of effective multi-agency working to support transition, including for the most vulnerable learners such as looked after children and those with special educational needs. Nonetheless, there is more to be done to ensure that all young people have access to programmes with a clear focus on employability skills, and that they receive clear and impartial advice on career options. We know from the Enterprise and Business Committee inquiry that young people often lack the practical knowledge and skills they need for job-seeking. Our Jobs Growth Wales programme, which subsidises employers to recruit 16-24 year olds, has been an outstanding success which has created more than 17,000 jobs. But a comprehensive approach, incorporating independent advice and guidance and the delivery of employability skills, is needed to ensure that *all* young people are able to progress.

Skills gateway

26. We are working with Careers Wales⁴⁰ to deliver the new Skills Gateway programme to unemployed individuals in Wales as part of the all-age, all-Wales careers advice and guidance service. The Skills Gateway model incorporates a single engagement, assessment and referral system, providing a seamless service for individuals seeking skills support. The essence of the Skills Gateway is to identify any skills needs and provide advice/guidance on how to access appropriate support. Throughout the project lifetime, face to face advice and support will be provided to over 54,000 unemployed individuals in Wales, this support will:
- Assess skills needs of individuals through detailed diagnostic assessments;
 - Provide individual and group guidance support to address need and develop effective career management competencies;
 - Refer individuals to skills training, education or employment opportunities;
 - Track individuals one month after starting on an opportunity; and
 - Provide going careers coaching to develop effective employability skills.
27. Although the delivery of this service will, in the main, be through the face to face network, individuals may also access other support channels e.g. Careers Wales's helpline or Careers Wales webpages. Understanding the needs of employers in Wales is key in to ensure an effective transition from school into the workplace. Therefore significant work was undertaken last year to develop the Careers Wales website to ensure labour market information is accessible in a user friendly manner. This information enables users searching career options to gain a visual snap shot of the key

⁴⁰ Career Wales is the trading name for Choices Dewis Gyrfa Ltd (CCDG), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Welsh Government which provides the all age, independent and impartial careers information, advice and guidance service for Wales.

information on a potential career e.g. average wages, hours, type of work, level of qualifications needed and level of demand in Wales. This intelligence allows advisers to tailor their advice in accordance with the ever changing demands of the labour market. It should be noted support is offered to all individuals regardless of qualification attainment, with tailored advice/ guidance provided considering the existing skills of the individuals, their aptitude to train and improve.

28. A new Common Area Prospectus (CAP) is being rolled out in 2015/16 through Careers Wales. The CAP will provide young people with searchable online access to the full range of post-16 options available to them locally. It will be matched to local labour market demand and will seek to reduce the numbers of young people taking up courses that are less recognised and that will not lead to sustainable employment. Careers management, advice and guidance is provided to support those at risk of not making a positive transition at 16 to steer them towards a suitable, but sustainable, pathway that supports them to achieve as a minimum a Level 2 qualification before they are 19 years old.

Work-based learning

29. On 22 January 2015 we launched a [consultation](#), seeking views on the development of the apprenticeship model in Wales. Our vision is to develop a responsive and resilient apprenticeship system that will support employers to develop and deliver innovative and industry focused apprenticeships. The system needs to support economic growth, be responsive to the needs of the future economy, provide a range of skills that aid social mobility and ensure equality of opportunity.
30. In summary, consultation respondents were generally supportive of a new apprenticeship programme for Wales. Many of the responses focused on the need for better communication of what the apprenticeship programme was – for employers, for schools and for parents – for all to get a better understanding of what the benefits of the apprenticeship programme might be, and for it to have parity with academic qualifications. There was a consistent desire for a programme designed specifically to meet the needs of employers and young people in Wales; especially when considering the number of SMEs and micro-businesses in Wales. What emerged strongly through the consultation was the importance of close working relationships between government, employers and education providers (especially in FE and HE) to ensure that the programmes are developed consistently, with clear and equitable skills levels, and with clear progression routes for learners.
31. Responses to the consultation will be used to inform the development of an implementation plan for a new apprenticeship model for Wales which we will be publishing this autumn.
32. In March 2014 the [Evaluation of Work Based Learning Programme 2011-15: Traineeships](#) was published. As a result of the feedback from the evaluation, York Consulting were procured to undertake an in depth evaluation of the Traineeship

programme, building on the research they have already carried out to date under the WBL evaluation. The review will assess the structure, profile and positioning of the Traineeship programme and ascertain whether it is fully meeting the needs of the target group. It will allow us to better understand what is currently being delivered under the Traineeships programme, whether the programme is fully fit for purpose and identify what changes we need to make to the programme to ensure that it meets the needs of the learners. The evaluation will conclude by December 2015.

Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

33. The Welsh Government is currently consulting on a [draft Bill](#) which proposes a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). This would replace existing legislation surrounding special educational needs (SEN) and the assessment of young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in post-16 education and training. These proposals, amongst other things, are intended to improve the current system for transition from school to further education and training.
34. We have also asked Estyn to undertake a review in 2015-16 of arrangements in independent specialist colleges in Wales for measuring learner progress, and the extent to which these providers and the programmes of study they deliver prepare learners for transition from college. A further review by Estyn of such arrangements in mainstream further education colleges in Wales is planned for 2016-17.

E) Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

35. The post-16 sector in Wales is diverse, with a wide range of qualifications delivered to learners of all ages. As a Government we continue to abide by the commitments in the Programme for Government to support education and training for young people in Wales. We continue to work closely with further education institutions, local authorities, work based learning providers and other relevant stakeholders to achieve this vision. We believe that successful transition for young people can only be achieved with the full co-operation of local authorities, schools, post-16 providers, Careers Wales and other agencies; in Wales, the **Youth Engagement and Progression Framework** is at the heart of transition planning, with multi-agency working overseen by dedicated Engagement and Progression Co-ordinators in each local authority.
36. It is also crucial that learning delivery is closely aligned with employers' skills needs. In Wales, three **regional skills partnerships** have been established: the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, South East Wales Learning, Skills & Innovation Partnership and South West & Central Wales Regional Learning Partnership. Each partnership consists of representatives from employers, local authorities, providers and other key stakeholders. The partnerships are responsible for analysing regional labour market intelligence, advising the Welsh Government on funding for training needs, engaging with local employers, and working strategically to recognise skill needs and maximise the effectiveness of future available funding for vocational training. Each partnership has developed and published a regional employment and skills plan, to be updated annually, which identifies priorities in response to economic demands and opportunities. All three plans build on priorities identified by Enterprise Zones and City Regions.
37. Of course, schools have a key role to play in preparing young people for the world of work. This is increasingly being emphasised in our curriculum policies. The secondary curriculum in Wales incorporates the framework [Careers and the World of Work \(CWW\)](#). [Welsh Government will update its guidance on roles and responsibilities in delivering CWW framework, and produce a work experience toolkit for schools. In addition, Welsh Government has recently awarded a contract to Business in the Community to develop an 'Enhanced Employer Engagement' project which will provide a framework for sustainable school-employer partnerships. The approach will build on Business in the Community's 'Business Class' project, and we hope that all schools will have the opportunity to participate by 2018.](#)
38. In 2014, Professor Graham Donaldson was commissioned by the Welsh Ministers to conduct **a fundamental review of curriculum and assessment arrangements in Wales, from Foundation Phase to Key Stage 4**. His report, [Successful Futures](#), was completed in February 2015 and accepted in full by Welsh Government in June. Professor Donaldson's recommendations challenge us all to re-think our approach to the curriculum and to focus on the four purposes of education so that we build a curriculum that supports our children and young people to be:

- ambitious, capable learners ready to learn throughout their lives;
 - enterprising, creative contributors, ready to play a full part in life and work;
 - ethical, informed citizens of Wales and the world; and
 - healthy, confident individuals, ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.
39. The implementation of the report's 68 recommendations will require a fundamental rebuilding of the school curriculum in Wales. The new curriculum will be focused on enabling our children and young people to be ready for the challenges they will face in a smaller, more interconnected and more competitive world, one in which social and technological change are having a profound effect on how we live our lives. The review's recommendations are designed to help ensure that the education system produces well-educated employees with both the 'hard' and 'soft' skills that are integral to the modern workplace.

8 September 2015

Local Government and regional bodies

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Summary

The most significant factors affecting the movement into an employment outcome from school are:

Government policy

- current government policy has created a confused system which is targeted predominantly at young people who are NEET and those with SEND;
- the system lacks an independent and impartial perspective, leading to young people often starting inappropriate courses that do not lead to appropriate career pathways or being swayed by effective marketing and lobbying from education providers;
- the recognition of quality in careers standards is a positive step, but there are too many unqualified individuals with poor knowledge of career pathways attempting to provide information, advice and guidance;
- policy doesn't identify a single government department is the strategic lead nor does it join up the policy strategies of linked departments;
- the raising the participation age has not been enforced and there are no consequences of failure for Local Authorities, employers or parents;

Qualifications system

- the qualifications system is predicated on a natural progression from A-levels to HE. Apprenticeships are seen as a second-class career pathway;
- Apprenticeships require GCSE grades A to C which many young people in this category are unable to achieve;
- Apprenticeship frameworks are not available in all career paths and workmanship frameworks do exist there are often not opportunities with employers;

Employer expectations

- employers expect young people to be work ready, but the system doesn't layout who was responsible for achieving this and doesn't include accountability;
- in many cases employers, particularly smaller employers, do not take on responsibility for developing young people, citing economic and productivity issues as the main reason;

Challenges faced by young people

- the system doesn't have a single identifiable access point therefore young people and their parents/carers do not know how to access the right support;
- the support that has been given to young people often hasn't had the impact of raising aspirations. All too often, support progresses to the first employment outcome, rather than towards a career pathway.
- with more graduates accepting lower skilled and lower paid jobs, entry to the job market and subsequent early career progression has become even more difficult for those without a degree.

Additional information

There is a lack of suitably qualified and experienced advisers who are able to engage the young person, understand the issues and barriers, provide independent and impartial information advice and guidance to support the transition into the labour market.

The careers guidance market is becoming more and more complex, with many new entrants many of whom are not experienced in understanding the qualifications or labour market, which leaves young people making ill-informed decisions.

Teachers, whilst influential role models for young people, know little of the qualifications structure or employment paths post 16. They became teachers to educate young people. Encouraging employers into schools can help with understanding the work place, but not with further learning options or wider labour market information, they know what they know about their particular business.

The most recent government policy in relation to providing young people with advice, has been the placement of Jobcentre Plus advisers into schools. Jobcentre Plus advisers have a poor understanding of how poor qualification choices limit future options and access to the labour market. The great strengths of Jobcentre Plus advisers are in helping unemployed adults back into work. A qualified careers adviser has on the other hand, studied to degree level and beyond, to ensure that the advice and guidance provided is appropriate, but also delivered in a way that achieves outcomes. A careers adviser does not just help young people to get their first job, they put them on the first step of a career ladder.

A further factor that acts as a barrier to young people is the complexity and challenges surrounding the opportunity structure at post 16. The Apprenticeship market itself is challenging, accessing apprenticeships is difficult and often not possible. The main barriers are that:

- many young people have lower levels of ability are not able to achieve English and Maths grades A to C
- there is a lack of availability of apprenticeship frameworks, for example, you cannot pursue a career in law or sign writing through the apprenticeship route
- there is a lack of micro and one-man band employers prepared to take on apprentices.

In our experience and in particular in conversation with employers, being “ready for work” is the number one issue raised. “Ready for work” is typically summarised by the following collective of skills and attributes:

- An ability to write a clear and concise application with a personal statement that goes beyond, “these are my grades and I’m a team player...”.
- A confident and well-presented interview technique.
- An example of some sort of work experience
- Positive and enthusiastic work ethic – can do attitude

Employers will often say if anyone comes to them with the above attributes, they can employ them.

When we consider each of the skills and attributes listed above there is no clear government statement on who is responsible for ensuring that young people develop these skills and attributes. The Statutory guidance from the Department for Education begins to put some emphasis on elements of this, but it is not robust enough, especially around using an independent and qualified careers adviser. From the examples that we have seen, Ofsted inspections are yet to challenge a schools achievement of the Statutory Guidance in a rigorous enough manner.

There are also particular challenges where schools with sixth forms are keen to retain students past year 11 and into years 12 and 13. This may be through encouraging students towards A-levels or other alternative but potentially inappropriate qualifications. This process of course starts much younger and at the point of young people making decisions around GCSE options the same potential bias can play a part in decision-making with individuals within education being challenged to increase the numbers within their departments. Again independent and impartial careers advice and guidance can remove this problem.

The Labour market presents a different set of challenges. There is an increase in the number of adult workers taking on part-time and weekend work. This reduces the opportunities available for young people to gain valuable work experience prior to leaving school and during the holiday periods. In addition to this, many schools no longer offer work experience or where they do, the offer is limited. For example, there is a school in Devon where to avoid additional cost, they do not offer any work experience placements with employers who may be considered high-risk, this would include agricultural placements and construction sites, both of which are key sectors in the south west.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

Far less is known about this group than the NEET group. The focus on moving NEETs to EET has meant that those sitting in the gap between NEET and A Level have not been a priority for local authorities or those that might otherwise support this group.

The NCCIS data can provide a very detailed breakdown of this cohort, by activity (those in jobs without training, those in Apprenticeship etc), by gender, ethnicity, disability etc and by geographical area.

A trend across the South West Peninsula is that at the end of March the total year 12 to 14 cohort was 56,512 young people. This group included 4,845 young people who were in a labour market (EET) activity that does not meet RPA. This means they were most likely in jobs without training, temporary employment or part time employment. However, 3,589 (74.1%) of these were year 14 equivalent so not in scope for RPA. Looking at the year 12 and 13 cohort (those that would be eligible for RPA) there were 37,818 in the cohort of which 1,256 (3.3%) were in a labour market (employed) status that was not meeting RPA. This is skewed

heavily too with 18.6% of these being year 12 equivalent and 81.4% being year 13 equivalent. In essence as young people move through from year 12 to year 14 equivalent, they become less and less likely to be engaged in learning and more likely to be in jobs without training and therefore potentially with less progression opportunity.

Our anecdotal feedback is:

- they are often in jobs without training or following other vocational training routes;
- they often lack aspiration, which is further hindered depending on the local economy;
- they often come from less well-off families
- there is a perception that there is a lack of opportunity and accessibility, especially around Apprenticeships
- they avoid Apprenticeships due to the low earning potential whilst training and the impact on some family benefits
- there may be a poor family history of education beyond compulsory levels and low level attainment with regard to career progression.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

The current transitions system is focussed on NEETs and those with SEND. There is, in some areas a limited offer to other vulnerable groups, such as those in care and care leavers. There is no longer a universal system for those who need help and support to access information, advice and guidance without additional identified barriers.

The typical attitude and outlook of young people that fall into this category is one without confidence and aspiration. This stems from many young people not having parental role models and adequate support systems.

These young people are now also facing a more competitive labour market, with many graduates taking lower skilled jobs, therefore blocking career progression opportunities. The real challenge is that for a young person looking to leave school there is no single agency or obvious route to access support.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

In our experience employers are willing to employ students without further education qualifications. Their concerns are typically with student attitudes towards work and their presentation of the skills they do have. For many young people their work experience is limited (often to a schools work experience programme) which leaves them lacking in confidence to enter a professional environment and succeed. Compulsory work experience for all young people coupled with unbiased and qualified careers information, advice and guidance and innovative employer engagement opportunities formed into a careers education

programme with a clear route and customer journey for each young person will help young people present themselves successfully to employers.

There needs to be more information on routes available through apprenticeships and support to explore travel and other barriers that result in drop out before actually starting an apprenticeship.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

We would suggest that the DfE is nominated as the lead Government department and that all other departments should ensure that their strategies align. This will support the achievement of common goals in the most cost effective way. The DfE statutory guidance must be more prescriptive in terms of what is required of all educational establishments and local authorities. A good example would be a concrete requirement for all educational establishments to hold a Quality in Careers Standard. Ofsted must then hold bodies to account and there must be consequences of failure.

The delivery of this work needs to be undertaken by a suitably qualified, experienced and connected third party where the outcomes and achievement of the young person is paramount.

14 September 2015

City of London Corporation – Written evidence (SMO0130)

HOUSE OF LORDS SOCIAL MOBILITY COMMITTEE

Memorandum from the City of London Corporation Submitted by the City Remembrancer's Office

1. The City of London Corporation is committed to improving social mobility for young people in London. Our long-term economic sustainability is at risk unless we improve diversity and cast the net wider in the search for talent. To encourage this, the City Corporation is undertaking a wide range of work in the City, its surrounding boroughs and across London as a whole aimed at raising the aspirations of young people and improving their employability. This includes work in schools, support to job seekers, training provision, and working directly with businesses to engage.

City of London Business Traineeship

2. A key strand of the City Corporation's work on social mobility is the City of London Business Traineeship (CBT) scheme. The scheme, delivered by the Brokerage Citylink, introduces talented A-level students from state schools in the City's neighbouring boroughs—some of which are amongst the most disadvantaged in the country—to paid work placements in City firms. While host organisations pay trainees a wage, the City Corporation supports the administration and management of the programme. This includes development of placement opportunities, selection/screening of candidates, matching candidates to employers, delivery of workshops, and an annual awards ceremony hosted by the Lord Mayor.
3. Each year, approximately 600 young people from some 70 City fringe schools and colleges register on the highly competitive scheme, of which over 100 secure a placement. A further 300 participate in a series of employability workshops, which confer lasting benefits for those who do not secure a placement. Many of those on the scheme are from demographic groups that are under represented at the highest levels of most professions. Of the 2015 intake, 57% of trainees were female and 85% are from Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds. Since 2001, the scheme has placed over 1,100 trainees with firms in the City.
4. In each of the next three years, the CBT programme is expected to secure at least 110 paid work placements from at least 25 City businesses, of which 5 will be within businesses participating in the programme for the first time. The programme will and place young people into these placements, facilitating the interview and recruitment process.

City Careers Open House

5. Another major element of the City Corporation's work to raise aspirations in neighbouring boroughs is the City Careers Open House programme. Like the City

Business Traineeship, the programme is administered by the Brokerage Citylink. It brings about 1,000 young people into the City each year for taster visits to City businesses to introduce them to the world of work and raise awareness of routes into employment in the financial and professional services sector. The programme is available for free to state schools in the London boroughs of Camden, Hackney, Islington, Lambeth, Southwark, and Tower Hamlets.

6. The programme responds to the increasing body of evidence that suggests there is a link between the number of employer contacts that a young person has during his or her school career and their future careers. Positive relationships are have been found to exist between the number of employer contacts, for example through work experience, and confidence at ages 19-24 about progression towards ultimate career goals, the likelihood of in education, employment or training and future earnings. Around 65% of participating students who take part in the programme say the experience gives them much higher career aspirations.

City of London Academies

7. The City Corporation is the sponsor/co-sponsor of three secondary academies and one primary academy. Located in neighbouring boroughs, the Academies are an important part of their local community. Each school has a high percentage of disadvantaged students and, as sponsor, City Corporation works closely with them to provide opportunities for every student, including careers advice, work experience, and pathways into employment. The Sutton Trusts report, *Chain Effects 2015: The impact of academy chains on low-income students*, found that the City of London chain of academies is one of the top chains on all measures of disadvantaged pupils' attainment and progress.
8. The City of London seeks to promote and support an effective transition from education to employment for students within its Academies. During the financial year 2014/15, over 1,500 Academy students were supported by work-related learning opportunities provided by the City Corporation. This included:
 - The provision of work experience placements for 40 year 10 and 12 Academy students. The students who participated all agreed they had developed a better understanding of the skills employers are looking for as a result of their placement.
 - Employability events (such as CV writing workshops and speed interviewing sessions) and large scale careers fairs to raise students' aspirations and boost their ability to gain employment in the future.
 - Tailored academic support, either through weekly one to one subject specific tutoring sessions, motivation boosting meetings with volunteer 'Personal Advisers' or by participating in specialist volunteer led classroom discussions and presentations.

Apprenticeships

9. The City Corporation is attempting to raise awareness amongst City businesses and the financial and professional services sector about apprenticeships to increase take-up. In June the Lord Mayor hosted a roundtable discussion with City businesses in partnership with the National Apprenticeships Ambassadors Network (part of BIS) and the Corporation is planning a series of sector-focused follow-up sessions, starting with law in January and banking in March.
10. The City Corporation has a free apprenticeship placement service to support businesses in employing young people starting their careers. The service supports apprenticeships within the Corporation and also assists recognised firms in banking, insurance, property and many other sectors.

Support for Charities

11. The City Corporation's charity the City Bridge Trust's 'Youth Offer' programme of grants, which helps young people not in education, employment and training (NEETs) into work or training, aims to demonstrate this by channelling a grant of £100,000 through each London local authority with a condition that third sector organisations be appointed to deliver locally tailored solutions. The City Corporation also supports charities such as Future First, which is currently recruiting City workers educated in state schools in more deprived boroughs to return to their old schools and share their insights into what a job in banking and law entails and how pupils can achieve a career in these areas.

9 October 2015

Herefordshire Council – Written evidence (SMO0020)

Select Committee on Social Mobility - call for evidence Herefordshire Council 14 -19 team response

1: What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes in the transition from school into the work place?

The data:

- Of the 323 Herefordshire young people recorded as NEET in August 2015 (years 12, 13 and 14) only 6% had achieved 5 A* to C GCSE qualifications including English and Maths. 16% had achieved 5 A* -C but without English AND Maths.
- Nearly 40% of the NEET cohort were recorded as having some form of special educational needs whilst in statutory education, this includes Statement, school action, school action plus.
- Girls are slightly more represented in the NEET cohort than boys (52.3 % and 47.7%)

A lack of level 2 qualifications at 16 is a significant factor in a young person becoming NEET. Anecdotal evidence suggests that those young people who become NEET may have issues with family stability and family aspirations.

Those young people who are in, or have been in the looked after system, young people from the gypsy, Roma, traveler cohort and those who have a SEMH diagnosis (social, emotional, mental health) are over represented in the overall NEET cohort.

2: There is a group of young people aged 14 – 24 who do not follow the A level and HE route and who are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group, who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

In Herefordshire we have a significant number of our young people who move on to the general FE college or the specialist art college to undertake qualifications in more vocational subject areas, we also have a successful apprenticeship Programme running across the county.

It is not a given that a young person not doing A levels will therefore become NEET, however there is historically more drop outs at age 17 from the general FE sector rather than the A level route. Some of the reasons for this may be that the general FE provision is taking on a cohort that by their very nature achieve less well at GCSE, which is a factor in their predisposition to becoming NEET; general FE provision is often a one year course followed by a second year at a higher level if the young person completes year one successfully, this is a different mindset to the A level route which is always (even with AS levels) considered a two year Programme.

In Herefordshire transport can be an issue particularly for the most vulnerable learners and those who are less committed or have less parental support to access their chosen provision. Transport can also be prohibitively expensive.

The career trajectories for young people who drop out at 17 are generally into entry level careers, with a significant number moving into the service sector, retail, catering and laboring.

Entry level agriculture roles are also a prominent employment sector for young males.

3: Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A level and HE route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Currently there is a lack of face to face support for any young person who is 'wobbling' over their career choices. Whilst on line and telephone support is useful for those young people who are confident enough to utilize it there is something about a young person being referred to face to face support that removes the 'self-help' aspect of the process which for young people suffering with confidence / self-esteem issues can be a real problem.

Lack of significant work experience opportunities because schools are no longer mandated to offer work related learning alongside limited part time jobs available to young people are both factors that limit a young person's employment opportunities. Cutting your teeth in a Saturday job may not give young person qualifications but the confidence and skills needed to deal with colleagues and the public are invaluable. Many larger employees now recruit through 'sifting' on line application processes, therefore a young person with no previous employment will automatically be sifted out so getting those initial employability skills can be very difficult.

4: How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, but particularly for those who do not go onto study A levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Require schools and post 16 providers to deliver work related learning including significant work experience for all learners but pay particular attention to those young people who are less likely to achieve 5 A* to C including English and maths.

Incentivize employers, particularly multi nationals to recruit local young people locally and not use on line application sites.

Incentivize employers, particularly multi nationals to offer part time contracts that can be flexible and work around young people's college attendance (this would potentially appease the zero hour contracts lobby)

5: Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

1: Schools

2: Local authority

3: Employers

All have a part to play but all need to coordinate their responses on a local level that then feeds into a national 'agreement'. Funding is an issue and both schools and local authorities are currently only able to deliver targeted work to those most in need rather than a more universal service that is needed. If employers feel the current cohort of young people are not work ready perhaps they need to look at what they can do to assist? A central fund, contributed to by employers, delivered through the LEPs to manage work related learning may be a good starting point.

7 September 2015

**HOUSE OF LORDS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY
CALL FOR EVIDENCE**

Please focus your answers on young people aged 14-24 who are not on, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A-Level to Higher Education pathway

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

The most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace are as follows:

1.1 Changes in the Post-16 curriculum and introduction of 16-19 Study Programmes and related funding

The introduction in September 2013 of the 16-19 Study Programmes should be a significant fact in encouraging young people to rethink employment and the opportunities available to them. Supported by changes to post-16 funding the 16-19 Study Programmes have established clear study and/or employment goals reflecting pupils' prior attainment, their aspirations and potential and future career plans.

However, even with the introduction of Study Programmes and the emphasis that government policy has placed on increasing apprenticeships and traineeships and work experience and work related opportunities, there is still not parity of esteem between the A level and Higher Education pathway and vocational programmes.

Work experience has a higher profile in the new programmes with changes to post-16 funding enabling it to count as 'a non-qualification activity' funded on the same basis as qualifications. This gives education providers the freedom and flexibility needed to expand their work experience provision and build employability skills in the young people that have a positive effect on transition from school into work. The EFA funding flexibilities also enable providers to promote enterprise and entrepreneurial skills as part of the students' 'non-qualification activities'; again building the skills needed by employers.

Despite this freedom and flexibility there is a mixed picture of what is offered to young people in terms of work experience and work related opportunities post-16. Schools are least likely to offer work experience while FE Colleges and independent private providers are more likely to do so. For example, West Herts College have been identified as a [good practice example by Ofsted](#). They have been commended for the whole-organisation approach that has been established, with each student receiving 'Gap Experiences, adventures in the working world' that are relevant to their destination and support the successful transition from study into employment.

The County Council and other key stakeholders have done much work to promote these freedoms and flexibilities through a bespoke programme of Continuous Professional Development to senior teachers and business managers in schools. The vast majority of Hertfordshire schools still offer no vocational provision at L2 or L3 within their school sixth forms. More work still needs to be done at national level to ensure that all schools are aware and are encouraged to utilise these flexibilities to help their students make the transition from school into the workforce.

In 2013 four schools in one town in Hertfordshire formed a partnership to introduce a 16-19 Study Programme focusing on employability and work-related experiences, including extended work experience. This has been set up specifically for those young people who do not want to follow the A-level to Higher Education pathway and want to go into employment. We are still waiting to evaluate the long-term impact of this programme. The model has been shared with other schools across the county and is being developed further for September 2015. It should however be noted that the initial cohort was only 8 students

1.2 Vocational qualifications and qualified teachers

With the reform of qualifications and the move towards linear assessment even for vocational subjects, practically orientated students can be penalised and are not achieving their true potential. These students are often able to demonstrate skills and apply their learning in work-related environments – however they do not have the desire or motivation to regurgitate knowledge in the limited time set for an examination. Schools are struggling to find ‘qualifications that count’ towards Progress 8 that are relevant and meaningful to learners that want to follow a vocational pathway and/or enter the workforce.

The competencies and occupational experience of the tutors delivering vocational training programmes is key to the effective transition of learners. Advisers in the Local Authority have expressed concern that courses are being taught in schools by non-specialists with no industrial experience. Evidence suggests that much of this learning takes place in a classroom setting rather than in the workplace. The interest and passion of the teachers needs to be backed up by formal and ongoing CPD with an investment in this to the same level received and available for Maths, English and Science.

1.3 Work experience and supported internships

It is important that schools create planned hours in the curriculum to undertake work related learning, including work experience. Work experience forms a key component of a Study Programme or the main learning aim for students who are not taking substantial qualifications at Level 2 or 3.

There are no statutory duties around work experience for young people so schools are not required to build this into the curriculum at KS4. This leads to most young people only

receiving work experience for one or two weeks during their time at school. This does not give employers the opportunity to get to know young people and to help develop their skills over a sustained period of time. In addition, there is a particular demand for work related learning activities in certain months of the year e.g. June/July which places considerable pressure on the existing employers.

According to Hertfordshire Youth Connexions, in 2014-2015 employers offered 8693 work experience placements to pre- and post-16 students with a total of 7217 of these being taken up by secondary schools purchasing work experience from Youth Connexions. A typical year cohort in Hertfordshire is 13,000. There is no duty for Local Authorities to check or audit schools about work experience so it is difficult to know the quality of the offer made to those young people in schools that do not buy into the Hertfordshire Youth Connexions traded offer.

Another strand of work experience is the Supported Internships programme, designed to support young people with complex needs who need a higher level of support to access employment.

1.4 Promotion and increase in the take-up of apprenticeships

Increasing the number of apprenticeship opportunities and successful retention and progression of apprentices into sustained employment is also another key factor to consider and has been placed as a top priority for the LEP's Employment and Skills Board. Representative curriculum leaders from some schools are working with strategic partners responsible for the development of apprenticeships to drive the agenda forward. This incorporates CPD for senior leaders and placing apprenticeships on an equal footing with University.

The number of Hertfordshire Apprenticeship vacancies on the Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service website is rising. From July 2014-November 2014 there were in total 906 vacancies (675 Intermediate, 227 Advanced and 4 Higher). From January 2015-June 2015 there were 1655 vacancies (1259 Intermediate, 376 Advanced and 20 Higher).

Our Hertfordshire challenge is in attracting young people to want to find out about apprenticeships and to register on Find an apprenticeship so that they can see the range of jobs available. The biggest complaint from employers and providers is that information in schools about apprenticeships is still being directed towards the lower achieving learners who are disengaged with the formal education system or who are deemed unsuitable to either continue in school or go to college or university. In fact, employers want the very best applicants – those who are engaged, enthusiastic and will be hard-working, motivated and committed. They also want individuals who are going to have a capacity to learn at an advanced and higher level if that is what the job needs. Degree apprenticeships should go some way to help to balance the situation, but more needs to be done to raise awareness of young people, parents and teachers.

Data collected by the Skills Funding Agency for Hertfordshire County Council showed that by the end of July 2014, 1599 young people aged 16-18 years out of the cohort of 42142

(3.8%) started on an apprenticeship programme. The percentage of young people aged 16-18 years in employment with training including apprenticeships is 4.9% and this compares to 6.9% for England.

In October 2014 the Hertfordshire data shows an increase in apprentices enrolled between the ages of 16 (482) to 17 years of age (949)⁴¹. This indicates that some young people may find they have made the wrong choice and drop out in Year 12 and then take up an Apprenticeship.

1.5 Occupational opportunity awareness

Confidence and awareness of teachers about apprenticeships needs improvement.

In a survey conducted with 277 secondary teachers in Hertfordshire, the following statistics were revealed:

- 81% of teachers rated their knowledge of apprenticeships as 'low'.
- 86% of teachers said that they wouldn't feel confident in explaining to a student what they needed to do next if they wanted support to find an apprenticeship.
- The top three areas that teachers want to know about regarding apprenticeships are
 - o The job roles / subjects
 - o How long they take
 - o The employment opportunities available

Evidence suggests that secondary school teachers are unaware of all the post-16 pathways (other than the route they went down) and how young people can access these.

Continuous professional development is essential to build the knowledge and understanding of all teachers/support staff advising young people. In Hertfordshire Youth Connexions has produced Infographics on LMI for individual schools which could be used to inform the curriculum as well as parents. Schools need to trust this information in order to make changes to the curriculum offer.

1.6 Parental expectations and ambitions

National research highlights parents as the main influencers of young people's career choice. They need to encourage exploration and ambition and help to develop the skills of independence and resilience in the young people giving them the confidence to 'take a risk' and not be afraid to try new opportunities. More structured and dedicated work needs to be done to raise awareness of employment opportunities to parents and inform them of the prospects along the non-traditional routes. Promoting the vocational pathway as 'professional' rather than 'vocational' may make a difference in terms of establishing parity with 'A' level and university routes.

A recent focus group conducted with parents in Hertfordshire showed that of the 18 parents interviewed, none had received any information from the secondary school that their son/daughter attends about apprenticeships. They felt that all information had been weighted to predominantly the school 6th form, college or university. None of the parents knew about higher or degree level apprenticeships but all wanted to know more once they had the opportunities explained to them.

⁴¹ October 2014 SFA LEP Operational Data Suite In Year Data Cubes showing Final Quarter 4 results for 2012/13

1.7 Involvement of employers in designing the curriculum

It is often cited that education and employers speak different languages and have few structured opportunities to interact and discuss the challenges posed by a knowledge based curriculum versus a skills driven world of employment. This means employers have very little opportunity to influence the curriculum. Unsurprisingly, they often complain that young people lack the required skills. Employers are often unaware of the potential of young people without traditional qualifications, continuing to use a standard method of recruitment and setting high grades as the criteria for selection. Lessons can be learnt from the FE colleges where some employers are actively engaged in curriculum design and delivery to ensure that their needs are taken into account when developing vocational provision. This is an approach that the colleges are keen to expand

Many employers provide work experience opportunities, but there are big gaps in job themes and locations, meaning that young people do not have the opportunity for placements in certain industries or parts of the county, so more needs to be done to encourage a greater number of employers to become involved. For those employers that are not involved this may restrict their awareness of young people's potential and the career choices of young people.

There is no statutory duty or universal offer of work experience/work related opportunities so therefore not all young people have the opportunity to develop their employability, or find out directly what employers want via dialogue or work experience. Good quality work experience and work-related opportunities provide both young people and employers with an improved transition from education into work.

1.8 Face to face independent and impartial information, advice and guidance from an informed (about labour market) provider

Schools have a statutory duty to provide IAG for years 8 to 13 which should include information about all the possible educational and training pathways. Although monitored by Ofsted the emphasis they place on it is not great enough and therefore, **it allows schools to deliver minimal IAG.**

IAG is offered to schools and other providers as a traded service by Youth Connexions Hertfordshire (part of the County Council) who employs professionally qualified advisers. There is a huge variation in the amount of IAG purchased by schools and is usually purchased only for young people of GCSE D-G profile who could be at risk of becoming NEET. **IAG is therefore purchased for only one-in-six young people in Hertfordshire, with others receiving varying degrees and quality of career guidance or none at all.**

There is no statutory duty for Local Authorities to check that appropriate IAG is delivered so it is difficult to know the quality of the offer made to those young people in schools that do not buy into the Hertfordshire Youth Connexions traded offer.

1.9 Cost of living in the south east/home counties compared to other parts of the UK

The high price of housing does not encourage young people to remain in the area or move into Hertfordshire from other parts of the country to take up vacancies. Although Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire have district policies that involve building affordable housing this has little or no impact on this age group.

Data (July 2015) from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) showed that the cost of the average home in the East of England jumped 9.3% in the 12 months to May 2015 – this was the fastest rate of growth of any of the UK regions. In the South East homeowners saw the value of their properties increase by 8.2% over the same period of time.

2 There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

Hertfordshire has a high participation in education or training for 16 and 17 year olds. In June 2014, the participation rate was 96.6%.

Using the Hertfordshire Activity Survey for Year 11 students (those young people aged 16 years who have completed compulsory schooling) for the academic year 2014-15, we know that 60% of the cohort started on an 'A' level progression pathway either at school (58.5%) or FE College (1.5%).

The majority of young people in employment, education or training (excluding 'A' levels) follow vocational programmes post-16 with a significantly reduced number entering employment.

Following a survey into the destinations of 13,396 year 11 learners (August 2014) the data has been analysed.

In terms of ethnicity:

- Out of the total cohort of 12,410 staying in education, 10,206 were white (6499 at school and 3707 in college). Of these learners 3419 (33.5%) were on vocational courses at all levels (1-3), predominantly in the FE colleges. In fact, 90% of the white learners entering FE colleges did so to follow vocational programmes.
- A very small percentage of the students who stayed in school followed vocational courses - just 79 of the 6499 (1.2%)
- Only 379 entered employment (including Apprenticeships at Intermediate and Advanced Level) – just 2.8% of the cohort. 59% of these are on Intermediate apprenticeship programmes.

- Out of the total of 281 black learners 103 entered vocational learning post-16 – 36.6%, again the majority (89) going into the FE sector. Only 7 went into employment with 5 of these into an Intermediate apprenticeship
- The percentage for Asian learners (526 in the cohort) entering vocational programmes is 166 - 31.5%. Again, just 7 entered employment, 4 of these into an Intermediate apprenticeship.

In terms of gender:

- There are low numbers studying vocational courses post-16 in schools - 0.88% of females (37 out of 4226) and 1.8% of males (70 out of 3808).
- The numbers entering employment are in total 414 of the cohort, 169 females and 245 males – 3.1% of the cohort.

For learning difficulties and disabilities:

- The data suggests that there were 717 learners with LDD included in the destination survey. Of these a total of 282 (39.3%) were on vocational courses, 7 in school (2.5%), 275 in college (97.5%)
- Twenty-one (2.9%) of these young people entered employment, 15 securing an Intermediate Apprenticeship. This is likely to be as a result of a programme of training for work-based learning providers and employers on understanding the profile and needs of learners with LDD

In total 505 jobs/apprenticeships were taken up across the whole cohort. The data indicates that the top six occupational sectors that the young people move into are:

- Hairdressing and related occupations – nearly 20% go into this sector – 82 of the 92 are female
- Skilled construction
- Other skilled trades
- Other elementary occupations
- Clerical/secretarial
- Child care

The main sectors looking to recruit are: Administration, Business, Office Work (142), Catering and Hospitality (66), Health and Social Care (64), Computers/IT (50), Hair and Beauty (39), Motor Industry (23) and Retail/Customer Service (21).

Maths and English at Grade C+ are a requirement of most of the jobs advertised. The cohort of young people following vocational pathways often are not secure at Level 2 i.e. do not have 5+ GCSE's Grades A*-C including Maths and English. Of the 2014 leavers surveyed (13,396), 4147 have not achieved this benchmark.

3 Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not,

why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

We do not feel it does. Many vocational courses are not designed and led by employers, therefore little vested interest in the product. Secondary school teachers are unlikely to have industry experience or occupational competencies at the right level, often teaching practical courses in a totally classroom based setting. Learners can finish their studies without gaining the skills relevant for the local labour market with employers complaining that they have a mismatched skill set. Learners are then forced to seek Apprenticeships at levels below their academic ability. The labour market wants experience and/or employability skills the learner does not always have. Again, lessons could be learnt from the FE sector who increasingly are going to great lengths to ensure that courses offered match the local labour market.

IAG is dependent upon the quality of staff and is only as good as the provision on offer and advisers can only signpost to local training and education; if this mismatches the local employment market this cohort will always struggle to make a successful transition from school to work. It is expected that IAG staff are qualified to Level 4 and that IAG providers are matrix accredited.

For some young people the lack of alternatives to school Sixth Form is a barrier.

In Hertfordshire we have 4 FE colleges but these are large educational organisations which may not be suitable for all learners. We used to have 13 independent providers offering level 1 re-engagement type provision through initiatives like Entry to Employment (e2e) and Foundation Learning. This was before the change in policy towards Study Programme and as a result, we now only have 4 independent private training providers working across the whole of Hertfordshire with an Education Funding Agency contract who offer L1 and below programmes. Only one of these providers can cover the whole county through their 'work based' model of assessment in the workplace. This limits the choice of progression pathways for young people.

Previously all 4 FE colleges offered centrally funded 'Increased Flexibility' Programmes or 'Practical Learning Opportunities'. These provided progression pathways for those young people interested in vocational options through the offer of part-time training by occupationally qualified staff at Key Stage 4. Students were able to make the progression to FE college post-16 having made an informed decision about which vocational pathway to pursue and through building a secure foundation of knowledge. Colleges have tried to retain this provision with no central funds.

There are key geographical areas within Hertfordshire and also types of occupation where Hertfordshire Youth Connexions report difficulties with providing work experience to meet demand from learners. For example, sourcing work experience from the leisure industry or from local councils has proved at times to be difficult. Sometimes these shortages in work experience also match with those occupations that struggle to recruit staff to job positions. What is required is a broader range of types of occupations.

The referral system from the Job Centre to encourage young people onto traineeships has not proved to be effective which has made it hard to market the opportunities for development of skills related to possible employment. It is hoped that with the changes to the benefits system this will begin to improve. Many young people do not see the

benefits from undertaking work experience with no financial gain as a stepping stone into successful employment.

4 How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Hertfordshire once ran a very successful initiative called the Young Apprenticeship Programme. This was a programme of sustained work experience for 1 day per week, whilst learners were completing their GCSEs in year 11. The difference was that this programme was aimed at learners who would be high achieving. They needed to be capable of both studying and completing work experience simultaneously. Employers reported that they really enjoyed the regularity of being able to get to know the young person and get them more involved in longer-term projects. They could even give them areas of responsibility. Learners reported that they enjoyed getting to know the employer and their industry in more detail and building a rapport with colleagues. What did not work quite so successfully was Hertfordshire's ability to progress these learners into apprenticeships. In 2010 when this programme was running, we did not have Higher Apprenticeships to offer them and the expected path of a high achieving young person from year 11 was to complete A Levels and then progress to a degree at University. The current situation of few formal links between young people and employers leads to many young people lacking the skills employers want, and failing to make the right choices around training and work. Employers also lack awareness of the potential of young people, especially those without traditional qualifications, and how to engage with them. This leads to the following problems:

a) Young people lacking the skills employers need

Employers in Hertfordshire complain that young people often lack the skills employers need. This includes both training in specific disciplines, but also generic employability skills, communication skills, and awareness of the demands of the workplace. Lack of work experience and lack of employability and communication skills due to absence from the curriculum are key factors.

b) Young people making the wrong training and career choice

Hertfordshire schools have tended to offer an academic pathway via sixth form provision. Hertfordshire has the highest proportion of sixth forms of any county. Many young people are influenced to stay on at school especially by their parents rather than take up an Apprenticeship or job with training. Many (see section 1.4) find they have made the wrong choice and drop out in Year 12, or embark on an academic route when a work / training route would have been preferable. This could be the result of a combination of factors such as lack of impartial IAG and careers guidance and parents' perceptions of Apprenticeship and vocational pathways.

c) Timing of opportunity starts

The issue of timing of opportunity starts is a factor in the choice made by young people. Sixth form and college places are offered in the autumn term. Apprenticeship

opportunities arise throughout the year, and many young people are unlikely to wait for an Apprenticeship opportunity coming up at the risk of having nothing to do the following academic year. Parents also have a strong influence on choice and are likely to promote the safe option. These factors contribute to Apprenticeship opportunities remaining unfilled.

Employers do not advertise apprenticeship vacancies at one particular time in the year. Their decision to recruit an apprentice can be influenced by a number of things, perhaps winning a new contract, a member of staff leaving etc. We cannot expect employers to change the way that they recruit into their business, particularly as 98% of businesses in Hertfordshire are classed as small or micro businesses.

Through the current 16-19 funding system, training providers including colleges and schools will be penalised for releasing learners mid-year before they have completed their qualifications. If this were to change so that institutions did not face penalties (financially nor success rates) for releasing learners to commence an apprenticeship, we feel that we could better 'match' suitable young people to employers throughout the year.

d) Recruitment processes

There is great comfort in the formalised, safe and trusted process of UCAS. There are set dates to respond and long-established traditions on how to get through the system. Teachers themselves have most likely followed that route and it is seen by parents as the 'grown-up' option. Apprenticeships are relatively new and because of the ever changing policies and funding mechanisms, they are not as trusted as they should be. The application and recruitment process is complex and more should be done to help teachers and parents to have confidence in the existing systems. We need greater flexibilities for young people to move into apprenticeships and not be restricted by the rigidity of the academic year.

e) Academic versus professional routes

Many young people are taking an academic route when an apprenticeship could be more likely to lead to their career choice. Employers would also fill more apprenticeship opportunities and job vacancies. To encourage young people away from the sixth form/academic route will require far more than merely promoting apprenticeships. Young people would need to be equipped to make this choice via the embedding of work related learning in the curriculum, work experience and other direct interactions with employers. There are a number of possible improvements that could be made to help improve transition for all young people and these include:

- Developing employer skills exercises in schools/projects for recruiting (in line with other application processes) This could include established 'Talent Pool' days which enable employers to select and recruit having observed young peoples' attitudes and abilities e.g. as team players, negotiators, presenters etc.
- Running recruitment events for employers / linked to districts (rather than NEET areas) and specific Local Enterprise Partnership priority industry sectors (larger events). Promoting and expanding work experience opportunities in shortage areas linking to the LEP specific growth sectors where possible
- Filming employers for local Labour Market Information (LMI) to engage and update young people about local job sectors in a cost effective way both in terms of time

and funding, which enables the messages to get out to as wide an audience as possible

- Raising awareness among employers of the potential of young people, including those without traditional qualifications, or who face disadvantage and encouraging them to take on young people with identified attributes/skills over traditional grades i.e. not just looking at those with the best exam results but focusing on those with the skills the role actually requires
- Doing more pre-emptive work with job seekers in school – notably developing a model of recruitment centres in schools, FE Colleges and with independent private training providers
- Making sure young people learn the skills employers need in school.
- Forging strong links between employers and young people via the web and via face to face learning opportunities, work experience and events
- Promoting and supporting schools to introduce a curriculum that focuses on the Technical Baccalaureate and Applied General pathways both of which have to involve employers in the design and the delivery.

The National Careers Service's remit has been extended to include supporting inspiration by brokering relationships between schools and employers. They have developed their national digital offer, and are working with partners across the region to ensure that schools have access to national and local information.

Hertfordshire Youth Connexions has successfully acquired funding from the Futures/National Careers Service to support the Careers Inspiration agenda by delivering a programme to promote Enterprise and Work Related Learning activities with 20 Hertfordshire schools (2 per district) which will be enhanced by the introduction of the Careers and Enterprise Programme which will provide funding for Enterprise Co-ordinators and Enterprise Adviser to work directly with secondary schools and colleges to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of employer-school interactions.

This project will begin in earnest in September 2015, but we are optimistic about the possible outcomes and believe that more funding should be made available for similar projects, if they prove to have a positive impact.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

We believe that this should be a joint responsibility for all key stakeholders.

The government needs to have in place the right policies for improving transition and not keeping changing these policies so they don't become embedded. This needs to be followed up by positive actions such as greater emphasis on performance for their vocational programmes. A review should be undertaken with regards to schemes/programmes which conflict with each other in terms of funding and outcomes (see 4.c above)

We need better communication between the key stakeholders about the needs of all young people for education, training and employment opportunities and the needs of employers for better prepared young local employees. Local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships could and should play a role in pulling together the key stakeholders to do this.

Schools and governors need to be accountable to Ofsted about the support they put in place to help their young people make the transition from education to employment. Employers also have a role to play with this transition. The emphasis that Ofsted place on this aspect should be greater as this in turn will drive different behaviours in schools etc Young people themselves do not feel that they are prepared adequately for the transition into employment. Through the [Hertfordshire 11-25 Manifesto 14/15](#) the area of most concern to young people (receiving 3807 votes) was work experience and how this can give young people the confidence to then progress the placement into volunteering in their own time. One of the 'asks' from the Herts1125 group to the County Council is 'More preparation for work lessons, including CV building and interview skills to help us develop skills not only for volunteering but also for our future'

This response has been co-ordinated by Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council and Youth Connexions Hertfordshire. It represents the views of the Apprenticeship Strategy group, a sub-group of the Hertfordshire LEP Employment and Skills Programme Board.

10 September 2015

**Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, Hertfordshire County Council, and Youth
Connexions Hertfordshire – Written evidence (SMO0026)**

[Submission to be found under Hertfordshire County Council](#)

High Peak Borough Council & Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – Written evidence (SMO0068)

Submission draft from High Peak Borough Council & Staffordshire Moorlands District Council

Please note: This response is based on opinions of appropriate officers, but have not been endorsed by a formal committee due to timescale.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Factors which impact most significantly on young people's route to work (specifically for those who are low risk of NEET or taking A-Level to HE pathway) are:

- **Lack of any independent careers advice** which can help inform both young people and parents - specifically there is lack of awareness of skills gaps/business growth needs. While the Connexions service had faults, it was significantly better than current arrangements which often result in young people who are not deemed at risk of NEET receiving no person-to-person advice at all. Online careers data is often only available at national or regional level and therefore provides no information on local employer needs or skill shortages.
- **There is a clear financial conflict of interest for schools with 6th forms** – which acts to discourage schools from offering guidance/information on non-A level pathways to work including Further Education (FE), apprenticeships or BTEC pathways to HE as viable and appropriate routeways to work for young people. This is especially true for the cohort that might be capable of achieving A levels thorough an academic route but might prefer to learn in more practical or applied way. This is resulting is high drop-out rates from A level routes at age 17 which is both costly to the public purse, and to the individual young people (who waste their time and perhaps become discouraged from continuing training education)
- **There is lack of public and business recognition of alternative qualifications** and what standards these mean (even in this report, there was only reference to “ A Level equivalent”) which means that the same public ‘value’ is not given to BTECs; NVQs etc. The lack of current value/recognition given to technical/applied qualifications (which were formerly OND,HNDs) means that in the public perception the newer Level 3 qualifications are only for people who fail on academic routes. Even in national career websites there is lack of acknowledgement of the BTEC Level 3 to HE pathway.
- **Time and cost for Young people to reach courses can dissuade young people especially in rural areas.** In rural areas, such as High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands, the cost – and access to- transport to attend FE colleges can be substantially more than remaining at a local school 6th form, which does not have facilities to provide non academic pathways to employment. For example, the nearest opportunities to study any Level 2 or Level 3 course in electrical installation, electrical engineering or any electrics course (despite there being a clear skills shortage for these skills) is over 2.5 hours travel time and would cost in excess of £50 per week after

Derbyshire's student discount is applied. It is also worth noting that Greater Manchester's subsidies for young people are significantly more generous than in rural counties.

- **Housing issues affect social mobility and education prospects of young people** - Access to affordable, settled and where applicable, appropriately supported accommodation is required for those young people not in stable home environments as without housing support the young people's employment/education prospects and aspirations are unlikely to be effectively considered and realised. Similarly access to appropriate floating support, to address specific and tenancy related support needs and ensure that tenancies can be successfully set up and managed. Public sector funding cuts and associated Welfare Reforms have impacted upon the ability of young people to access accommodation and reduced the provision of frontline services (i.e. provision of supported accommodation, tenancy and other floating support).

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

- FE and level 2 apprenticeships have predominantly been seen as pathways for young people who underachieved in GCSEs. These young people would traditionally have come from socio-economic classification C & D as produced by the ONS. Within this group are those on apprenticeship schemes within housing and construction sector which provide a wide range of opportunities from traditional trade based apprenticeships through to office & purchasing roles. These opportunities can be significant especially in deprived areas/social housing communities. Registered social housing providers working with local authorities also have a significant role building social capital; e.g. facilitating work clubs, social enterprises, which offer volunteering positions and the opportunity to obtain skills and experience required to gain employment.
- In addition, the traditional C&D social-economic groups who may not have traditionally followed an A level route, the increasingly academic nature of the national curriculum to Y11 (and the pressure on schools through the Ofsted process to achieve academic excellence in English Baccalaureate subjects) has resulted in a perception of less value placed on applied or technical skills across all subjects from science through to technology subjects themselves. This means that the cohort of young people – from all social classes - whose learning style suits a more practical learning style are either underachieving on the GCSEs/A levels or have a lack of awareness of alternative pathways to both HE and work via apprenticeships and FE. We understand that there are now higher numbers of people at FE colleges who are 17 years old compared to 16 years, which implies that there is high drop out rates from A-level/6th forms.

- It is worth noting that there are key routes to Higher education other than through A Levels, for example via FE vocational routes; higher level apprenticeships etc, which this call has not acknowledged.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

- The longer term employment prospects of young people who do not follow an A level/HE route are extremely mixed. It can result in:
 - extremely well paid technical positions which are highly sought after if young people secure an appropriate FE place or apprenticeships within medium/larger company (especially within engineering, higher level manufacturing);
 - young people gaining FE/Apprenticeship based practical hand-on experience/skills which are closely matched to the job market and are valuable if they later become supervisors and managers (especially within care and health sectors)
 - but also can result in young people taking training courses which have limited career prospects within their area and insecure agency work/unemployment with no longer term skill development.
- The challenges to access alternatives to A Levels – are effected by cost of transport, settled affordable accommodation and support to maintain accommodation as outlined in question 1 are also applicable.
- It should also be noted that DWP support and alternative training provision (including voluntary sector/private training organisations) maybe extremely limited or non existent within a rural and market town context, meaning that young people are having to commute into major cities to access provision and advice – and this prevents a barrier to social mobility for rural young people. For example, there is no DWP provision in Staffordshire Moorlands

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- FE colleges provide a clear transition route from schools to apprenticeships; higher vocational qualifications and HE and should be seen as one the principle routes for transition from school to work. They offer the advantage of peer-to-peer and trainer-to-student support which is often lacking in apprenticeships within small businesses; but also have a clear vocational remit and close business involvement in their programmes. For many young people aged 16-17, they offer a significantly better transition than school to full apprenticeship as they provide a transitional period for the student to mature, gain practical skills and learn employability skills.

- The expansion of apprenticeships, while welcomed in general terms, has clearly resulted in some job positions being ‘converted’ into lower paid apprenticeships (Apprentice Shop Assistant’ ‘Apprentice Warehouse Assistant) which were traditionally roles which are available to school leavers without having to obtain a formal qualification. Schools career advisers and young people view these as exploitive, as they are perceived as employers taking advantage of apprentices schemes so that they can pay them £2.73 an hour rather than minimum wage of £5.13. This is dissuading some young people from exploring apprenticeships altogether and has damaged the apprenticeship brand. It is also one of the key factors which is resulting in higher numbers of unfilled apprenticeship vacancies which we commonly see across High Peak and Staffordshire Moorlands. Rather than focusing on ‘how can employers be encouraged to employ more young people’ – we should be asking “how can we encourage more employers to employ more level 3 + apprenticeships’ and take on young people post A level who do not wish to proceed to HE”
- The expansion of lower level apprenticeship frameworks are also increasing confusion with employers - as some employers are reporting that they are unclear/dis-satisfied with the skills that young people have gained on previous apprenticeships.
- There needs to be much greater emphasis on Level 3 + apprenticeships to support business growth and most 12 month Level 2 apprenticeships (especially in more generic skills such as customer service, retail, business administration) should be reclassified under a broader definition of ‘traineeships.
- It is well recognised that there is a financial conflict of interest for schools with 6th forms in their support for alternative post 16 transition. This could be counter-balanced if a financial payment was introduced to the school to reward them for a successful external post 16 transition. (for example a payment made to school if young person completes L2/L3 course/apprenticeship externally). This would encourage schools to guide young people to a wider range of options and this could be paid for by reducing the over supply of A level provision. (In some towns, there are a number of small high schools which have extremely small 6th forms. This must be expensive to resource (as class sizes are small and technical equipment might not be available) and the number of subjects taught maybe extremely limited.
- Our understanding is that the funding formula given to schools, FE colleges and external training providers does not incentivise Level 3 + qualifications which are skill shortages. This could result in a lack of training provision which requires expensive equipment or where industry salaries are significantly above teaching pay grades. It would seem to be worth exploring if weighted payments to providers who provide training in technical skills such as engineering, electronics could be trialled.
- Focus on homelessness prevention alongside provision of adequate settled affordable accommodation and support to maintain accommodation in order to address the challenges outlined.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

While Schools and FE colleges have a clear role to play in supporting their students to find post 16 routes to long term employment, they are clear conflicts of interest built into the current system which incentivise them to fill their vacancies – and which can result in young people not accessing fully independent guidance.

While larger businesses may have the capacity and skills to play a key role in supporting job awareness and transition of young people, they are often unfamiliar with the broader local economy and the small and micro business sectors which make up over 80% of the job market.

We therefore see a key role for the public sector – in partnership with schools, FE/private sector training providers and employers – to facilitate a more robust transition process and which, if resourced appropriately, can ensure that young people are made more fully aware of opportunities within the economy and the skills and pathways needed to secure these opportunities.

14 September 2015

Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership – Written evidence (SMO0049)

9 September 2015

RESPONSE TO SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY CALL FOR EVIDENCE FROM THE LEEDS CITY REGION ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

- i) The Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership (LEP)'s business-led Employment and Skills Panel is grateful for the opportunity to respond to this consultation on an issue that is absolutely central to the LEP's ambitions. Our Skills Plan for 2012-2015ⁱ sets out our ambition to create a NEET free City Region, to prepare young people for work, and to help the City Region's residents to gain and progress in rewarding employment. We have structured our response to this consultation by beginning with a summary of the LEP's activity related to youth employment, building links between businesses and education, and apprenticeships. We have then provided detailed responses to the questions posed in your call for evidence, drawing on our experiences, feedback from businesses in Leeds City Region and robust labour market information.

- ii) Supporting young people not in education, employment and training (NEET) is a key part of the LEP and its Employment and Skills Panel's strategy for ensuring that everyone in the city region is able to benefit from economic growth. The LEP has secured devolved funding to address Youth Employment. This includes £4.6m Apprenticeships funding, £4.6m Headstart, £5.6m Devolved Youth Contract and £8m Big Lottery Funding for Talent Match (not directly under LEP control). We are delighted that the LEP's locally-managed devolved Youth Contract, which identifies 16 to 17 year-old NEETs to get them into employment, education or training has achieved excellent results. Almost 85% of young people engaged with the scheme have made further progress compared with the 65% engagement figure for the equivalent national scheme. We have achieved this transformational result through delivering tailored and intensive support that is responsive to the individual's circumstances and by engaging businesses to offer suitable opportunities in the local labour market to develop the workforce of the future. We have been able to respond to the need to support some young people on an ongoing basis to stay in work, including providing support with budgeting, transport and other issues. The percentage of young people classed as NEET in the City Region has fallen dramatically by 40% since 2012. Despite this excellent progress, the percentage of NEETS in Leeds City Region remains higher than the national average (2.5%). Currently, 3.2% (9,515) of LCR's total 18-24 population is in receipt of Jobseekers' Allowance and a growing number are classed as "unknowns" and are truly NEET. In Bradford, Leeds and Barnsley, GCSE results are – and have been for some time – below national average. Across LCR. Around 87 schools performed below the national average of 52.6 (A*-C) during 2013-14, almost half of our schools. We believe that youth employment activity is best commissioned locally in Leeds City Region and are keen to ensure that we can continue to work with business to design and tailor the support available to young people as a coherent offer, encouraging local businesses and sectors to "grow their own workforce".

- ii) One of our key priorities is to improve the relevance of learning within the City Region's schools, colleges, universities and other educational institutions and to help young people to prepare for opportunities needed in growth and priority sectors. There is a mismatch between the educational choices that young people are making and where job vacancies exist now and will exist in future (both due to the creation of new jobs and replacement demand). For example, sectors like manufacturing and logistics struggle to recruit in Leeds City Region and businesses face technical skills shortages particularly in engineering and software coding. Employers also complain about a lack of work-readiness among school leavers and graduates from college and University. In order to address these issues, we are working closely with careers advisers and schools to help them understand (and explain to young people and their parents) the career opportunities that exist in Leeds City Region and the pathways to accessing them. Businesses in Leeds City Region are keen to improve links between education and employers in order to better equip young people with the skills needed by industry. Our Enterprise Advisers programme links businesses volunteers with schools and helps schools to work directly with businesses on their careers and enterprise strategy as well as giving pupils real contact with businesses. We already have over 100 Enterprise Advisers and operate in 60 schools in the City Region, and will operate across 90 schools during 2015/16 and all schools in the Leeds City Region (approx. 180) by 2016/17.
- iv) Across the Leeds City Region, we are running a successful apprenticeship programme funded by City Deal wave 1 and supported by HRH The Duke of York, KG which over the last two years has enabled over 2,300 SMEs who have never offered apprenticeships before to create opportunities for young people and develop talent. The document 'Research and Reporting on the City Deal Apprenticeship Programme May 2015'ⁱⁱ highlights the good and effective practice that has been put in place through the local partnership approach to the LEP City Deal programme to enhance apprenticeship opportunities. A range of written and filmed case studies and interviews with businesses and young people that the programme has supported can be found at www.apprenticeship-hubs.co.uk demonstrating the impact that this locally delivered programme has had on SMEs and on young people's development and growth. Building on this work we will be using our devolution arrangements to implement the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) at a local level. Launching our programme on 1 August 2015, AGE is allowing us to encourage more of the 72,000 SMEs across the West Yorkshire Combined Authority geography to offer Apprenticeships. The arrangements will enable us to provide higher level apprenticeships and develop opportunities in fast growing sectors, such as manufacturing and digital – providing valuable employment opportunities for young people and making a significant contribution to our ambition for above-trend growth that drives the Northern Powerhouse and the nation's economy.
- iii) We welcome this consultation, and a debate about the different routes into rewarding employment for young people. We have included below our responses to the questions posed in the Select Committee's call for evidence. We would be delighted to provide further information about the work of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership and its Employment and Skills Panel should this be of interest.

- 1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace?**
- 1.a. We believe that too often young people's employment outcomes are negatively affected by a poor understanding among young people and their parents of the career opportunities that are (and will be in future) available to them in their local area, and the routes into those careers. For example, there is a widely held perception that the Manufacturing sector is in decline. However in Leeds City Region, due to the strength of the sector and a high level of replacement demand due to an aging workforce, employers are struggling to recruit to well-paid roles that could offer a route into an excellent career. We believe that up-to-date, impartial and locally relevant careers information advice and guidance is essential to combat these issues and are working closely with the local team of the National Careers and Enterprise Company, schools and careers advisers to provide accurate information based on robust intelligence. We are also aware of resistance from schools to raising awareness of routes other than A-Levels, particularly when they offer A-Levels themselves or where they are keen to see as many pupils as possible progress to University. A recent mapping exercise about careers and enterprise education within a sample of LCR secondary schools revealed that 77% of our schools audited aren't using labour market information to inform careers advice and 66% don't offer information about self-employment. Careers and enterprise activity isn't consistently available to all students – often it is targeted at either Gifted and Talented or disadvantaged groups in isolation.
- 1.b. We are also concerned that in some cases the availability of provision, particularly in Further Education (FE) isn't sufficiently aligned with economic need and therefore too many places are offered that will not lead to employment opportunities, and insufficient provision is available in priority subject areas. We are in favour of an employer-led skills system and employer leadership is a central principle in all of our work. We feel that the current system is primarily led by learner demand and leads too many young people to choose courses that are unlikely to lead to employment.
- 1.c. In some cases, particularly where technology is moving quickly, course content can be out of date or not relevant to employer requirements. Employers also report that they are reluctant to employ young people due to a lack of work readiness, including "softer" skills including timekeeping, working as part of a team, and writing and addressing people in a professional manner. We support the involvement of employers in all parts of the skills and education system, including sponsoring equipment and projects and getting involved with the design and delivery of courses in schools, colleges and Universities. In Leeds City Region there are some excellent examples of employers working with schools to ensure that technical content is appropriate for business needs, and preparing young people for the world of work including the planned Leeds University Technical Collegeⁱⁱⁱ sponsored by Kodak, Siemens, Agfa, Unilever, EEF, Leeds Chamber of Commerce and the University of Leeds.

- 2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and Higher Education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**
- 2.a. A number of young people engaged in locally funded programmes have left education without strong qualifications and have experienced difficulties at school due to mild or moderate learning difficulties, issues of low self-esteem and a general lack of career focus. Housing issues have also started to be more prevalent with young people struggling to focus on work, career or training. Local programmes are flexible to enable these issues to be identified and work towards addressing them, to support the realistic aspirations of young people and provide sustainable employment and/or training.
- 2.b. We are concerned that young people are still entering jobs without training and working part-time in low skilled and low-paid jobs. We are also aware that some young people not in education employment and training are being supported by their parents and aren't accounted for in NEET figures.
- 2.c. As indicated in our response to question 1, too many young people are choosing courses that are unlikely to lead to employment. We believe that young people should have the information required to make an informed choice about their educational choices and that all vocational courses should offer a direct line of sight to work at all levels.
- 2.d. On a more positive note, significant numbers of young people aged 14-24 in Leeds City Region are enrolled on apprenticeships or other vocational courses that do offer a direct line of sight to rewarding employment opportunities. It is a commonly held misbelief that any young person who does not follow the A-Level and Higher Education route has failed. On the contrary, there are excellent vocational routes into growing sectors in Leeds City Region such as Manufacturing and Digital industries. Unfortunately this is still not well enough understood and employers – particularly SMEs – struggle to recruit. A key challenge for the LEP and its Employment and Skills Panel is to raise awareness of these opportunities. Our employers tell us that they are deeply concerned about the perceived lower status of technical education routes and we welcome efforts to create parity of esteem between vocational and academic routes. We believe that both Universities and Colleges must play a key role in the delivery of vocational education (including Higher Apprenticeships and Degree Apprenticeships) and are keen to encourage collaboration between the sectors to ensure that the offer in Leeds City Region is aspirational and sufficiently vocational to meet businesses' and learners' requirements.
- 3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and Higher Education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?**

- 3.a. As we have indicated in our response to the questions above, we believe that young people perform best in terms of employment outcomes when they are able to make informed choices about their education based on up to date, accurate and local information about career opportunities now and in the future; when they are able to act on honest and impartial information about the best routes into those careers; when they are able to develop the technical and softer skills that employers are looking for; and when they have meaningful contact with employers throughout their educational experience which allows them to prepare for the world of work.
- 3.b. The points noted above are equally important for young people progressing into work from the A Level and Higher Education route as they are for young people who don't choose this route. Employers tell us that they are frequently dissatisfied with the technical skills and work readiness of graduates, and indeed often find that an apprenticeships are better prepared for the work of work than graduates.
- 3.c. Young people who have been NEET may face multiple barriers to accessing and staying in work. As we have indicated above, we are delighted that our devolved youth employment programmes in Leeds City Region have been so effective. We have found that as well as tailored localised support, these young people sometimes need support on an ongoing basis to then stay in work, including support with budgeting, transport and other issues.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and Higher Education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- 4.a. We believe strongly that there should be meaningful contact between schools and businesses. Employers in Leeds City Region are keen to improve links between education and employers in order to better equip young people with the skills needed by businesses and to help young people prepare for work. Our Enterprise Advisers programme links businesses volunteers with schools and helps schools to work directly with businesses on their careers and enterprise strategy as well as giving pupils real contact with businesses. We already have over 100 Enterprise Advisers and operate in 60 schools in the City Region, and will operate across approx. 180 schools by 2016/17. We are also working with businesses who allow their Apprentices to act as Young Ambassadors who visit schools and speak about their experiences of the Apprenticeship route. Despite some excellent practice, there is still more that can be done to embed employers in the education and skills system, including schools, colleges and universities.
- 4.b. We are keen to improve the alignment between the supply of courses and current and future demand from businesses in order to ensure that young people embarking on a course have a realistic chance of getting a job on completion, particularly young people who do not choose the A-Level/HE route. We have a close and mature relationship with the City Region's FE sector who set up the pioneering Leeds City Region Skills Network in 2012 in order best to respond to the economic priorities identified by the LEP and its

Employment and Skills Panel. We have recently established a Headteachers' Network to improve links between the LEP and schools, and to help schools to understand more about the economy that they are preparing young people to work in. The LEP produces high quality labour market information enabling the FE sector and schools to respond. We will further build on this strong track record of collaborative working following the Government's agreement under the Leeds City Region and West Yorkshire devolution deal to re-commission provision for the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to ensure that a new, forward-looking Further Education (FE) system is in place by 2017, and the announcement that a series of Area Based Reviews will be launched as soon as September 2015.

4.c. As part of our Headstart project, we have been working with employment agencies to break down barriers between young people and commercial employment agencies. We have found that young people's perceptions of employment opportunities available to them needs to improve. Close collaboration between with JCP, employment agencies, young people and Local Authorities has paid dividends in terms of exploiting available opportunities across all sectors for young people looking for work. Partnerships are crucial in maximising the support, provision and opportunities for young people who have not followed the mainstream routes.

5. **Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?**

5.a. There are of course many organisations that should play a role in supporting the transition into work for school leavers. The Leeds City Region Enterprise Partnership believes that it should play a leading role in the following aspects:

- Ensuring that careers information advice and guidance is impartial, up to date and locally relevant. This could include direct commissioning of the regional National Careers and Enterprise Company regional activity by the LEP.
- Providing leadership for business/school engagement to ensure that schools understand the requirements of local businesses and are able to prepare pupils for the world of work.
- Ensuring that there is alignment between the supply of (particularly vocational) provision and demand from businesses to ensure that learners have a clear line of sight to employment and a realistic chance of finding work. Through the recently announced Area Based Reviews, the LEP will play a leading role in ensuring that FE provision meets the needs of businesses and learners. In order to be as meaningful as possible, these reviews should also include school and University provision.
- Promoting technical routes into employment including higher vocational education.
- Responsibility for locally responsive and delivered support for NEETs including to support them to sustain employment. Coordination of apprenticeship marketing

at LEP level to ensure that young people, their parents and business are aware of the opportunities presented by apprenticeships.

- Identifying future employment opportunities in Leeds City Region and ensuring that young people have the (technical and softer/transferable) skills that will be required to access these opportunities.

14 September 2015

Local Government Association – Written evidence (SMO0011)

1. About the Local Government Association

- 1.1. The Local Government Association (LGA) is the national voice of local government. We work with councils to support, promote and improve local government. We are a politically-led, cross party organisation which works on behalf of councils to ensure local government has a strong, credible voice with national government.
- 1.2. We aim to influence and set the political agenda on the issues that matter to councils so they are able to deliver local solutions to national problems. The LGA covers every part of England and Wales, supporting local government as the most efficient and accountable part of the public sector.

2. Summary

- 2.1. Falling unemployment figures disguise the increase in long-term unemployment and underemployment for young people. They are failed by the structural problems of a complex market of post-16 provision, a skills mismatch between training and the needs of local employers, and a lack of independent careers advice.
- 2.2. Currently there are around 40 different national schemes, services and payments costing in the region of £15 billion each year, delivered by 10 national departments or agencies, across 14 different age boundaries. Complexity across services confuses responsibility for the overall long-term outcomes for young people. As a result there is little strategic planning.
- 2.3. Many larger employers complain of relentless new initiatives by education providers competing for their attention and calling on their time, while many smaller employers receive no contact at all. The approach risks marginalising employers, increasing the difficulty of engaging them in creating opportunities for young people.
- 2.4. There are different skills gaps in different areas of the country, as the training opportunities do not match with the needs of local employers. Councils have strong relationships with their local employers and an understanding of local economies and so are best placed to broker the provision of training.
- 2.5. High quality impartial careers advice is needed to help young people navigate complex learning options and prepare for ever more challenging youth jobs market.
- 2.6. Schools and colleges have been put in a difficult position of having to provide pupils with impartial advice in a competitive market, while many hold a financial interest in the decisions students take.⁴² Furthermore, schools have been given insufficient clarity about what pupils should expect to receive, little support to implement the duty and upskill staff to commission and provide advice services, and insufficient incentive through the Ofsted framework.

⁴² [16- to 18-year-old participation in education and training](#), National Audit Office, 2014

- 2.7. National Careers Service (NCS) provision to young people is weak and adds further fragmentation and confusion. In its first year the NCS had just 27,500 contacts from 16- to 18-year-olds, equivalent to just 1.4 per cent of the age group
- 2.8. The Government must take a number of immediate steps to guarantee every young person the support they need to make positive choices. In addition, longer term reform of all services supporting youth transitions to work will be increasingly unavoidable.
- 2.9. The LGA is calling for a localised Youth Offer, planned and delivered by councils and Jobcentre Plus, using existing budgets. This would provide a single journey for disadvantaged young people to transition to employment. Within the Youth Offer all 14-21 year olds in education, training or work would be guaranteed access to careers and employment advice and experience. Every young person not learning or earning will have support into training, an apprenticeship or sustained employment.

3. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

- 3.1. Our young people face a number of structural barriers which are leading to higher levels of long-term unemployment and underemployment. These challenges include navigating the complexity of post-16 provision, a mismatch between the training available and the skills needs of local employers, and a lack of independent careers advice.
- 3.2. Around 2.5 million young people are unemployed or underemployed, approximately 40 per cent of the youth population. This is much greater for young people than adults. It also varies significantly around the country.
- 3.3. The number of young people unemployed for less than three months has stayed relatively constant since 2005. However, youth unemployment has largely been driven by young people remaining unemployed for longer periods. 220,000 have been unemployed for over a year increasing by 225 per cent since 2005, and 90,000 young people have been looking for work for over two years, a 330 per cent increase since 2005.⁴³
- 3.4. Over 200,000 young people who are unemployed and not participating in education do not claim Jobseekers Allowance and so receive no Government support back into work. This has increased by nearly 20 per cent since 2012.⁴⁴
- 3.5. Youth unemployment is a structural issue that will not be resolved by economic growth alone. It was rising before the recession, increasing from 12 per cent in 2003 to 14.6 per cent in 2007⁴⁵.
- 3.6. Young people with low or no qualifications are particularly poorly placed to benefit

⁴³ [LGA Youth Transitions Report](#) Page 10

⁴⁴ Office of National Statistics, October 2014, Inclusion analysis

⁴⁵ [LGA Youth Transitions Report Page](#) 13

from growth. Compared with the national average, employment rates for young people with low or no qualifications and young people not in full-time education have been declining steadily since 2005. Over the same period, the employment rates of other disadvantaged groups, such as lone parents and the disabled, have increased.

- 3.7. Young people's disadvantage in the jobs market is long-term and has been further entrenched by the recession. Recent falls are welcome but unemployment is still far too high and underemployment poses significant challenges.
- 3.8. Every individual is different and every place is different. Beneath global, European and national economic and social trends, the economic downturn has had a differential impact on people and the places in which they live. Similarly, growth will look and feel very different across the country. Some young people were able to prosper during the recession, others struggled but are well placed to benefit from growth, but some are squeezed out of opportunities and will struggle to ever fully recover. It is this last group that councils are most concerned about.
- 3.9. Successive administrations have sought to manage the relationships with employers on skills training through multiple departments in Whitehall. This has not worked for the majority of employers. It has created a supply-driven model encouraging thousands of institutions to separately seek out employers to source opportunities for young people primarily to meet national criteria, rather than the needs of employers.
- 3.10. LGA analysis reveals a significant gap between skills levels across all sectors in the economy. The labour market must dramatically upskill to meet the demands of employers up to 2022, equivalent to increasing everyone from an equivalent average of five GCSEs to three A Levels.
- 3.11. The consequence of not meeting this challenge by 2022 will be 9.2 million low skilled people chasing 3.7 million jobs, and 12.6 million people with intermediate skills chasing 10.2 million jobs. Across the economy employers will struggle to recruit to the estimated 14.8 million high skilled jobs, with only 11.9 million high skilled workers.
- 3.12. If employers cannot recruit the skills and capabilities that they need up to 2022, between 16 and 25 per cent of potential growth – up to £375 billion of output – could be lost. This is bad for our workforce and bad for our economy. More should be done to equip younger generations to compete for jobs that will become available.⁴⁶
- 3.13. In order to achieve better outcomes and efficiencies, local partnerships should be empowered to broker local employer demand within the skills and employment system, and in return create the experience and learning opportunities that all young people need.
- 3.14. The Government and councils should work together to:
 - 3.14.1. Ensure that all employers can shape skills funding by transferring further education funding to local partnerships in line with the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act.

⁴⁶ Realising Talent, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, July 2014

3.14.2. Focus apprenticeship spending on young people not already in work and devolving the Apprenticeship Grant for Employers programme enabling councils to work with local employers to create opportunities for young people.

3.14.3. Reshape the relationship with employers to address the long-term challenges for young people in the labour market, including productivity, in-work progression, job security and pay.

4. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

4.1. Young people who do not follow the higher education route are poorly served by the complexity and fragmentation of post-16 provision. Currently there are around 40 different national schemes, services and payments costing in the region of £15 billion each year, delivered by 10 national departments or agencies, across 14 different age boundaries.⁴⁷

4.2. Complexity across services confuses responsibility for the overall long-term outcomes for young people. As a result there is little strategic planning and little sense of the balance between apprenticeships, further education, and other types of provision. There is little scope for young people, employers or Government to address duplication, gaps or underperformance. Tens of thousands of institutions are encouraged to focus on a range of national objectives that, without meaningful local involvement, can reinforce barriers between services around young people.

4.3. Councils are best placed to take a strategic view across places, mapping provision to understand where there is duplication and gaps, and to build relationships between institutions to ensure that they collectively serve young people and employers across an area. This view is shared by Ofsted, who have warned that nationally managed strategies have too often been poorly aligned with local delivery, recommending that clear lines of local accountability be established through councils or Local Enterprise Partnerships.

4.4. There has never been a greater financial case for public services to work together to strategically plan, use and target investment in places and the National Audit Office has warned that cuts to councils put Government's objectives to reengage young people at real risk⁴⁸.

4.5. The centralised public service model is poorly placed to adapt to further reductions while improving outcomes for young people. Blanket national budget reductions prevent partners from working together strategically to find savings and protect all young people. Instead they risk 'salami slicing' individual national budgets in a way that can intensify competition and reinforce the barriers between services, entrenching duplication and gaps that serve vulnerable young people least well.

⁴⁷ [LGA Youth Transitions Report](#) Page 16

⁴⁸ 16 to 18 year old participation in education and training, National Audit Office, 2014

4.6. This is happening to some extent already. The Government's protection of pre-16 budgets has concentrated 12 per cent reductions in post-16 learning and subsequently led to further 18 per cent funding reduction for all 18-year-olds. These reductions, combined with pressure on schools to focus on academic achievement, have the greatest impact on pupils who struggle in academic learning and reinforce the gap between pre- and post-16 institutions and academic and vocational learning.

5. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

5.1. Whitehall continues to emphasise the importance of employer engagement in helping young people prepare for the world of work, but with little consideration of how to best achieve it in practice. There are 2.23 million local businesses units across England. 99 per cent employ fewer than 100 people and all want a simple and supportive route into the employment system.⁴⁹

5.2. Successive governments have sought to manage public service relationships with employers through multiple departments. It has created a complex supply-driven model, encouraging thousands of institutions to separately seek out employers to source opportunities for young people in order to fulfil national funding or performance criteria, rather than to support employers to grow.

5.3. Providers have been incentivised through the national funding system to create large numbers of apprenticeship placements without giving sufficient consideration to the needs of different groups of young people (particularly more vulnerable groups), the skills demands of smaller employers, or the wider local economy.

5.4. This has a different impact on large and small employers. Many larger employers complain of relentless new initiatives by providers competing for their attention and calling on their time, while many smaller employers receive no contact at all. The approach risks marginalising employers, increasing the difficulty of engaging them in creating opportunities for young people.

5.5. Every young person should be supported to make positive and productive post-16 choices that are right for them as individuals and allow them to thrive in the jobs market.

5.6. Allowing young people to take poorly-informed decisions about their career can have long-term repercussions, which cost them and the economy. In particular, it can lead to increased disengagement and course drop out, lower levels of achievement, and generate skills mismatches.

5.7. Post-16 learning options are becoming more complex and difficult to navigate as a market of schools, sixth forms, further education (FE) colleges, university technical colleges (UTCs) and apprenticeship providers all independently compete for young people.

⁴⁹ [LGA Youth Transitions Report](#) Page 23

- 5.8. Demand from poorly informed young people risks entrenching local skills mismatches in a national funding model. It creates barriers for FE colleges to respond to local employer demand in the short and medium term. As a result, learning can be dominated by courses with low labour market value that are poorly placed to help young people to benefit from growth
- 5.9. Labour market trends have complicated education to work transitions and the ‘job for life’ is disappearing. The pathway to sustainable employment is longer, and bumpier, and more likely to include periods of underemployment, insecure and temporary employment. Careers support into the right job, rather than any job, is important for young people entering the jobs market for the first time, together with the development of resilience and career management skills to adapt and switch careers.
- 6. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?**
- 6.1. Central and local government must work together to ensure school leavers receive the support they need. The Government should devolve responsibility for skills to local government, supported by a coherent national strategy for youth transitions that focuses on:
- 6.1.1. **Helping the vulnerable by reducing complexity and intervening early:** Successive administrations have built up a range of initiatives that trip over each other in trying to reach young people, incentivise partners to focus on the easiest to help, and create barriers that mainstream services must overcome to work together in helping them.
- 6.1.2. **Matching skills and training to local economies:** Young people not pursuing the university route need a clearer track from education into the world of work. The post 16 learning landscape is increasingly fragmented and centralised, with little scope for institutions to collectively engage and meet the needs of local employers, and patchy advice for young people to navigate it. As a result, the skills gap is widening and teenage apprenticeships are falling.
- 6.1.3. **Responding to young peoples’ lengthening transition into work:** Services must adapt to a new youth jobs market, which includes periods of underemployment, insecure employment, and unemployment. A half of all unemployed young people not in education receive no official help, those that do are poorly served by a benefits system designed to help adults into any job as soon as possible.
- 6.2. Evidence from the City Deals, the Troubled Families programme, the Raising of the Participation Age, as well as local initiatives, demonstrate that local delivery makes the difference.⁵⁰
- 6.3. To refocus services around the long-term outcomes all local areas should be able to commission and plan their post-16 provision in a way that responds to local economic priorities. This will unlock the knowledge and expertise of partnerships of schools,

⁵⁰ [LGA Youth Transitions Report](#) Page 7

colleges and councils to collaborate around local employers' skills needs and young people. This will fulfil the original intention of the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 and enable local areas to address challenges raised by Ofsted and the NAO.⁵¹

- 6.4. To help the Government increase the number of apprenticeships for young people, the Government should devolve funds to allow **all areas to develop** local apprenticeship hubs, bringing partners together to match employer needs and young people's abilities. Funds should include Apprenticeship Grant for Employers, Trailblazers for higher apprenticeships, Employer e-vouchers, and a proportion of the apprenticeship levy. Our proposal creates better alignment of investment in training with the skills and jobs in demand, promote take-up and offer subsidies in priority and shortage areas.

- 6.5. The Government's establishment of the new Youth Obligation for 18-21 year olds acknowledges that young people have been poorly served by an adult benefit system. To succeed it should be integrated and delivered through a localised Youth Offer,⁵² planned and delivered by councils and Jobcentre Plus, using existing budgets. This could provide a single journey for disadvantaged young people to transition to employment. Within the Youth Offer all 14-21 year olds in education, training or work would be guaranteed access to careers and employment advice and experience, and every young person not learning or earning will have support into training, an apprenticeship or sustained employment.

27 August 2015

⁵¹ National Audit Office, July 2015

⁵² Realising Talent: a new framework for devolved employment and skills, March 2015

London Councils – Written evidence (SMO0057)

1. This document provides the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility with the views of London Councils Young People’s Education and Skills Board in response to the Committee’s inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14 to 24 year olds.
2. London Councils is committed to fighting for more resources for London and getting the best possible deal for London’s 33 councils. We develop policy, lobby government and others, and run a range of services designed to make life better for Londoners.
3. London Councils hosts the London Young People's Education and Skills Board⁵³, the lead strategic body for 14 to 19 education and training services in London. We provide pan-London leadership for 14 to 19 education and training provision in relation to the current and future needs of learners and employers, support local authorities in undertaking their statutory functions, and assist other stakeholders in planning, policy and provision.
4. The Board, made up of key stakeholders and chaired by the London Councils Executive Member for Children, Skills and Employment, works for London's boroughs, guiding and supporting them in their local commissioning. Working closely with the London Enterprise Panel, we bring together key stakeholders from across London to help deliver the region's priorities and to influence and shape the learning provision on offer to young people
5. We are therefore a unique body - the only forum that brings together the organisations that have responsibility for post-16 education and skills in London.
6. This means that our assessment of the needs of London is forged not only out of the varied perspectives of many different organisations, but through a vast body of research and analysis tested by the sector’s collective experience.

Introduction

7. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Committee’s Inquiry. The Committee is concerned about those young people who sit between those who go on to university and those who are not in education, employment or training (NEET). We share this concern.

⁵³ <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/our-key-themes/children-and-young-people/14-19-young-peoples-education-and-skills>

8. Our answers to the Committee's questions are founded on our analysis of an extensive body of evidence. Our submission is based on a summary of this evidence and on the shared experiences of our member organisations.

9. On this basis, we are confident in our opinion that many young people – those who can be referred to as 'middle-attainers' – are not achieving their full potential. This is a situation that has persisted for some time and has escaped a clear policy focus, but is now becoming a major issue. However, it is a subject that has risen up the agenda of London's leadership where action is now being taken.

10. Unfortunately, there are elements of government policy and priorities that militate against local action. Among the most pressing are:

- Changes to the system of careers education, information, advice and guidance introduced by the coalition government have not served young people well. We advocate a right to face-to-face careers guidance and a careers curriculum that provides 100 hours of experience of the world of work for all young people;
- Changes in the funding of education and training for young people aged over 18 (whether in school, college, university or other training provision) have reduced the attractiveness of progression and continuing learning, especially from less well-off families;
- Dilution of the role of local authorities in the education system has served to increase the fragmentation of support to young people and businesses. Concentration of funding decisions within central government and its agencies has worked against the integration of education, skills, employment and welfare to the benefit of young people, their families, local businesses and communities.

11. In preparing this response, we have referred in the main to published official statistics and research that we or our key partners have commissioned, in particular:

- "London Ambitions: Shaping a successful careers offer for all young Londoners" (June 2015)
- "The higher education journey of young London residents in a changing landscape" (June 2015 and July 2014)
- "What is happening with 17+ participation, attainment and progression in London? (Summary of findings)" (October 2014); also the three specialist contributory papers covering: Colleges in London (September 2014); "Risk factors and strategies to support students in schools" (October 2013) and "Schools in London" (October 2013)
- "Pioneering careers work in London" (September 2013)
- "Rebuilding and extending 14-19 partnership working in London to improve participation, progression and transition for young people" (May 2013)

12. Each of our responses to the Committee's questions is supported by an annex that provides supporting information.

Question 1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

13. Our research, supported by a number of other studies and reports, shows that:

- Openings for young people are still very dependent on their background; too often young people are unaware of the range of possibilities open to them; and family background is still a big indicator of whether or not a young person will enter Higher Education;
- While attainment of GCSEs has improved significantly in London, there are still many young people who do not achieve good enough grades either to progress to further study at Level 3 or to enter employment (with or without training/an apprenticeship);
- Moreover, educators inform us that the new requirement for young people who do not achieve at least GCSE grade C in English and mathematics to retake these subjects post-16 is proving counterproductive for some students. While we support the need for all young people to gain competence in English and maths, the current GCSE qualifications are unsuitable, even unattainable, for some young people. Under these circumstances, retakes can contribute to a sense of failure and potentially deter young adults from future learning;
- Changes in skills needs make it more difficult for some young people to access the labour market;
- Unemployment 'scars' young people particularly badly; it shakes their confidence and this can often have a long-term, even transgenerational, effect;
- Even those with good qualifications face stiff competition for the best paid jobs (international competition in London);
- There is a gap in the supply of appropriate vocational and occupational skills - this a particular issue in London where the vast majority of secondary schools have sixth forms and deliver a predominantly A level curriculum that does not always meet the needs of young Londoners and its employers;
- Closer integration of central government initiatives would assist effective implementation of local solutions;
- Local leadership of the education system best supports collaboration between institutions and employers in the interests of young people.

Question 2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young

people in this group - who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

14. Our analysis of the situation in London confirms that:

- Many young people are following other vocational courses as a route into Higher Education;
- Whilst Apprenticeships feature as a route for 16 to 24 year olds, the take-up of Apprenticeships is relatively low in England, and this is especially so in London;
- Changes to the assessment framework for GCSEs/A Levels and to the accountability measures for schools and colleges encourage institutions to work closely with students who are at risk of failing, especially in key subjects, or those students who have the potential to achieve a place in Russell Group universities. 'Middle attainers' - those who, with additional support, could go beyond basic pass grades at A Level - are not necessarily prioritised for the support that could open up for them a place in further/higher learning and a solid career path;
- Although there has been improvement in GCSE achievements, there are still many young people who (a) do not achieve at least grade C in any subject; (b) do not achieve a full Level 2 [i.e. five GCSEs graded at least C]; (c) do not achieve a full level 2 that includes English and mathematics. These young people usually take at least the first year of their post-16 education and training catching-up on their lost ground;
- Restoring longitudinal surveys of young people would help demonstrate the effectiveness of policies, particularly local policies.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

15. We have found that:

- The shift towards a higher-skilled workforce is likely to accelerate - young people need to have far better careers advice (so that they can make informed decisions about the courses best able to meet their needs) and there needs to be a better supply of courses that develop technical, vocational and professional skills;
- There is an issue around transition at age 17 - the system does not work well for those (capable) young people who want to change direction, in particular the 25 per cent of young people (in London) that spend a year in school sixth form and then seek alternative learning;
- Neither London nor the UK as a whole is unique - the issues being investigated by the Committee are common internationally.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

16. In exploring the issues raised by the Committee, we have found that:

- Young people and their families need to be confident that the education and training system will enable them to achieve their ambitions. Parents/carers and young people need help to understand that A Levels are not the only option - embracing different options and recognising that there are many routes - not just university - to the working world will require a culture change;
- London's leadership is improving the system for providing careers education, information, advice and guidance;
- Businesses need to be encouraged to offer more Apprenticeships, particularly Higher Apprenticeships, but it will be very damaging if the expansion of Apprenticeships comes at the expense of their quality;
- Business involvement in education in London is increasing and it is being made easier for business and education to work together, but the national systems of education, skills, employment and welfare could work better for young people.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

17. Our analysis shows that:

- The main responsibilities for ensuring that young people remain in learning lie with local authorities and schools;
- Action in the future will need to bring into play a broader partnership that works in the interests of young people.

Annex One: Supporting Information – Question One

At first glance, the educational achievements of young people seem to be improving:

1.1 We believe that education has historically been a great leveller in society – offering opportunities for young people to improve their life-chances. The government's statistics on educational attainment⁵⁴ show that 69.3% of young people achieved a level 2 qualification at the age of 16, rising to 87.0% by the age of 19 (that is, 17.7% of young people achieve a level 2 qualification between the ages of 16 and 18); in other words, nearly one third of young people do not achieve level 2 by the age of 16 and about one in eight do not do so by the age of 19.

⁵⁴ SFR11/15: "Level 2 and 3 attainment by young people aged 19 in 2014", ONS, London, 31st March 2015
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/level-2-and-3-attainment-by-young-people-aged-19-in-2014>

The same statistics also show that 59.9% of young people achieve level 3 by the age of 19 – or, put another way, approximately four in ten young people do not achieve level 3 by the age of 19.

Improved performance is not evenly attained by all young people:

1.2 The educational performance of young Londoners, measured by GCSE attainment, has been transformed since the introduction of ‘London Challenge’ in 2003. London Challenge was launched by the then government in 2003. At that time, London’s education system was underperforming when compared with other parts of the country – when judged mainly by comparing students’ achievements of five GCSEs at grades A*-C and the differential performance of students with different backgrounds. Through London Challenge, using the same measurements, performance improved and in 2010 Ofsted reported that London had a higher proportion of good and outstanding schools than any other area in England⁵⁵. The Centre for London and the Centre for British Teachers Educational Trust (CfBT) produced a report that evaluated the effect of London Challenge (Baars et al, 2014)⁵⁶ and found that:

“The research shows that the success of London schools cannot be explained in terms of the ‘contextual’ advantages that London has over the rest of England - factors such as gentrification, ethnicity and opportunity.

The improvement was assisted by a set of factors that we describe as ‘enabling’, these include issues relating to resourcing: finance, teacher recruitment and school building quality. Improvement in these areas enabled improvements to flourish but London’s success was not fundamentally caused by these factors.

Four key school improvement interventions provided the impetus for improvement - London Challenge, Teach First, the academies programme and improved support from local authorities. Our research identifies common features that link together all of these interventions:

- *a focus on data and data literacy;*
- *the need for a culture of accountability;*
- *the creation of a more professional working culture;*
- *a collective sense of possibility; and*
- *highly effective practitioner led professional development.*

The improvement of London schools also depended upon effective leadership at every level of the system.”

⁵⁵ Ofsted 2010: “London Challenge”, Ofsted, Manchester, December 2010 <http://dera.ioe.ac.uk/2143/1/London%20Challenge.pdf>

⁵⁶Baars et al, 2014: “Lessons from London schools: investigating the success”; Sam Baars, Eleanor Bernardes, Alex Elwick, Abigail Malortie, Tony McAleavy, Laura McInerney, Loic Menzies and Anna Riggall, Centre for London & CfBT, London, June 2014 <https://www.cfbt.com/~media/cfbtcorporate/files/research/2014/r-london-schools-2014.pdf>

1.3 This research concludes with seven key lessons from the success of London's schools which could be applied throughout the UK and internationally:

- Ensure that policy is based on hard evidence of effectiveness
- Maintain a sustained and consistent policy momentum for change over time
- Use performance data systematically to make the case for change
- Transform underperforming schools through well-managed, sector-led school improvement activities
- Develop an effective 'middle tier' to support sector-led improvement activity
- Ensure that teaching is a career of choice for talented and idealistic recruits
- Apply pressure for change through allowing market entry to new providers of education services”

1.4 The Institute for Government has also examined the learning points from London Challenge. Its report in 2014 (Kidson & Norris 2014)⁵⁷ recorded that:

“Our analysis shows that the implementation of the London Challenge successfully combined experimentation on the ground, rapid feedback and learning by advisers and officials, with strong project management across different strands of the policy. Over time, the centre of gravity for intervention shifted towards the teaching profession itself, with increasing ownership by senior practitioners driving sustainable improvements.”

1.5 A report by the University of London: Institute of Education in 2012 (Hodgson & Spours 2012 – commissioned by London Councils)⁵⁸ suggested that a closer examination of the trends in educational performance presented a more “unsettling picture”:

- a continued borough and intra-borough variability of performance at Key Stage 4;
- a dip in performance at 17+ related to problems of retention and attainment in AS/A Level;
- the recent lack of expansion of vocational provision post-16;
- low Apprenticeship involvement by 16-18 year olds despite their recent growth in the Capital;
- problematic labour market access for young Londoners because of the influx of highly qualified migrants from other parts of the UK and abroad and the relative absence of jobs for young people.”

⁵⁷ Kidson & Norris 2014: “Implementing the London Challenge”, Marc Kidson and Emma Norris, Institute for Government, London, July 2014

http://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/publications/Implementing%20the%20London%20Challenge%20-%20final_0.pdf

⁵⁸ Hodgson & Spours 2012: “Young people’s participation, progression and transition to higher study and work: a London perspective”, Professors A Hodgson and Ken Spours, Institute of Education, London, June 2012

http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/16387/1/London_Councils_Final_13_6_12_Final.pdf

1.6 The report cautioned that *“the balance of gains and inherited problems could be decisively tipped by current government reforms at each stage of the 14+ participation, progression and transition process – changes to qualifications, institutional autonomy and diversity, the removal of the EMA, higher education fees and continuing austerity.”*

There are solutions to the employment challenge of young people

1.7 London Councils is keenly aware of the employment challenge facing young people in the capital. In 2013 (Harrison 2013)⁵⁹, we noted that there is now:

- Intense competition for jobs
- Weaker work incentives and support programmes
- A lack of integration between London’s skills system and the needs of business and employers
- Diversity in London’s labour market

1.8 We have proposed devolution and reform of London’s public services to deal with the future challenges that the capital and its residents will face. In particular, we have proposed three models for a new relationship between central and local government that can maximise our collective impact in skills and employment (Harrison 2015)⁶⁰. These are:

- Co-commissioning and co-design of specialist employment support;
- Partnership delivery of specialist employment support;
- Local leadership and control of specialist employment support.

Gaining the skills that they need to get on in work and life is important for young people:

1.9 Looking at young people in particular, our research - delivered in partnership with Higher Education Research Institutions - concentrates on the participation of young people in education and training; their achievements as a result of education and training; and their progression into employment or further and higher study. We have found that:

“Many ‘vulnerable’ post-16 learners will take three years rather than two to reach the goal of a Level 3 outcome. A collaborative project is recommended to help schools and colleges to actively plan three-year study programmes that will involve a mixing of general and vocational study post-16 and the introduction of level 2.5 programmes (a mix of Level 2 and Level 3 qualifications). This will also require financial support from government by restoring the full

⁵⁹ Harrison J 2013: “Getting London Working”, Jane Harrison, London Councils, London, April 2013
<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/download/file/fid/4153>

⁶⁰ Harrison 2015: J Harrison, “Reforming Employment Support”, London Councils, London, March 2015
<http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/download/file/fid/15181>

funding for 18 year olds and building on the current 16-19 Study Programmes policy.” (Hodgson and Spours 2014)⁶¹

1.10 Findings during the same programme of research showed that⁶² General Further Education Colleges (GFEs) and Sixth-Form Colleges (SFCs) in London “*play a fundamental role in ensuring that outcomes for young people at the end of the 16 to 19 phase are, in many ways, better than the national average. This applies to 16, 17 and 18+ educational participation, attainment of three A Levels and participation in higher education. However, London lags in terms of participation in Apprenticeships and in the quality of Level 3 attainment measured in terms of A Level points per candidate...GFEs are the largest single provider for 16 to 18 year olds, although they have been slightly losing their share to schools in the past year or so. This is particularly the case at 16, but less so at 17 and 18. SFCs, on the other hand, have slightly increased their share of 16 to 18 year olds...London colleges (GFE and SFC) accommodate higher proportions of students from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and with lower GCSE attainments compared with 11 to 18 schools. They also tend to take students who at 17+ leave a school sixth form. That is why we suggest that many Level 3 learners in London’s colleges could be termed ‘vulnerable’*”

1.11 In London, therefore, much of the improved attainment of residents between the ages of 16 and 19 can be attributed to Further Education. Many young people are not starting full level 3 courses until the age of 17.

More young people are choosing paths other than A Level to get into Higher Education:

1.12 Our research shows there is also evidence that more young people are choosing paths other than A Level to enter into Higher Education (HE). Research conducted by the Continuum Research Centre for Widening Participation Policy Studies at the University of East London, in collaboration with London Councils and the London Borough of Newham, (Tindell, Weeden & Storan 2015)⁶³, shows that:

“more than half (of London young people) progressed to HE from schools sixth forms, and the numbers are increasing year on year. Although the vast majority of students are progressing from A level programmes, there has been a significant increase in the number progressing from other Level 3 programmes”.

⁶¹ Hodgson & Spours 2014: “17+ participation, attainment and progression in London Summary Report: Key findings and recommendations”, Professors A Hodgson & K Spours (University of London: Institute of Education), London Councils, London, October 2014 <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/6563>

⁶² Hodgson & Spours 2014A: “What is happening with 17+ participation, attainment and progression in London? Report 3: Colleges in London” Professors A Hodgson & K Spours (University of London: Institute of Education), London Councils, London, September 2014 <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/6562>

⁶³ Tindell, Weeden & Storan 2015: “The higher education journey of young London residents”, G Tindell, S Weeden and Professor J Storan, London Councils, London, July 2015

1.13 In terms of participation, the same research reports that

“The numbers of young London residents progressing to higher education increased steadily for a number of years prior to the introduction of the new student funding regime in 2012/13. The higher tuition fees resulted in 9,000 fewer young people in London accessing higher education – a reduction of 13.3% on the previous year. There has been a 7% recovery across London in 2013/14, but the numbers of young people participating has not quite recovered to the levels of 2008/09.”

There is a gap in the supply of appropriate vocational and occupational skills:

1.14 We are conscious of the continuing issue of skills shortages and the reported lack of young people with appropriate skills.

1.15 London Councils shares the concerns of businesses who have pointed to the contradiction of the growing London economy demanding skilled labour, but London’s young people lacking appropriate skills and experience. In many cases, this is not because young people do not have qualifications – it is because either they do not have the right, appropriate qualifications or, more often, because they do not possess the ‘employability skills’ that enable them to secure and sustain employment. The ‘Business Backs Education’ Summit (held in London on 13 October 2014) set out five ‘London Asks’:

- promotion of careers education programmes;
- providing work experience for young people in years 10 to 13;
- supporting schools and colleges in designing their careers education;
- exhibiting at Skills London; and
- creating and promoting Apprenticeships to London schools and colleges.

1.16 Our involvement in the field of careers education and guidance has had two strands. First, to point out weaknesses in government policy; for example we provided evidence to the education select committee in its inquiry into careers guidance⁶⁴. Secondly, we have provided practical advice on how careers advice and guidance can be improved⁶⁵ and, with the London Enterprise Panel, called on all involved in careers education to provide young people in London with excellent career and employment support, regardless of their background or the

⁶⁴ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmeduc/632/121031.htm>

⁶⁵ “Pioneering Careers Work in London”, London Councils, London September 2013 <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/3913>

school or college they attend. Following extensive research and consultation, the report into this work (LEP 2015)⁶⁶ makes seven proposals:

1. Access to impartial, independent and personalised careers education, information, advice and guidance
2. At least 100 hours of experiences in the world of work for all young Londoners and a personalised digital portfolio
3. An explicit published careers policy and careers curriculum in every secondary school and college
4. A governor with oversight for ensuring the institution supports all students to relate their learning to careers and the world of work from an early age
5. Up-to-date, user-friendly labour market intelligence/information
6. Formation and development of 'careers clusters' across London
7. The London Ambitions Portal

1.17 *London Ambitions*⁶⁷ has set itself the challenge of bringing together the diverse programmes that businesses offer for schools and colleges.

1.18 Businesses are becoming increasingly involved in the development of the curriculum and their input is crucial to the improvement of vocational learning in London. They provide experience of work; opportunities to develop employability skills; mentoring; internships; Traineeships and Apprenticeships. They help set standards to which young people must aspire in order to enter, sustain and thrive in work. Young people provide businesses with skills, talent and energy that fuel business competitiveness.

Some of the changes in national policy could work against closing the gap between those young people who start off with an advantage and those who do not.

1.19 Our efforts to respond to the needs of young people and businesses have, to some extent, been frustrated by responsibilities for national policy regarding the education, training, employment and social mobility of young people being divided between various government departments. During the Coalition, the then government published a summary of the various initiatives that affected young people aged 13 -19⁶⁸. Since then, responsibility for youth policy transferred from the Department for Education to the Cabinet Office (3rd July 2013). To an outsider, each department gives the appearance of following its remit without regard to the effect on other departments, nor on young people, their families, the community or businesses.

⁶⁶ LEP 2015: "London Ambitions: Shaping a successful careers offer for all young Londoners", London Enterprise Panel/Mayor of London and London Councils, London, July 2015
http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Policy%20themes/Children%20and%20young%20people/Shaping_Report_Interim_19_June_SP.pdf

⁶⁷ <https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/schools-and-education/for-teachers/london-ambition/about-london-ambitions>

⁶⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/175496/DFE-00133-2011.pdf

1.20 Our appraisal of the effects of government policy on young Londoners is informed by our close partnership with University College London: Institute of Education (IoE) and, in particular, the work of Professors Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours⁶⁹. They have concluded:

“Using a range of national statistical sources and findings from local studies we will suggest that policy - curriculum and qualifications changes; encouragement of institutional competition and the imposition of funding cuts on post-16 education - could have profound effects on ‘middle attainers’, their horizons for action and patterns of 14-19 participation, attainment and progression.”⁷⁰

Annex Two: Supporting Information – Question Two

Despite many national, regional and local initiatives to boost the take-up of Apprenticeships, the level of participation is still very low, especially in London.

2.1 Take-up of Apprenticeships in London has for some time been low when compared to the rest of the country and the latest statistics show that in London approximately 27.6 per cent of Apprentices in the capital were aged under 19 years old⁷¹. Fewer than 10 per cent of the qualification aims pursued by 16 to 18 year olds in London in 2014

Region	2006/ 07	2007/ 08	2008/ 09	2009/ 10	2010/ 11	2011/ 12	2012/ 13	2013/ 14	2014/15
	Full Year	Full Year	Full Year	Full Year	Full Year	Full Year	Full Year	Full Year	August to April (provisional)
North East	12,640	16,650	17,230	18,510	34,550	38,340	35,870	30,480	26,730
North West	32,220	35,480	36,530	47,280	78,660	89,310	84,180	71,670	59,330
Yorkshire and The Humber	24,140	29,300	32,170	36,530	55,800	64,200	59,900	53,120	46,300
East Midlands	17,430	21,700	22,180	24,620	40,860	46,790	49,010	40,290	36,140

⁶⁹ Please see in particular Hodgson, Ann and Spours, Ken (2013) *Middle attainers and 14-19 progression in England: half-served by New Labour and now overlooked by the Coalition?* British Educational Research Journal, N/A (N/A). N/A. ISSN 0141-1926. DOI UNSPECIFIED (In Press) <http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/11987/>

⁷⁰ “The Missing Middle: how middle attaining students in 14-19 education are being overlooked and squeezed by policy - Briefing Paper for the House of Lords Committee on Social Mobility for School Leavers”, Professors Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours, UCL Institute of Education, 1 July 2015

⁷¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships> (updated 19th August 2015)

West Midlands	20,150	25,430	27,860	31,720	54,290	60,470	62,430	52,410	45,940
East of England	16,800	21,030	21,170	23,730	39,760	45,820	46,220	40,430	34,330
London	11,090	14,520	17,180	20,350	41,400	47,230	45,070	40,050	32,410
South East	26,520	32,160	35,040	39,120	58,340	66,850	68,960	60,220	48,960
South West	20,810	25,280	27,790	35,020	49,330	55,950	52,540	45,960	39,380
England Total	181,800	221,500	237,100	276,900	453,000	515,000	504,200	434,600	369,500
Other	2,640	3,220	2,810	2,790	4,220	5,600	6,040	5,820	4,730
Grand Total	184,400	224,800	239,900	279,700	457,200	520,600	510,200	440,400	374,200

FE Data Library, Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 19th August 2015

Government policy encourages schools and colleges to prioritise those young people with greatest ability/potential and those who require greatest support. There is an ever-increasing group of young people in between who are often overlooked - those who, with greater attention, could achieve more than at present (“Middle attainers”)

2.2 Our research with the Institute of Education has identified ‘middle attainers’ as a group of young people who tend not to be prioritised in local, regional or national policy. In 2012 we commissioned a report (Hodgson & Spours 2012)⁷² that pointed out that the lack of preparation of many young people who enter the first year of sixth-form, which contributes greatly to an increased drop-out from education by young people aged 17+ and in 2013 (Hodgson & Spours 2013)⁷³ the IoE also reported:

“So who are the middle attainers in the English education and training system? Looked at in different ways, they constitute around 40 per cent of young people. At the end of primary education, about 4 in 10 pupils are classified as ‘medium-attainers’ having achieved Level 4 in their Key Stage 2 SATs (Standard Attainment Tests) scores at the age of 11. Post-16, a similar proportion of young people are not involved in a full two-year A Level programme, an Apprenticeship or classified as NEET.”

⁷² Hodgson, Ann and Spours, Ken (2012) *Young People’s participation, progression and transition to higher study and work: a London perspective*. http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/16387/1/London_Councils_Final_13_6_12_Final.pdf

⁷³ Hodgson & Spours 2013: “Middle attainers and 14-19 progression in England: half-served by New Labour and now overlooked by the Coalition?” <http://eprints.ioe.ac.uk/11987/>

2.3 Changes to the assessment framework for GCSEs and A Levels and the accountability measures for schools and colleges encourage institutions to work more closely with those young people who at risk of failing, especially in key subjects. There is also benefit to institutions ensuring that their top performing students achieve university places, especially in Russell Group universities. 'Middle attainers' are those who, with additional support, could go beyond basic pass grades at A Level and achieve grades that would open up the opportunity of a place in Higher Education.

HE journey

2.4 Our analysis of the Higher Education journey of young people (London Councils 2015)⁷⁴, up to 2013 (the last full year's data available), shows that the number of young people in London accessing higher education has still not recovered to the level of 2008/09, that the number of students aged 21-24 and studying part-time are still in decline. If young people aged 21-24 are not entering Higher Education as once they were, it suggests that London's economy will become even more dependent on 18 and 19 year-olds to meet its higher level skills needs.

2.5 Moreover, London does not mirror the national picture in which participation has increased in areas of high deprivation.

2.6 There has been a significant increase in the number entering Higher Education from Level 3 programmes other than A Levels. More places have been taken up by students with BTEC Level 3 diplomas and Extended Diplomas.

2.7 Over 80% of London resident students achieved a bachelors degree with honours and approximately two-thirds achieved a first or upper second degree.

2.8 Nearly 90% of students who resided in London boroughs were in a job (or had a job offer) six months after graduation⁷⁵. Of those who graduated the previous year and who were employed six months after graduation, 62% were employed in professional, associate professional and managerial occupations (usually considered to be 'graduate-level' employment).

2.9 We believe that, when they become available, the figures for 2014/15 will show continued progress in the number of young Londoners taking up places in Higher Education, but remain concerned over the implications of polarisation on grounds of family background and the disincentives to young people over 21 years old to pursue higher education as part of their

⁷⁴ London Councils 2015: "The higher education journey of young London residents" Tindell G, Weeden S & Storan J, London Councils, London, July 2015. See also the Higher Education Statistics Agency for information about the destinations of graduates: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/>

⁷⁵ This includes those in full-time paid employment, part-time work, self-employment or employment with further study.

career development. The supply of highly skilled and qualified people into the labour market is an essential component of London's desire to become a leading hub for science, technology and innovation.

2.10 In a further twist to the debate, the Chartered Institute for Personnel and Development (CIPD 2015)⁷⁶ has noted that many graduates are in jobs that do not require a degree, picking up an observation from Professor Alison Wolf (Wolf 2015)⁷⁷ about the balance between a potential over-supply of people with generalist degrees and an under-supply of those with higher technician qualifications.

Adult Vocational Education and Training

2.11 We are responding to the call for more young people to enter the labour market with technical, professional and vocational qualifications. The Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning, which was established under the auspices of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in 2011, reported in 2013 (CAVTL 2013)⁷⁸. It referred to the characteristics of excellent vocational programmes:

- That there should be a 'clear line of sight to work' in all vocational programmes;
- 'dual professional' teachers and tutors who combine occupational and teaching expertise and who are given time to develop relationships with employers
- Vocational courses must have access to industry-standard facilities and reflect the ways in which the world of work is being transformed
- 'clear escalators' to higher-level learning

2.12 Previously, the influential 157 Group of leading colleges published good practice examples of colleges' experience of working to reduce unemployment (Fletcher 2012)⁷⁹ and building effective transition from education into the workplace⁸⁰. These works observe that greater integration, rather than division across different government ministries, would help.

2.13 London Councils, together with the London Enterprise Panel, South East Strategic Leaders and the National Foundation for Educational Research⁸¹, researched how businesses

⁷⁶ CIPD 2015: "Over-qualification and skills mismatch in the graduate labour market" C Holmes & K Mayhew, CIPD, London, August 2015 <http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/over-qualification-and-skills-mismatch-graduate-labour-market.pdf>

⁷⁷ Wolf 2015: "Heading for the precipice: can further and higher education funding policies be sustained?", A wolf, Kings College, London, June 2015 <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/policy-institute/publications/Issuesandideas-alison-wolf-digital.pdf>

⁷⁸ CAVTL 2013: "It's all about work...excellent adult vocational teaching and learning", Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning, London, March 2013 <http://repository.excellencegateway.org.uk/fedora/objects/eg:5937/datastreams/DOC/content>

⁷⁹ Fletcher 2012: "Tackling unemployment – the college contribution", Fletcher M, 157 Group, London July 2012 http://www.157group.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/tackling_unemployment2_policy_paper.pdf

⁸⁰ Fletcher 2012A: "Effective transitions from school to work: the key role of FE Colleges", Fletcher M, 157 Group, London, October 2012

http://www.157group.co.uk/sites/default/files/documents/effective_transitions_from_school_to_work_policy_paper.pdf

⁸¹ NFER 2015: "Improving Employability Skills: enriching our economy" National Foundation for Educational Research, London Councils, the London Enterprise Panel and South East Strategic Leaders, Slough March 2015 <http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/IMSL01/IMSL01.pdf>

(including micro firms and small-medium sized enterprises)⁸² are already engaging with secondary schools and colleges and provided case studies of promising and effective practice.

An example of a college delivering effective vocational learning

Barking and Dagenham is one of London’s most impoverished boroughs. It has the highest percentage of out-of-work claimants in the capital and the fourth highest child poverty rate. Education is vital to tackling these challenges and preparing young people for work – something Barking and Dagenham College is passionate about.

The college is one of 23 Gazelle colleges in the UK – colleges committed to creating opportunities for young people to develop entrepreneurial attributes through education. The college works with local employers and community stakeholders to create the conditions for employment and employment opportunities for students. A good example of this is the decorating project carried out in partnership with K&M McLoughlin for Thames View primary school in Barking.

The decorating project was part of the college’s Aspire programme, through which learning companies are being established within each curriculum area to address the issue that not all young people have the opportunity to be working while studying.

“We know it’s not just about providing our students with a qualification, it’s about offering a whole range of real work learning and other employment skills that help them create their own future.”

Cathy Walsh OBE, Principal and CEO, Barking and Dagenham College

From : “Improving Employability Skills: enriching our economy” National Foundation for Educational Research, London Councils, the London Enterprise Panel and South East Strategic Leaders, Slough March 2015

Annex Three: Supporting Information – Question Three

Even though London is held up as an example of how pre-16 education has been transformed, there are still 17+ issues that need to be addressed urgently

3.1 For the past three years, London Councils has been exploring the participation, attainment and progression of young people in London aged 17+ (London Councils 2014)⁸³. The summary report concludes that:

⁸² ‘micro’ businesses employ up to nine employees and ‘small-medium enterprises’ have fewer than 250 employees

⁸³London Councils 2014: “17+ Participation, Attainment and Progression in London”, Hodgson A & Spours K, London Councils, London, October 2014 <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/6563>

“London has made marked progress in recent years in pre-16 performance, measured by the attainment of five or more GCSE A-C grades including English and mathematics. However, this research suggests that this level of performance at KS4 does not necessarily ensure successful post-16 retention and L3 attainment at 18 because students sometimes lack wider progression skills to make an effective transition.*

Successful transition at age 17 appears to be a key factor in determining successful outcomes at 18 or 19 for young Londoners, particularly at Level 3. In this regard, London lags behind the England average and there is considerable variation in performance between boroughs, depending on their socio-economic status.”

London Ambitions Careers Offer

3.2 Careers information, advice and guidance represents one of the main inequalities in the education and training system. Those who are best placed in society often have better connections into further and higher study and into the labour market, than those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds. This serves to entrench deprivation across generations.

In September 2012, the Education Act 2011 placed schools under a new duty to secure access to independent (defined as external to the school) and impartial careers guidance on the full range of 16 to 18 education and training options, including Apprenticeships. This duty was later extended to colleges also.

3.3 There is no discrete or additional funding for this duty and Department for Education statutory guidance states that: “Schools should meet the costs of provision from their overall budgets, including the pupil premium.” At the same time, the duty to provide careers education and work-related learning was repealed.

3.4 Once the duty on schools commenced, local authorities were not expected to deliver a universal careers service. They retain responsibility under section 68 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 to encourage, enable and assist the participation of young people in education or training and will continue to assist the most vulnerable young people and those at risk of disengaging with education or work.

3.5 In April 2012 the National Careers Service was established to deliver advice to young people and adults, although the services to young people are limited to web-based and telephone advice.

3.6 There have been several reports into the effect of these changes, most notably by Ofsted (2013)⁸⁴ and the House of Commons Education Select Committee (2013)⁸⁵, all of which tend to view the change negatively.

⁸⁴Ofsted 2013: “Going in the right direction?”, Ofsted, Manchester, September 2013
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413171/Going_in_the_right_direction.pdf

3.7 London Councils Young People's Education and Skills was sensitive to the urgent need to provide clarity to schools and colleges. Our work⁸⁶ provided a framework to support senior leaders, managers and governors in schools and colleges to meet their statutory duty to secure independent and impartial careers guidance and to support the delivery of careers education. It clearly sets out the case for careers work, describing the unique benefits it brings to students, and is shaped around three key themes: leadership, diverse good practice and a wide range of resources.

3.8 These concepts have been developed further in conjunction with the London Enterprise Panel, resulting in the *London Ambitions* project⁸⁷. Its report (London Councils 2015)⁸⁸ proposes seven key elements to transform the careers education landscape in London:

- All young people to have access to impartial, independent and personalised careers education, information, advice and guidance
- All young Londoners to have at least 100 hours of experiences of the world of work and a personalised digital portfolio
- An explicit published careers policy and careers curriculum in every secondary school and college
- A governor with oversight for ensuring that institutions support all students to relate their learning to careers and the world of work from an early age
- Up-to-date, user-friendly labour market intelligence/information to be available
- Formation and development of “careers clusters” of schools and colleges
- The development of the London Ambitions website as a portal for the closer involvement of businesses into the education system

Annex Four: Supporting Information – Question Four

Improving transition by gaining the confidence of young people and their families

4.1 Just as we are concerned about post-16 provision in London not building on London's advantage pre-16, we also share the Committee's concern about the crucial phase when young people make the transition from school or college into the wider world - whether into work, or further study and then work. Young people's perceptions of their prospects are shaped by the strength of the labour market - and their understanding of it - and the availability of a range of opportunities for further learning into early adulthood.

⁸⁵ House of Commons Education Committee 2013: “Careers Guidance for Young people: the impact of the new duty on schools”, House of Commons, London January 2013 <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201213/cmselect/cmeduc/632/632.pdf>

⁸⁶ London Councils 2013: “Pioneering..” <http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/node/3913>

⁸⁷ <https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/schools-and-education/for-teachers/london-ambition>

⁸⁸ London Councils 2015: “London Ambitions: shaping a successful careers offer for all young Londoners” London Councils, London, June 2015

http://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Policy%20themes/Children%20and%20young%20people/Shaping_Report_Intirim_19_June_SP.pdf

4.2 We are particularly concerned that changes in the post-19 learning landscape and funding system could hamper young people's progression and aspirations. Though we know that more effective careers education and guidance can mitigate some of this, challenging economic or labour market conditions will undoubtedly affect young people's ambitions if they are not professionally guided through their options.

4.3 We were not in favour of replacing the Education Maintenance Allowance paid to individual learners with a bursary system paid to learning institutions. With refinement, a system of personal allowances to young people could have also provided the basis of incentivising transition to the labour market

4.4 To provide greater confidence of young people in the ability of the education system to transform their chances in life, London Councils Young People's Education and Skills and the London Enterprise Panel are working together to influence the type of education and training provision that is on offer to young people so that they can acquire the skills, knowledge and experience that will enable them to achieve their goals. It is our belief that young Londoners will be best motivated to achieve the skills needed in the future if they are able to set, own and achieve their personal goals, with appropriate, personalised support. Setting their sights high and having the confidence in their ability to reach them should provide every incentive to young people.

4.5 This attention to each young person as an individual means that no one will be left behind as London grows in the future and that that young Londoners should leave education or training able to participate in and make the most of London's diverse culture; and make successful transitions to adulthood, to further and higher study and to employment

There is more to Vocational Education and Training than Apprenticeships

4.6 High quality vocational learning needs to be a more prominent and valued aspect of the post-16 learning landscape in London. Increasing the supply of good quality vocational provision will be a key component of the solution to the 17+ dropout problem described earlier part of this submission.

4.7 The needs of young people are paramount. The education and skills system in London must equip all young people with the skills they need to become resilient to change, to manage their transition to adulthood and to prepare them for employment. The emphasis must be on helping more young people achieve good level 3 qualifications by the age of 19 and on achieving other good life outcomes, especially moving into and on in jobs. Learning institutions in London have proved to be very effective in providing opportunities for the most vulnerable learners and young Londoners have excelled in progressing both to Higher

Education (especially Russell Group universities, including Oxbridge) and to high-skilled employment. London's performance at Key 4.8 Stage 5 suggests helping middle-performing young people to achieve their full potential at level 3 is a major priority for London.

4.9 Too many young people are being penalised by a system that has proved slow to adapt well when a young person changes their course choice - often because the system has also not provided them with appropriate advice and guidance on their choices and options. Consequently, there is growing support for the idea of three-year programmes of study at level 3, but *not* if this merely means an extension of the time a young people spends in school when a different setting would be more appropriate. London Councils Young People's Education and Skills has expressed concern about the issue of full funding for full-time 18 year-old students in the context of three-year programmes and personalised pathways.

London's leadership is taking action to improve careers education, information, advice and guidance.

4.10 In developing the approach to careers education, information, advice and guidance in London, we recognise that there is no quick fix. Effective transition into the labour market cannot be achieved by working only with those young people who have not achieved the grades necessary to progress into further or higher education. It requires a systematic and universal approach that is available to all young people from an early age and opens up to everyone the possibilities of building connections into the worlds of work and education than will allow them to reach their full potential.

4.11 Seven key elements for the London Careers Offer are proposed

- Access to impartial, independent and personalised careers education, information, advice and guidance
- At least 100 hours of experiences of the world of work for all young Londoners and a personalised digital portfolio
- An explicit publicised careers policy and careers curriculum in every secondary school and college
- A governor with oversight for ensuring the institution supports all students to relate their learning to careers and the world of work from an early age
- Up-to-date, user-friendly labour market intelligence/information (LMI)
- Formation and development of 'careers clusters' across London
- The London Ambitions Portal

4.12 In support of these proposals, London Councils Young People's Education and Skills is developing Skills Match⁸⁹ to enable careers advisors, teachers/tutors, planners, employers

⁸⁹ <http://skillsmatch.intelligentlondon.org.uk/>

and young people to understand the likely demand for qualified staff and the supply of courses to provide them.

4.13 In its wider context, London Ambitions provides the basis through which employers can work more efficiently and effectively with the education sector in the future.

Business involvement in education in London is increasing

4.14 Businesses are becoming increasingly involved in the development of the curriculum and their input is crucial to the improvement of vocational learning in London.⁹⁰ They provide: experience of work; opportunities to develop employability skills; mentoring; internships; Traineeships and Apprenticeships. They help set standards to which young people must aspire in order to enter, sustain and thrive in work. Young people provide businesses with skills, talent and energy that fuel business competitiveness. Working with the London Enterprise Panel, we will aim to bring the interests of businesses and those of young people together in a mutually beneficial way.

4.15 Employment in science and technology in London has grown in the past five years and this industry has become a key element in the future prosperity of the capital. Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) provision both pre- and post-16 is therefore inexorably linked to London's future prospects; this is a major consideration for those in learning institutions responsible for planning provision.

4.16 London's economy is – and is projected to remain – more highly skilled than the rest of the country.⁹¹ Attracting more businesses and learning institutions to offer Higher Apprenticeship opportunities will therefore be a particularly important contribution to London's economic success.

4.17 Work is on-going with the London Enterprise Panel to ensure that London's learning institutions and its business community work better together to enable more young people to succeed. We are supporting engagement between small, middle and micro-sized businesses and schools and colleges in London through the sharing of good practice in effective engagement. ESIF will be used to promote opportunities for internships and work experience as well as traineeships and Apprenticeships to support the businesses that offer them.

4.18 When fully developed, the *London Ambitions Careers Offer* will provide schools and colleges with examples of activities and tools to develop and maintain strong partnerships with local business. The continued development of *Skills Match* - an interactive tool that will

⁹⁰ The London Ambitions webpage provides further information: <https://www.london.gov.uk/priorities/schools-and-education/for-teachers/london-ambition>

⁹¹ Further information is available from the London Datastore: <http://data.london.gov.uk/>

allow the visual exploration of the relationship between skills supply and employer demand in London up to 2020 - will support policy-makers, practitioners and employers to take an intelligence-led, geographically-specific approach to addressing youth unemployment in London. London Councils and the London Enterprise Panel, with other partners, have reported on employability skills and developed the *Connect Card*, supported by a rich series of case studies, to help education organisations and businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises, to engage with each other more effectively⁹².

The systems of education, skills, employment and welfare could work better for young people.

4.19 At present, we have four different systems that need closer integration:

- Overall responsibility for government policy on young people rests with The Cabinet Office. Since 2010, no single government department has had a clear lead on the seamless progression of young people from school into upper-secondary, further and higher education or to employment;
- The Department for Education concentrates on academic education and on ensuring that all young people attain at least GCSE grade C in English and mathematics and all those who are capable of doing so have the chance of getting into university;
- The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills “invests in skills and education to promote trade, boost innovation and help people to start and grow a business.” It sponsors the Further and Higher Education sectors and has lead responsibility for Apprenticeships.
- The Department for Work and Pensions is responsible for the benefits system and for encouraging ‘welfare to work’.
- The Department for Communities and Local Government aims “to create great places to live and work”. It sponsors local government and works with local councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships to increase economic activity, eradicate deprivation and increase employment.

4.20 Responsibility for European Structural and investment Funds (approximately £2 billion in London over the period 2014-2020) is shared by the Department for Communities and Local Government, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions. These funds can also provide additional provision for hard-to-help young people and their families, especially in transitions to work. Co-ordination in London is through the European Programmes Management Unit at the Greater London Authority under the strategic oversight of the London Enterprise Panel. It is hoped that central government departments and agencies will cooperate to deliver the London strategy in full, but there are

⁹² http://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/IMSL01/IMSL01_home.cfm

indications that central government policy may influence the commissioning that is due to start before the end of 2015.

4.21 Local government is well-prepared to integrate different funding streams for the good of its residents – the London Borough of Barnet has been cited as a particularly good example.⁹³

Annex Five: Supporting Information – Question Five

Action in the future will need to bring into play a broader partnership that works in the interest of young people

5.1 In London, London Councils Young People's Education and Skills and the London Enterprise Panel are working to a shared agenda:

- To increase the participation, achievements and progression of young people in London
- To work with business to tackle the issues in the youth labour market and provide stepping stones into stable and secure employment and career progression;
- To enable businesses and learning institutions to work together in the interests of young people
- To improve the education system so that it better prepares young people for work and enables young people to set and fulfil their goals for work and life (London Ambitions Careers Offer)
- To strengthen the effectiveness of vocational, technical and professional education in London and increase the take-up of high quality Apprenticeships, Advanced Apprenticeships and Higher Apprenticeships so that vocational pathways lead to higher skills and possible entry to higher education
- To work towards a funding system that provides young people and their families with confidence that they can reach their potential – irrespective of their background or circumstances
- To achieve closer integration and better local control of education, skills, employment and welfare that works for London – its economy, enterprises and people

14 September 2015

⁹³ "Welfare reform, employment and skills in Barnet: a successful cross-agency approach to helping people into work", R Cornelius, Localis, London July 2015 http://www.localis.org.uk/images/loc_barnet_reform_220715_finalweb.pdf

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

Greater Manchester Combined Authority response to call for evidence. 14th Sept 2015

Q1. Factors affecting social mobility

1.1 GM recognises that the transition in transferral in the statutory duty relating to IAG to schools has left gaps in how young people are supported to make good transitions and progressions into post-16 provision first time. This is particularly true for those of young people who are the focus of this consultation. Previously all young people were offered independent advice and guidance under a universal service. That is now much harder to measure and quality assure although GM is confident that it is taking good steps to close the gaps.

1.2 Young people are not being guided in a consistent and high quality manner to understand the relationship between the subjects they choose to study and how they transfer in to the workplace. Career aspirations of young people are not always well matched to labour market supply; this could be brought about by a lack of understanding of the labour market and underutilisation of labour market data by education institutions. The demand for post-16 provision should come from young people and their parents with a well-informed perspective, which is currently not the case.

1.3 Socio-economic factors should also be considered when drawing conclusions about this cohort of young people. Family influences, traditional understanding of the labour market and direct parental experiences of the world of work play a role in setting ambitions and being equipped to keep young people on a path that can lead to economic success. In worse case scenarios where young people are not supported to thrive, exiting in troubled family scenarios it makes it all the more difficult for young people to pursue and explore their ambitions without consistent and direct interventions from the institutions they study in and their wider family/community networks where possible.

1.4 GM fully recognises that to redress skills shortages, raise aspirations and match the supply of young people to meet the needs of our growing sectors, attainment of qualifications alone is not enough. There is a mismatch in how the pre-16 system prepares young people to make the next step to progress at 16 and the needs of the skills system. Work related activity, softer skills development and exposure to the world of work is limited and non-statutory making it difficult for schools to prioritise. This is very difficult to turn around post-16 although GM does indeed make some gains in how employers perceive the work readiness of young people at 17 and 18 in comparison to that perception at 16 which rates poorly compared with other LEP areas. The recommendations from the Wolf report in 2011 has made a difference in supporting rigour in the pre-16 vocational curriculum but what is missing is enough guidance intervention to understand the post-16 vocational offer that leads to strong transitions and good employment outcomes. It may be viewed that the E-Baccalaureate will undermine any strength the Wolf recommendations had and make it much more difficult for young people to progress into vocational education given that vocational qualifications will be measured differently under Progress 8.

1.5 Employers perceptions and willingness to employ young people; it is difficult for young people to get a foot in the door with employers if they continue to value older, more experienced workers over the younger newly qualified workforce. Schemes like

Apprenticeships encourage employers to take on young people; however there is still a stigma attached to apprenticeships being a less valuable route to employment (than A-levels/degrees). GM is working strategically to reverse this perception amongst teaching staff, young people and parents.

1.6 Employers are increasingly being expected to be involved in shaping curriculum, which is a step in the right direction as long as they are listened to and changes are made.

Q2. What is known about the 14 to 24 cohort?

2.1 Local authority data requirements do not currently provide the necessary long term tracking data to come to a conclusion about the wider cohort however we are able to come to some conclusions about those taking the Apprenticeship route. Individuals who take a work based learning route are 3 times more likely to be male than female and are much more likely to go into gender stereotypical roles e.g. males go into engineering, construction and motor vehicle and females are much more likely to go into caring or hairdressing. White, Black and mixed race young people are more likely to take the apprenticeship route than Asian or Chinese young people. Due to the occupational choices made, young women are more likely to be in lower paid opportunities in the long term than young men as engineering & construction related occupations pay more highly and have better career progression than care and hairdressing in the long term.

2.2 Not achieving English and maths at Level 2 is a challenge for young people in terms of having to continue post-16 and is a strain on an already financially stretched system. This is prohibitive to progression to higher level skills which in turn affects chances to access opportunities from growth and potentially locks some young people in a cycle of low pay occupations. Some young people would be eligible to follow an apprenticeship but the demand isn't as high as it could be for reasons outlined in Q1. In addition, not being apprenticeship ready is clearly a factor in GM that leaves vacancies unfilled. This is a similar picture around Traineeships. Tracking and understanding this cohort is difficult as little is collated / accessed on the destinations post-19.

2.3 We know that care leavers face increased challenges in taking up a post-16 offer in particular Apprenticeships as it is more financially challenging when taking independent living costs into account. This cohort of young people is more likely to take a vocational route.

2.4 Young people who have learning disabilities are most likely to be NEET but also take non-traditional routes. These young people often spend 3 years in further education but their long term progress after 19 is not effectively tracked so their social mobility is not being measured against their peers at a Local Authority level.

Q3. The current system

3.1 It is becoming more of a difficulty for FE to support transitions and with the reduction of IAG services to schools and the limitation of schools to resource this area adequately. The young people in this cohort are more likely to become part of a churn – not dropping out but equally not getting it right first time. Alternatives to A-levels are little understood by young people and parents and much needs to be done post-16 to guide young people to make appropriate choices. Young people are often best informed by parents who may not always understand the non-traditional routes such as vocational qualifications and therefore young people themselves may not necessarily understand the benefits of taking an alternative route to higher skills and ultimately employment. The value of the vocational route needs much greater emphasis. The challenge in the system will come from the cultural perceptions that

are emerging about the status of vocational education due to the E-Bacc. It is highly unlikely at the point of making a post-16 choice that young people and their parents know the currency of qualifications. Employers too need to better understand the qualifications and what that practically means for them when recruiting. More could be done on this in order to dispel some myths. Understanding what employers' value in terms of qualification type will depend on the sector.

3.2 GM has recognised that more needs to be done to support schools and providers to better engage with the business community to authenticate the messages around the skills gap and provide an understanding and direct experience of the world of work. Initiatives such as Industrial Collaboration Zones create an environment of knowledge exchange that meets the needs of influencers of young people's lives. HEI's, FE and secondary schools school be encouraged to communicate jointly by mapping the student journey and delivering the messages in environments conducive to 'show off' their capabilities.

3.3 There is a wide range of qualifications on offer for those not able to access Apprenticeships The FE redesign taking place across Greater Manchester (as part of Devolution) will ensure that the system is responsive to labour market demand.

Q4. Possible improvements

4.1 Through the devolution agreements The Greater Manchester Combined Authority is in a unique position to be able to take a system view of the improvements we need to make in order that all our residents progress and achieve sustainable employment outcomes. This draws upon new powers and levers offered by devolution as well as being able to strengthen existing levers and duties through strong integration of work and skills. The strategic partnership approach led by GMCA offers GM the flexibility to ensure its system responds to its economic and social needs which in turn support growth and reform, benefitting this particular cohort. In this respect GM sets out below its response to how further improvements can be made.

4.2 Labour market data could be better utilised and communicated to education institutions to inform the careers provision and enable young people to better understand the supply of jobs in a local area and to make more well-informed decisions about the pathways they take.

4.3 For careers advice and guidance to be effective it must align with the needs of employers and young people need to be equipped with the skills (including life skills and key competencies like communication, team work, problem solving) that will enable them to compete in an workforce that is saturated with highly experienced older workers. Ofsted should play a greater role in ensuring that careers advice and guidance in education institutions is embedded in the leadership and management

4.4 It is important that school/college leavers have appropriate pathways and routes to employment mapped out and understood by family and carers – slipping into unemployment at 18 can be dangerous territory for some young people – getting work experience and building up a CV as early as possible not only contributes to positive attitudes but also the aptitude for working life. As of July 2015, 4.7% of Greater Manchester's 16 to 24 year olds were claiming out of work benefits, and between April 2014 and March 2015, 17.5% of 16 to 24 year olds who were able to and looking for work, were unemployed. More could be done to ensure that young people who may be at risk of unemployment or poor/underperformance at further education level are picked up and supported to ensure they do not fall in to a cycle of low pay work/unemployment.

4.5 Often, vocational qualifications are not seen to be relevant to the requirements of employers today. As employers are ultimately the ones who will house the people who go through these courses, they should have more input into the design of the programmes. Employers need to be involved in the standardisation of vocational education programmes so as to ensure that the evolving requirements of the labour market are continuously fed into the design of current and future programmes; this will ensure that qualifications/programmes do not go 'out of date' and that people undertaking the programmes can complete the courses and actually be work ready and possess the skills and values that employers look for.

4.6 There are organisations that currently provide a link between employer and education providers – these could potentially be more joined up and aligned with an area's economic priorities/strategies. The approach to employer engagement appears to be irregular and varied across local authorities. This is the aim of Careers Inspiration and the newly formed Careers and Enterprise Company. Greater Manchester recognises this and is already taking steps to move this forward but national models need to take into account local steps to driving forward this strategy and not duplicate activity, causing more confusion and fragmentation.

4.7 Rather than focusing solely on seeking to increase the qualification levels of the workforce to drive productivity, an alternative effective strategy may be to target the productivity market strategy of employers. Firms seeking to compete in higher value markets are more likely to demand higher skills and to seek to tap the discretionary effort of the labour force through practices that engage employees. Interventions such as working with employer associations to develop the evidence base and communicate it (for example about the benefits of high performance work organization); developing the skills of senior managers so they are able to envisage the possibilities of competing with enhanced skill levels; and easing the financial constraints that inhibit risk taking and investment.

4.8 Greater Manchester is working hard to make CEIAG a strategic priority in schools and colleges. Much work has been successfully implemented and more still needs to be done on this agenda to support schools and colleges to fulfil their strategic duties against a backdrop of local, national and global LMI to raise ambition and support growth across GM and meet the skills gap challenges. Transition and progression should be a dedicated element of school and college life and resources need to be allocated for this.

4.9 In schools where young people are from the highest levels of deprivation efforts to improve employer contact and quality interactions, access to quality impartial IAG and a strong careers programme in school and college which is developmental and incremental as a young person moves through the school is a minimum. Vulnerable young people such as care leavers should not be disadvantaged by mainstream offers, especially Apprenticeships and more should be done to ensure these groups of young people are supported early on in life and do not fall into a cycle of no pay/low pay work.

4.10 Local areas should be financially supported to strategically bring more cohesion to employer engagement on a number of levels such as face to face with young people, working to support the curriculum offer, understanding the system and the qualifications and endorsing the work of LEPS.

4.11 Challenging cultural norms about the value of post 16- pathways for a wide variety of young people particularly vulnerable such as care leavers and those with special educational needs/disabilities (SEND) as well as pathways associated with gender and ethnicity takes time and involves a wider number of stakeholders very early on in a young person's development

to challenge stereotyping at an earlier age. More intervention needs to take place in an appropriate format to support young people, their families and the community that serves them to understand and be able to access the opportunities available as they grow and make choices.

Q5. Responsibility for improvement

5.1 No single institution should be responsible for improving the transition from education to the workplace. Given the complexity of funding and availability of places, this should be monitored and reviewed collaboratively by all organisations that play a part, and in some cases have a statutory duty, in young person's journey of education.

5.2 The GM Raising of the Participation Age Strategy is key driver to bring partners together in support of all young people. The strategy identifies four priorities to provide a focus for our participation partnerships to better support the transitions and more importantly, the positive progressions we need our young people to make to better support growth and improve the outcomes for the young people, their families and ultimately the GM city-region. The four priorities are:

- All young people that are NEET, or are at risk of becoming NEET, are identified, supported and encouraged to participate and engage in suitable education, employment or training and levels of participation and attainment in accredited post-16 education and training are increased, in line with the raising of the participation age (RPA).
- Improve the quality and consistency of approach to careers information advice and guidance (CEIAG) provided to young people in order to raise aspirations and increase their progression into suitable education, employment and training (need to re-phrase to differentiate)
- Strengthen post-16/FE curriculum offer to help ensure more young people are able to enter provision that better supports them towards jobs and careers
- Co-ordinate and lead specific maths and English related activity to focus on pre and post 16 curriculum challenges to better support progression to higher skills

5.3 It is the ambition of the strategy that we work more collaboratively to increase a systematic way of tracking and increasing knowledge of this cohort particularly given the statutory duties of LAs in this area.

5.4 A significant gap facing a good number of young people is the transition from pre to post-16 pathways. Data sharing protocols between pre and post 16 institutions, particularly given duties placed on young people regarding participations is essential to ensure consistent and effective transitions and the most appropriate start to education or training which will in turn support progression. Warm handovers and transition support for vulnerable young people but equally those who very rarely manifest obvious difficulties but are by and large 'invisible' are critical factors when supporting young people and their families to get it right first time.

5.5 The introduction of Local Outcome Agreements may increase the opportunity for areas to track and measure mobility and transitions in young people. It could be a shared responsibility for schools, local authorities, FE providers, HEIs etc to ensure that young people,

particularly those at risk of falling under the radar and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are fully supported at every stage of their education journey.

14 September 2015

**NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP'S RESPONSE TO THE HOUSE OF LORDS
CALL FOR EVIDENCE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY**

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Members of the wider Employment and Skills Strategy Board and the NEP Team and have identified the following issues as relevant:

- Some students are still leaving school with no clear career path and little aspiration. These students often have no understanding of the support networks available to them, once they have left education.
- Too much focus on academic routes which leave those more suited to a vocational route feeling that they are following a less prestigious route
- The qualification system alone does not prepare young people for moving into work – employability skills training is also essential.
- Some parents have very limited understanding of opportunities and support available to their children.
- Many teachers have limited knowledge of the opportunities within the economy for young people and therefore cannot provide the necessary employment advice.
- Young people have limited understanding of the options available to them and the breadth and range of careers available in their locality.
- The expectations of some employers are unrealistic. e.g:
 - Not recognising travel to work costs when paying minimum wage
 - Expecting Grades A-C in Maths and English even when not required
 - Not recognising and underestimating personal support and issues facing some of the young people within this group

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

It is worth recognising that there is a porous boundary between NEETs and non-NEETs, as identified by work undertaken by our local Horizons partnership, which undertakes tracking of all young people for 3 years after completing compulsory education (Yr11). The information is reviewed and updated to a national schedule (set by DfE), with the details of all young people revisited at the start of a new academic year, as a minimum. Many groups are checked more frequently.

The charts focus on the young people who are undertaking Apprenticeships & Jobs with training, Employment without training (including temporary and part time work) and those engaged in Training programmes such as traineeships and other pre-employment programmes. These are some of the young people that the call for evidence is seeking to understand.

Details of joiners to the NEET group are provided as although the enquiry is not focused on this group there is movement in and out of this cohort i.e. those who are NEET and EET are not mutually exclusive.

Annex A

This spreadsheet demonstrates:

- The volume of young people undertaking the employment and training type activities in the three years after compulsory education
- Highlights that participation in all types of employment and training increases with age
- During the first 2 years (roughly aged 17-18) Apprenticeships are the most popular route
- By the third year, employment without training ranks highest. This is likely to reflect that young people have completed their Apprenticeship and moved into employment 'only'. In addition, some of those who have left full time education at age 19/20 have moved into the work force.
- This appears to indicate that these young people are not moving on to or continuing to higher skills training, after their initial post 16 phase.

Annex B

This spreadsheet demonstrates:

- The 'flow' of young people into the NEET group from each types of EET activity
- Chart A – identifies that the largest number of people joining the NEET group were previously in FE Colleges. This should be considered in the context of the number of young people in FE
- Chart B – shows that pre-Apprenticeship training has a fairly significant progression rate to NEET.
- There is overlap between young people who are outside school sixth forms and those who have episodes in the NEET group. There is a risk that if the enquiry does not consider the NEET group at all, the needs of this group may be overlooked.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

- The apprenticeship route is a successful and viable option to A-Levels and higher education, and should be promoted as such.
- Traineeships are also available for those who need extra employability support prior to starting an apprenticeship.
- There are a variety of young people that fall into this group (including ex-offenders, those with mental health issues, young parents) with a range of barriers that will affect them in any transition into work.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- Schools need to offer further careers support and develop student's employability skills. Further opportunities for work tasters and direct contact with industry.
- Employers need to view the vocational route as having parity with the academic route, if employment outcomes are to be equal.
- Employers can be encouraged by working more closely with schools. This may include mentoring individual students and gaining a better understanding of the barriers some students face.
- Employers need to update their recruitment practices, so they are more 'young person' friendly.
- Employers need to be made aware of the benefits of traineeships and apprenticeships in order to encourage employment from within this group.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- This has to be a partnership approach between employers, educational establishments, government and parents. The Enterprise Advisor Programme is an excellent example of how this collaborative approach can work. Local Enterprise Partnerships can play a key role in co-ordinating the system.

14 September 2015

Telford and Wrekin Council – Written evidence (SMO0009)

- 1 What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?
- There has been a loss of the vocational pathway through compulsory education as a result of the focus on an academic route, recently the ebacc.
 - There has been a lot of change in the language of qualifications, eg, diplomas, BTEC, etc, which has led to employers not fully understanding the value and equivalencies of the vocational route. They have therefore recruited via A level requirements only, as this is a framework that they understand.
 - As a result of the performance measures, schools have been under increasing pressure to focus on outcomes and results. There appears to have been a focus on the ‘high achievers’ to maximise on their outcomes, and if a student is ‘borderline’ C at GCSE, a focus here to support to achieve the C. The result has been that those students who are ‘middle of the road’, ie, comfortably on target to achieve a C, being left and not challenged sufficiently to realise or maximise on their potential.
 - Because of the above pressures on curriculum time, there has not been the same room for relevant and important enrichment activities, to enable a focus on ‘life ready work ready’ skills, particularly work experience and employability. This means that those young people who choose not to take the academic route, and instead opt for employment, employment with training/apprenticeships, are expected to meet the requirements of the world of work much sooner than their academic counterparts, and they are often ill-equipped to manage this successfully.
 - A significant factor in some young people’s ability to have a good transition is their behaviour, and the management of this. These are not special educational needs young people, but those who for various reasons have issues with their behaviour. The current system in some way endorses their poor behaviour, by using temporary exclusions, and modified timetables. Some young people use their poor behaviour to ensure they don’t have to participate full-time in school, and see the consequences as a reward rather than a punishment. This clearly does not prepare them for their post 16 option, as there are no ‘exclusions’ in the workplace, and post 16 education providers have to manage this much more strictly, if in fact they have given them a place at all.

2 There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A level and higher education route, and are not classed as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

- Some young people have learning styles that are better suited to the vocational, ongoing assessment route. They may have academic ability for A levels, but choose alternative options as they do not wish to continue with the exam-based education route.
- There are young people that are from a family background where an academic route would either not be supported, or is not valued.
- Comments received from young people and their families include concerns about the financial cost implications of the A level/HE route.
- There are young people who want a change from compulsory education, and want to get into the workplace, and follow a vocational interest.
- Often young people are unlikely to see the ‘bigger picture’, or the long-term implications of their choices at 16. There is often choice in terms of what presents itself at opportune times, rather than a conscience career planning.
- Young people are often influenced by peers, and if undecided, will go along with the choices of their friends.
- There are those young people that are bright at school, but disengaged, through a range of factors. This is evidenced through the elective home educated, alternative and modified timetables for Years 10 & 11.
- Young people may also face some family circumstances which prevent them from taking up a more academic route. These include young people who are required to start earning as soon as possible after compulsory education, to contribute to the household income, and those that are required to help with younger sibling childcare.
- There are cultural and religious reasons that we see young people taking an employment route at age 16. These include those from BME backgrounds working in the family restaurant, and those from the traveller community where there is a different expectation at 16.
- There are those young people where the academic route is not realistic due to ability, and may struggle through the GCSE pathway. Finding employment for these young people is a challenge, as they are competing with adults who have been moved from benefit claims, made redundant etc. However, when they do achieve employment, they are loyal and committed employees, making a viable economic contribution to the workforce.

3 Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A level and Higher Education route, to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

- Apprenticeships are still seen by young people and parents as ‘cheap labour’. The minimum rate they are paid doesn’t feel fair when they are working alongside other people (for some sectors, eg business administration).
- There is a perception by employers that young people are not ‘work ready’, which we have reflected in question 1 in terms of the opportunity for this.
- Some of the apprenticeship areas, eg engineering, are seen as a more rigorous qualification to achieve, with a clearer, more aspirational route going forwards. This is in comparison for example to an area such as hairdressing or business administration, which are seen as ‘easier’ jobs to achieve. These areas are perceived to have no longer term, or higher education progression, whereas engineering can be undertaken to a high level, and has a longer term commitment from the employer.
- Some young people, whilst not achieving the national expectations of A* - C in GCES’s, may have realised their potential academically, and already have worked hard to achieve the grades they have, even if these are below the national benchmarks. For these young people, it is a much harder transition to the labour market, given employer recruitment expectations, setting the entry requirements as GCSE A* to C.
- Post 16 providers are selective about the young people that they accept to their provision, and focus on those that they can move on quickly. This is despite Study Programmes in theory being a bespoke offer for all abilities.

4 How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- Employers say they want young people with ‘sparkle’ and bit of initiative, and very often they advise they are prepared to train them to give them the skills they need to do the job. However, the recruitment process does not measure enthusiasm, and starts with qualifications and experience, which many of this group do not have.

- The whole system around employer engagement with schools is very piecemeal, and dependant on each school, with no mandatory requirement or baseline on which to measure its effectiveness or quality assure it.
- Communication between employers and schools is difficult for both parties, and needs some independent brokerage to bring the 2 together. This is best done at a local level to maximise realistic, local opportunities that are achievable for young people.
- This area is not a statutory requirement, and with schools being under increasing pressure around outcomes and performance data, they are much less likely to undertake anything which is detrimental to the national curriculum, even if they would want this for their students.

5 Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- The problem with the current system is that responsibility is split between too many different organisations. An example of this is for those young people that are at risk of NEET/NEET. Schools are measured against how many NEET young people they had that left their school – in November, it is the ‘settled activity of young people’, followed by a measure in April of ‘sustained activity’. At the same time, Local Authorities are measured on both the number of NEETs, and Raising of Participation Age, with statutory duty to ‘encourage, enable and assist’ young people to participate. Alongside of this, post 16 providers are measured on ‘drop-out rates’, which are taken once the young person has been with them for 6 weeks. Schools would consider their duty done, once the young person had moved onto something, with any drop-out being the fault of the provider. Providers would say they have had, in some cases, inappropriate IAG for the course they took up. The Local Authority would be working with any that drop out, and re-engage these young people, which ultimately, reflects well on the school they left, regardless of how well the school have met their duty to provide impartial, independent careers advice and guidance. There is no one organisation providing the ‘steer’ on this, with ultimate responsibility for moving this forward. It is often confusing, with everyone chasing the same young person at the same time.
- The Government should enforce time in the curriculum for both careers education & guidance, and work readiness for transition. With there being no statutory duty for schools to provide careers education or employability, these are usually the things that are excluded, to the detriment of the

young people, the post 16 providers, employers, and ultimately, the economy.

- Due to the challenges outlined above, this leads to patchy and inconsistent delivery, which is dependant on which school a young person attends, and indeed, the Head Teacher's commitment to such areas of development.
- The Local Authority needs more power to enable it to fulfil its duty in tracking young people. It should be able to check the quality of IAG across all providers in its area and establish a minimum offer to include and deliver employability skills, work experience and careers education, information, advice and guidance.
- Local Authorities should have the ability to mandate post 16 providers to accept young people onto a place with them, to meet the RPA duty, in the way that they can for compulsory education. This should be done in a way that does not penalise the provider in outcome measures and would reward them for taking on those less able young people. This would ensure that those young people who are least likely to take the academic route, and potentially with more challenging abilities and/or behaviour, would have better opportunities and more commitment from the provider. The current system has too much 'cherry picking' of young people who will not have an adverse effect on funding and progression outcomes.
- There is a lack of provision for very low level ability young people, for whom the transition will be straight into work if the right placement can be found. Currently, that is not seen as a good transition, but for some young people, this is the best outcome given the scope of their abilities.
- The current entitlement of all young people being able to access provision to achieve a minimum of a level 2 is a good one, but should be more open-ended, to allow for a longer period of time in which some of the less able students to take this offer up.
- The majority of young people find themselves making significant decisions about their long-term future, without always understanding the ramifications for progression. These are often the students that will not take the academic HE route, and find themselves achieving level 2 qualifications in school, but then without any real scope once in the world of work to either make a career change, or re-train due to financial and other implications.
- There should be a review of what the best measure is for demonstrating good transition. Currently there are too many cuts of data, with a lack of consistency in the way individual organisations are counting outcomes and interpreting guidance. It should be a simple measure that recognises where young people have realised their potential, which for some will not

be Higher Education, but may be a good sustained job, and the best they could aspire to. Not all young people will be doctors or solicitors, and it is important that the range of skills and levels in jobs are equally valued.

- Compulsory education has had most of these young people as a captive audience for 12 years. If at age 16 they have not achieved key milestones such as English and Maths at GCSE grade C or above, then it is unrealistic to expect all young people to achieve this within a further 2 year period. Many of these young people will need something completely different from the education route to support their transition into becoming economically active.

13 August 2015

Youth Connexions Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire County Council, and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership – Written evidence (SMO0026)

[Submission to be found under Hertfordshire County Council](#)

International Governments

Government of Austria – Written evidence (SMO0129)

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility– Request for Evidence Austrian response

1. *What is the system in Austria for preparing young people for the world of work?*

Austria has a traditionally well-developed vocational training system. Roughly 80% of youths partake in some form of initial vocational training (attending school either full-time or in combination with in-service training). This represents the highest percentage among EU and OECD Member States. Young people have the option of completing vocational training through full-time schooling, as well as through the “dual” (in-service training combined with schooling) approach taken in Germany and Switzerland. There is a comprehensive safety net in place for those young people in danger of dropping out, who have already dropped out, or are experiencing difficulties during training: industry-wide training (guaranteed apprenticeship scheme), integrative training, manufacturing schools, youth and apprentice coaching as form of external supervision.

Vocational training systems with close ties to industry and in-service training generally prepare students well for emerging technological challenges arising e.g. through the so-called industry 4.0.

2. *What options do young people have after they leave school to prepare them for the work place? How do they know about them?*

Austrian labour market policies ensure that young people have several options to pursue either further education or enter the workplace, and support them in doing so. In 2008 and 2009 respectively, Austria adopted a guaranteed apprenticeship policy (‘Ausbildungsgarantie’) and established ‘Aktion Jugend Zukunft’ (Action Youth Future). A close meshed safety net is created through a combination of industry-wide training, youth coaching, manufacturing schools and projects specifically designed for young people experiencing difficulties during training. This strong focus on young people in labour market policy is also reflected in the allocation of funds. Further details on measures and information provided in the area of labour market policy can be found in the brochure ‘Jugend und Arbeit in Österreich’ (Youth and Work in Austria, available in German at:

http://www.sozialministerium.at/cms/site/attachments/1/0/6/CH2124/CMS1402033052188/jugend_und_arbeit_in_oesterreich_berichtsjahr_2014_2015_webversion1.pdf).

3. *How are they supported in deciding what route (university/ vocational/ other) to take?*

Young people are provided with information on education, training and employment free of charge, e.g. through consultations offered by AMS (‘Arbeitsmarktservice’, Labour Market Service), AK (‘Arbeiterkammer’, Chamber of Workers) and WKÖ (‘Wirtschaftskammer Österreich’, Chamber of Trade, Commerce and Industry). Information and support is provided through consultations, skillset analyses, tests, workshops, career fairs, internet portals and many more.

4. *How are employers engaged in this process?*

Austrian businesses are strongly represented through their Chamber of Industry, which enables them to participate in shaping the (state-mandated) curriculum for vocational

training. Representatives contribute to providing information to young people through presentations at career fairs, at career information centres and in direct cooperation with schools. Many businesses offer visits to school classes and short internship schemes in the framework of school programmes. Roughly 300,000 businesses take on apprentices, with many more offering internship and trainee schemes for pupils at vocational schools.

5. *How are the positives and negatives for each route into the workplace available to young people communicated?*

Austria has a comprehensive career information system, which is anticipated to continue growing in line with current government policy. Careers information is provided internally by schools, as well as by AMS, WKÖ and AK (see also Q3).

6. *What is the Austrian government's role in supporting young people during this transition? Who is responsible for providing support?*

The Austrian federal government clearly favours the dual approach and commits itself to further developing the career information system. The Austrian system takes a holistic approach, which is potentially the main reason for its success. While many European countries focused on the educational aspects of dual training for a long time, only to shift to an entirely labour market oriented approach, Austria has traditionally approached the matter from both perspectives. This approach is reflected in the allocation of responsibilities for dual training among a variety of government departments (BMBWF, BMLRT, BMLFUW and BMFJ). The role of the Austrian social partners should be emphasised in this respect, as their functions go beyond business representation and extend to tasks of a governmental nature. Cooperation between public authorities and the social partners is therefore crucial to the functioning of the Austrian dual training system.

Labour market policies provide many options for young people, particularly those struggling to enter the labour market (see also Q2).

The BMFJ is supporting the development of a national strategy to recognise informal and alternative forms of learning, in order to support education and career decisions in a low-threshold way. In line with this goal, the BMFJ has put the following measures into practice:

- www.jugendportal.at/wiki "WIK:1" – a model for self-assessment
- www.aufzaq.at "aufZAQ" – Certification system for personal skills

7. *What is the private sector expected to do? How are businesses encouraged to support young people in this process?*

Austria has a long tradition of business-led apprenticeship schemes, intimately connected to the belief in the benefits of such schemes to business. State aid is limited to a small proportion of the apprentice salary, which is generally payable by the employer. Schooling, which runs in parallel to in-service training, is state-financed.

8. *What data is collected to monitor young people's progression into work? How are those who do not go to university monitored?*

'Statistic Austria' carries out comprehensive career monitoring, which includes the collection and analysis of data on education, social security and employment. In the autumn of 2015,

figures contributing to the monitoring of the European Youth Guarantee will be transmitted to EMCO for the first time.

9. What are the employment outcomes and likely career trajectories for young people in Austria who do not go to university?

In Austria, vocational training is a full-fledged alternative to university education. This includes the possibility of pursuing post-secondary or even tertiary vocational training, such as master craftsman's diplomas or courses of advanced lectures. This equivalence is also reflected in very similar salary expectations and levels of employability. It should also be noted that the Austrian system is highly permeable, as evidenced e.g. by dual or extra-occupational university courses.

8 September 2015

Royal Danish Embassy – Written evidence (SMO0108)

Select Committee on Social Mobility – Submission from the Royal Danish Embassy

The Embassy's submission is based on information received from the Danish Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment, Ministry of Employment as well as a report on youth unemployment and inactivity, published by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2015, where further information can be found: <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf;jsessionid=rlyv8rZvo53OBJsJF9Evj1zQDfmRXwTiDT7Imhju.diva2-search3-vm?pid=diva2%3A852123&dswid=9361>

What is the system in Denmark for preparing young people for the world of work?

In Denmark, there is a smooth transition from post-compulsory education into working life for youths, which is a distinct feature of the upper secondary education system. There are two tracks in the Danish secondary education system: an academic track and a vocational track. Whereas the academic track often is a prerequisite for admission to universities, the vocational track is a combination of school and work-based learning. The vocational track normally begins with an introductory, commercial or technical college course of 20-25 weeks, which is then followed by an educational programme, comprising company placements and modules in colleges. Company placements are regulated by apprenticeship contracts between the company and the apprentice.

What options do young people have after they leave school to prepare them for the work place? How do they know about them?

There are various “activation” programmes for young people who do not work and who are not enrolled in education, including training and work experience programmes. From 1994 and onwards, there have been several reforms aiming to get young people into either work or education. In 2013, a youth benefit reform took place, reducing the unemployment benefit for under-25 year olds to the same level as young people in education receive (in Denmark, people enrolled in education receive income support).

How are they supported in making the choice to decide what route (university/vocational/other) to do?

When in primary education, pupils receive guidance on upper secondary education and the aforementioned academic and vocational tracks from a designated careers guidance officer at the school. Furthermore, throughout primary education, pupils attend “education and job” classes, preparing the pupils for further education and work.

In upper secondary education and after finishing upper secondary education, students are able to receive guidance and seek advice on further education from careers and education centres located around the country.

How are employers engaged in this process?

Employers also play an important role in the vocational education track when accepting apprentices. In such instances, college, employer and the apprentice collaborate in developing individual vocational plans.

How are the positives and negatives communicated for each route into the work place available for young people?

The Jobcenter has to guide and support people receiving education benefit progress towards education.

What is the government's role in supporting young people through this transition? Who is responsible for it?

The Ministry for Children, Education and Gender Equality is responsible for the transition and progress from education to the labour market. If the young people finish their education and are unable to find a job, then they become of the Ministry of Employment's area of responsibility.

What data is collected to monitor and capture young people's progression through this transition into work? How are those who do not go to university monitored through the process?

The Ministry of Employment does not have any data, unless the youths apply and are granted either cash- or educational benefits. The Agency for Labour Market and Recruitment monitor the cash- and educational benefit system closely and publish the key performance indicators on jobindsats.dk.

What are the employment outcomes and likely career trajectories for young people who do not go to university in Denmark?

There is a wide range of employment outcomes and career trajectories for young people in Denmark if they do not wish to pursue a university degree. One of the main trajectories is to obtain a vocationally oriented education, where the focus is on specific employment opportunities. Another main trajectory is an academic profession program, where a job in specific professions is pursued.

15 September 2015

Government of Finland – Written evidence (SMO0127)

The Government of Finland - Ministry of Education and Culture/Department for Vocational Education and Training

18 August 2015

Finnish vocational education and training in practice

In Finland, vocational education and training (VET) is popular. About 44% of young people who have completed comprehensive education start vocational studies either to get a qualification or to participate in preparatory training for VET. **VET is developed together with many stakeholders** by anticipating the quantitative need of labour and education as well as the qualitative demand for competencies. **One of our many strengths is cooperation with stakeholders**; many European countries, including Portugal, are only starting to involve relevant interest groups in VET. In addition to the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Finnish National Board of Education, the following sectors are involved in the development of VET: employer and employee organisations, representatives of working life (companies), VET providers, teachers and students. Stakeholder cooperation covers all levels of administration (VET providers, national level).

Attention has been paid, among other things, to **a close link between training and the world of work** (work-based training and apprenticeship training, competence-based qualifications) and **cooperation with companies** (including assessment of learning outcomes), **quality of education and training**, **recognition of prior competencies** (reduces the duration of study periods), **more diverse learning environments** (for example, on-the-job learning), **more effective entry processes** (electronic application services, guidance counselling) and reduction of the drop-out rate. About 9% of students in Finland discontinue their studies. This is quite low by European standards.

Structure of vocational education and training

VET comprises **initial vocational education and training, and vocational further training**. **Initial vocational education and training** covers training that leads to a vocational **upper secondary qualification** and preparatory training for VET. Most students in initial vocational education are young, but also adults participate in it. **Vocational further training** for adults who are already in working life includes training leading to **further vocational qualifications and specialist vocational qualifications** and continuing training that does not lead to a qualification.

In Finland **vocational adult education and training is largely based on a system of competence-based qualifications**. This means that a person's **vocational competence can be recognised** independent of whether it has been acquired through work experience, studies or other activities. Candidates attending the competence-based qualification examination participate nearly without exception in **preparatory training for competence-based qualification**. A personalised study plan is prepared for each candidate. The qualification is

usually completed one module at a time. The system of competence-based qualifications is linked to working life and its competence needs. The qualification criteria are drawn up together with employers. The qualifications are granted by a qualification committee, which consists of a tripartite representation from the working life. Students demonstrate their vocational skills and competencies set in the qualification criteria primarily in real production and service situations in workplaces.

Vocational special education

Special education supports students in their studies and in their graduation. Vocational special education is **based on students' individual capabilities**. This means that students (young or adults) are given personalised instruction to meet their individual needs. Moreover, **an individual education plan (IEP)** is drawn up for each student with special needs. As a rule, instruction for students with special education needs takes place in **an ordinary classroom** or, if necessary, partly or wholly in special education groups. Students with the most severe disabilities attend school in vocational special education institutions. **About 14% of students in initial vocational education are special needs students**. The number of special needs students has increased in the past few years.

Apprenticeship training

Apprenticeship training is the most work-based form of VET. It **is based on a written fixed-term employment contract (apprenticeship contract) between an apprentice, aged 15 years or above, and an employer**. Approximately **70–80% of apprenticeship training takes place in the workplace**, where the apprentice's training is entrusted to an appointed workplace instructor(s). Theoretical studies are provided in vocational institutions. **Apprenticeship training accounts for about 20% of VET** and nearly all apprenticeship diplomas are acquired by participating in vocational skills demonstration tests. Most apprentices are over 20 years of age. The employer pays the apprentice's wages for the period of training that takes place in the workplace according to their collective agreement. For the period of theoretical studies, the apprentice receives social benefits, such as a daily allowance and travel and accommodation allowances. The employer receives compensation to cover the costs of training provided in the workplace. Apprenticeship training is a rapid and flexible way of responding to labour and competence needs, because the amount of apprenticeship training in different educational fields is not regulated.

Preparatory training for VET

Preparatory training for VET coaches students for entry into initial VET and helps them find ways to complete a vocational upper secondary qualification. VET takes into account students' individual learning needs and interests. These may include improving immigrants' language skills, developing practical skills required in everyday life, or helping students find apprenticeship training. The training lasts for about one year (60 credits) but, if possible, students can smoothly transfer to vocational training during the programme.

On-the-job learning as part of an initial vocational qualification organised in the form of initial vocational education and training

Work-based learning

An initial vocational qualification organised in the form of initial VET (in an educational institution) includes a minimum of 20 credits acquired at a workplace (after 1 August 2015 a minimum of 30 credits), which means learning practical skills relevant to the qualification. In studies leading to an initial vocational qualification, the VET provider arranges a workplace for the student for the period of work-based learning. As a rule, **students are not in an employment relationship but retain their student status and social benefits**. Employers do not receive any compensation for their costs. The workplace for the work-based learning period can be also abroad. Teachers and coaches in the workplace plan and manage the work-based learning period and together with the students assess how they have reached the set objectives during the period.

Expanded work-based learning

The legislation on vocational education and training does not set maximum threshold for work-based learning. The Ministry of Education and Culture funded pilot projects on extended work-based learning in 2008–2013. The purpose was to increase and diversify personalised opportunities for work-based and pragmatic vocational studies; to promote entry into VET; to support mastery of skills required in working life; to facilitate completion of initial vocational qualifications; to reduce the drop-out rate; and to support the transition from VET to working life. Depending on the students' needs and the opportunities in the workplaces, the workload in work-based training has ranged between 30 and 80 credits – the normal scope of credits is at least 20 credits. The pilot projects have also combined **extended work-based learning and initial VET leading to an initial vocational qualification (studies in an educational institution) and apprenticeship training**.

Development projects to increase on-the-job learning:

2 + 1 model

This model combines studies leading to an initial vocational qualification organised in the form of initial VET (studies in an educational institution) **and apprenticeship training**. Students start their studies in an educational institution and transfer flexibly to apprenticeship as soon as they master the basic vocational skills and competencies. Should the apprenticeship training discontinue, the studies continue normally in an educational institution. **In this model, students can insert even short apprenticeship contracts in their study plans according to their individual needs to develop their competencies.**

Combination of studies in an educational institution, workshops and apprenticeship training in the workplace

Students start the studies in an educational institution or workshop and move on smoothly to apprenticeship training as soon as they master the basic vocational skills and competencies. Students can **also start in apprenticeship training** in which case the apprenticeship contract is concluded first **with a workshop** and later with an employer. Should the apprenticeship training discontinue, the student continues to study in an educational institution. In this model, students can insert even short apprenticeship contracts in their study plans according to their individual needs to develop their competencies. During studies in an educational institution or workshop, **students become acquainted with the workplace and its line of activities and the employer gets to know the student.**

Experience shows that for **work-intensive training paths to be successful employers must be willing to and interested in participating in their implementation. When studies are expanded to working environments, students need sufficient guidance and a sufficient degree of independence and commitment to longer-term on-the-job studies. To implement work-intensive training pathways, VET providers must arrange the most suitable form of training available for each student,** and plan the content of training paying attention to the student's individual need to develop skills and competencies. They must also develop the pedagogical practices used for guidance and support in on-the-job studies, and ensure sufficient resources for these activities. Moreover, **collaboration between training and education and working life is intensified.**

Compilation of statistics

Statistics Finland collects data on student life and their integration into working life after completing a vocational qualification. A year after graduation, about 80% of those with an apprenticeship diploma had a full-time job. Among those with a diploma from a vocational institution, about 55% have found full-time employment within a year after graduation.

Further information about the structure of vocational education in Finland:

http://www.oph.fi/download/131431_vocational_education_and_training_in_finland.pdf

The Finnish guidance system

Summary

Compared to many countries Finland has a well-established and professionalized guidance system. One of the main challenges is related to the Youth Guarantee Initiative, how to reach the adolescents who are not using the existing career services. Second, how to engage the employers in developing lifelong learning and guidance services. On policy level the challenge is to guarantee political emphasis for lifelong guidance and the sufficient economic resources during the economic recession and savings in the public services. In order to promote cost-effective use of existing resources the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy and the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture have jointly initiated a national development

programme 2014-20 with an aim to establish a multi-channelled integrated guidance system with a joint concept in stand-alone online services and regional low-threshold one-stop centers. (“Ohjaamo centers”). The establishment of the centers during the initial phase is funded by the European Social Funds and based on local partnerships. The challenge is how to guarantee long term sustainability and agreements on joint financing and joint management of these services. The development of sustainable evidence-base and quality assurance is on progress as a joint initiative of both ministries responsible for guidance services.

The Finnish guidance system:

The service model in the employment and business services is based on three service lines and on support for business competence development. The aim is to enhance faster placement of job-seekers, match the level of services with different client groups and guarantee versatile and efficient multi-channelled service delivery. Based on the individual evaluated needs the clients are signposted to one of the following three service lines:

- **Employment and Business Services** are targeted for clients who have skills and competences for direct placement in open labour market either as self-employed or employed. The client group consists of individual changing jobs, graduates and starting entrepreneurs. This service line has the main responsibility of services for employers and enterprises.
- **Business Competence Development Services** have the responsibility of services for clients who need upskilling or support in defining their goals and future options. The clients consists of individuals who need support for career choices, career changes, upgrading of competences, completion of studies, validation of prior learning or support for migrants.
- **Supported Employment Services** are targeted for individuals who need assessment of their ability to work or individual support in developing their employability skills. The clients have often more than one hindering factors in their transition to labour market, e.g. low basic skills, low professional skills or there is a need for a thorough assessment of their ability to work using multi-professional co-operation.

As a whole, the key mission in the reform is to organize the services which meet the evaluated needs of various client groups. The reform is very comprehensive and it covers the overall service delivery, offices, vacancies and job profiles, online services, visual appearance and legislation. In the new legislation the previous separate concepts “vocational guidance”, “educational advice” and “vocational rehabilitation” were merged into one concept “vocational guidance and career planning” as follows ⁹⁴:

“Employment and economic development authorities may offer vocational guidance and career planning to support jobseeker clients in making career choices, in

⁹⁴ Act on public employment and business service (Issued in Helsinki 28 December 2012; <http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/kaannokset/2012/en20120916.pdf>)

occupational development, placement in working life, and lifelong learning. With the client's consent, appropriate psychological assessment methods may be used in order to assess a jobseeker client's vocational and career options, competence, and suitability, if necessary."

During the last few decades most of the reforms in the employment offices have been focusing on the placement services, but in the latest reform also the vocational guidance psychologists have to reorganize their work. Two thirds of the psychologists were placed into the Business Competence Development Services, one forth into the Supported Employment Services and only few psychologists into Employment and Business Services. As an outcome of the reform the traditional vocational guidance came to an end as an organizational stand-alone service provided by vocational psychologists. However, it will be available for clients in a new visible format. The reform of the employment and business services was targeted mainly for job-seekers, but the role of the vocational psychologists as a part of the reform is not clear. They could play an important role, because over half of their clients are also job-seekers and there is a growing need for staff with good guidance skills and psychologists have a long and strongest tradition of it.

In the course of the reform, the attention has been paid to promotion of guidance related work approach, especially in the Supported Employment Services. However, the experts in charge of placement do not necessarily have basic guidance skills, experience in individual guidance processes or knowledge of the Finnish educational system. The implementation of the reform is taking its first steps, but it seems that there is an organizational need for competences of vocational psychologists and former educational advisers. Like in any reforms, there is still at the same a number of new concepts and definitions which need clarification among the professionals within the organization during the implementation process. For example, which client needs can be met with "psychological counselling" provided by vocational psychologists.

The basis of "psychological counselling" is psychology and psychological methods. The aim is to analyze the client situation and to promote a psychic process, which helps the client to define one's personal relationship with the labour market. Compared to the work of other experts in all the three new service lines the vocational psychologists set more comprehensive goals with the clients and focus on supporting key psychic factors and lowering potential thresholds. The work of the psychologist the guidance related approach is applied by interaction with clients and support on individual process.

Experts of employment and economic development services aim to help their clients to find education and training, career choice or career solutions that are compatible with their life situation. The clients have the opportunity to use online services or the national helpline, or visit the nearest local TE office. The TE offices also support the clients in developing or implementing their career plans through education and training with the following options:

- **Vocational labour market training** is targeted for those who want to improve their vocational skills and possibilities of finding a job. The clients can also complete their comprehensive school studies, if lack of a basic education certificate is barrier to starting their vocational studies.
- **Entrepreneur training** is targeted for clients who are thinking about starting their own business or have already started one.

- **Integration training** provides immigrants with basic skills needed in vocational education and training or working life and in Finnish society.
- **Self-motivated study on unemployment benefit** may be possible on certain conditions, if no training that is suitable for the client can be found among the labour market training programmes. Studies of this type must always be arranged with the TE Office.
- **Apprenticeship training** can be a pathway to a vocational qualification. The clients can also improve their skills by completing some modules of a qualification.

The role of vocational guidance within the totality of guidance resources

The current guidance services including the career education in schools and information, advice and guidance in employment offices in Finland are derived from vocational guidance from employment sector. However, guidance services seem to grow in their importance in implementing the modern employment services. Growing complexity in the society and labour market require lifelong guidance alongside lifelong learning.

As lifelong guidance crosses different sectors, it is distributed across educational, labour market, social and health provision, under different ministries and other jurisdictions (schools, tertiary education, public employment services, social partners, the voluntary sector, the private sector, different projects). One of the key roles of such services is to help individuals to move effectively across sectors in the course of their personal and career development. Effective policies for lifelong guidance and consistent service provision need to involve a number of different authorities and stakeholders.

The increased attention to guidance services has raised mutual awareness among the service providers. As all providers are facing the growing demand of guidance with decreasing financial resources it has been necessary to develop co-ordination mechanisms between different sectors. In order to avoid overlapping services and a new trend has emerged towards to flexible development of the totality of guidance services. The Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Ministry of Education and Culture established in 2010 a national lifelong guidance working group which was extended in 2011 into National Lifelong Guidance Coordination and Cooperation Group. The goal of this national forum is to enhance national, regional and local information, advice and guidance services with lifelong approach, support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee Initiative and strengthen multi-administrative and multi-professional co-operation among the service providers and policy makers. The National Lifelong Guidance Coordination and Cooperation Group has defined the following strategic objectives for developing lifelong and life wide guidance in Finland:

1. Services will be equally accessible for all and they meet the individual needs
2. Individual career management skills will be strengthened
3. Those who work in the field of guidance will have the required knowledge, skills and competences
4. A quality assurance system for guidance will be developed
5. The guidance system will function as a coherent and holistic entity

In 2013 the regional Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY-centres) were given a task to coordinate the development work on lifelong guidance provision in their own region. The co-ordination task is supported by regional lifelong guidance working

groups with representatives of the service providers and key stake holders. This new coordination model of guidance services is implemented in accordance with the five strategic goals for lifelong guidance in Finland as defined by the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy in 2011.

Future development of integrated and coherent all-age guidance services

The emerging need for guidance services reflects the increased complexity in global societies as well as the increased transitions in the citizens' lives. Also in Finland the range of guidance service providers has expanded. In meeting the needs of individuals in different transition phases the services provided by schools, training institutes, TE offices, local social and health professionals, youth workers, workshops, trade unions, community services and private providers. In order to avoid overlapping and to promote the more cost-effective use of existing resources the Finnish Ministry of Employment and the Economy and the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture have jointly initiated a national development programme 2014-20 with an aim to establish an integrated all-age guidance service with local one-stop-centers ("Ohjaamo centers"). The establishment of the Ohjaamo centers during the initial phase is funded by the European Social Funds national programme, but the long term sustainability will be based on agreements on joint financing and joint management.

In addition to the national lifelong guidance strategies a key driver initiating the one-stop centers was the launch of the national Youth Guarantee Initiative in 2013, requiring that each person younger than 25 years and each recent graduate under 30 years of age should be offered work, a traineeship, or a study, workshop or labour market rehabilitation place within three months of becoming unemployed. This requires strong collaboration between local organizations, to ensure that guidance services meet the challenges posed by the guarantee. The initiative will take into account the experiences of regional pilot projects which are already working in accordance to the guarantee.

Ohjaamo activities are based on trust and partnership, representing a new kind of co-created and co-financed concept of services and activities. At the initial stage, Ohjaamo activities are provided for young people and at a later stage to all age groups. By participating in Ohjaamo activities, the individual will be able to create a personal and functional relationship with learning and work, to make decisions related to these and to build a well-functioning learning and work career. This will improve the individual's career planning skills; the individual's attitude, motivation and capacities enable his/her favourable activities, in particular during the transition stages related to learning and work.

Engaging employers

In Finland the employers and the enterprises participate in so called tripartite co-operation. This means co-operation between public administration (state and municipalities), employer organisations and trade unions in defining both short and long term goals for educational and labour market policies. A concrete example of this co-operation is the Finnish model of Youth Guarantee Initiative which is described in more details in the answer for question 16. The tripartite co-operation takes place both nationally and regionally.

In the Finnish education system the employers and enterprises participate in labour force development, training and employment by providing placement for Practical Professional

Orientation periods for students in basic education, internships for VET students and traineeships for students in higher education. In the apprenticeship programmes the employers have a crucial role, because a major part of the vocational training takes place in the work place. In the validation process of prior learning of adults the competence-based exams takes place in the work places as well.

The clients of the employment and economic offices can attend to labour market training which is jointly funded by the companies and employment services. The content of the training is customized to meet the competence needs of local employers and companies. The companies provide placements for short traineeships to test different occupations and also short term placement with wage-subsidy from the employment services. The employment services have a long tradition on local and national co-operation and this co-operation has been even strengthened during the last decade. The current emphasis is to develop the forecasts on labour market information by structured co-operation.

How local labour market information is used in Finland so that young people are trained for jobs that are required by the economy

Vocational upper secondary education and higher education (provided by universities of applied sciences and universities) are funded and administered by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Labour market training services, which are primarily meant for people who are unemployed or under the threat of becoming unemployed, are acquired by the employment and economic development administration.

Labour market training is vocationally oriented and partly planned and acquired in cooperation with employees (so-called joint purchase of training). It can lead to a degree, a part of a degree or a general vocational qualification in the labour market. In addition, the training programmes can complement existing professional skills and help develop expertise. Entrepreneur training is also organised under labour market training for persons planning to start their own business. Education and training services are purchased from both publicly funded training institutions and private training service providers. Young persons under 25 take part in labour market training (about 16% of those enrolled on the training annually), even though young people's main route to vocationally oriented training is self-motivated studies funded by the education administration.

Service acquisitions in labour market training are funded from the appropriations in the Budget earmarked for the management of employment. About EUR 160 million is used annually for the acquisition of services for vocationally oriented training. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy allocates the appropriations for the 15 Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (ELY Centres), which are responsible for the targeting and implementation of training service acquisitions. In their foresight activities concerning future training needs, the ELY Centres collaborate with the local Employment and Economic Development Offices (TE Offices). Both ELY Centres and TE Offices maintain regular contacts with the regional councils, municipalities, entrepreneur and employee associations, education and training organisations and companies, organisation active in developing business life, and other regional and local players. The TE Offices' vast amount of information about jobseekers and companies looking for employees is utilised in the foresight activities.

Advantage is also taken of ELY Centres' direct contacts with businesses in their region, for example, in issues concerning business finance and business services. As a rule, the above procedure is followed in each region, but there are some differences in the composition of the network of contacts of the employment and economic development administration in each ELY Centre region. For example, all regions do not have a university or the structure of the local field of associations is built up differently.

Several authorities, labour market organisations, universities and educational institutions, research institutes, etc. have produced national, regional or branch-specific reports, which describe, for example, developments in the general economic situation and markets, changes in the labour market and industrial structure, qualitative and quantitative changes in the demand for labour, or changes in skills and expertise requirements. Along with direct contacts, this information is used to support the targeting of training. The majority of the information describes changes in the past few years but the reports also often seek to look further ahead and take a long-term perspective. In addition to the above-mentioned information illustrating the national situation, international economic and other developments are, of course, followed as well. Based on a survey conducted in 2014, training specialists in the ELY Centres and TE Offices use a total of 60 different sources of information in their foresight activities.

ELY Centres and TE Offices use not only their own information systems but also electronic tools, such as ForeAmmatti, an online service collecting information about vacancies and jobseekers from a broad range of sources, and other foresight information provided on the internet. TE Offices' Ammattibarometri is an online tool for citizens and companies, which can be used to follow how the demand for and supply of labour match regionally and nationally in certain most common occupations and professions.

There is a wealth of information available about the labour and education and training markets, some of which is often contradictory, as well as silent information. It is therefore very challenging for the public servants responsible for training service acquisitions in the ELY Centres to produce an overall picture of what kind of package of training services acquisitions would serve best the needs of jobseekers and employers and promote employment and companies' success.

Specialists in the ELY Centres form a network under the Ministry of Employment and the Economy and conduct dialogue about training service acquisition plans in different regions and about open questions relating to foresight tasks or about problems linked with the targeting of acquisitions. The objective is to reduce overlap between different ELY regions' acquisitions, to agree about appropriate distribution of work concerning acquisitions, and to decide about possible special responsibilities of ELY Centres in the implementation of training in a certain field. It is also possible to decide that two or many ELY Centres collaborate, for example, when plans are made concerning the training needs of a large company with several offices around the country and when that training is provided.

KEHA Centre, a decentralised office, which focuses on supporting the administration of TE Offices in development and administrative matters, was founded at the beginning of 2015. Its

responsibilities involve developing and coordinating the foresight activities of employment services. The activities have only just started and the future shows how they will evolve.

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy collaborates with the Ministry of Education and Culture in the context of foresight plans. For example, the Ministries co-finance research carried out by the Institute for Economic Research (VATT), which provides background for the preparation of education and training development plans in the Ministry of Education and Culture used in analyses in the Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

Ultimately, the supply of labour market training consists of the fairly standard volume of training services provided in the biggest lines of training on the one hand and of annually modified training on the other. This is complemented by employees' jointly purchased training service packages and different innovative training programmes and, for example, training related to ESF projects (early stage researchers). Even though a marked part of the training can from year to year focus on certain big industries, the contents of individual training programmes are revised according to changes in the skills requirements in the world of work and updated degree requirements in the education administration. Revisions are made as required in the duration of training, the amount of on-the-job learning or practical training, different permits and licences (e.g. occupational safety or hot work cards, hygiene passport, welding classes, special licences for different vehicles, IT cards, etc.).

Drawing on foresight information, the aim is obviously to make sure that the supply of labour market training matches the projected skills and training needs at both the regional and national levels and that the supply serves both employees and jobseekers. In addition, the purpose of the training services supplied by the employment and economic administration is to complement the education and training services funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The attainment of the goals is followed by means of, for example, information about the participants' subsequent situation, filled vacancies, and student feedback after training. The received follow-up and feedback information complement the picture obtained on the basis of foresight information and helps in the preparation of training plans in the future.

2 October 2015

Ministry of Social Development, Government of New Zealand – Written evidence (SMO0032)

Youth Service

The **Youth Service**, established in 2012, is a contracted service whereby community-based providers work with unemployed or disengaged 16-to-18 year olds. The Ministry of Social Development (MSD) provides the service in regions where there are no providers contracted to provide the service. More than \$148 million in services are being targeted towards these groups over four years.

The current Youth Service is designed to:

- discourage an early reliance on the benefit system
- reduce long term welfare dependency
- ensure that young people remain in education and training in return for the assistance they receive.

As at June 2015, 10,123 of these teens are 16 and 17 year olds who are not receiving financial assistance from the Government and are not in education, employment or training (NEET). Participation for NEETs in the Youth Service is voluntary and these youth are risk profiled to ensure that the Youth Service is targeting the right people. The Youth Service also supports around 1,921 sixteen to 17 year olds without children and 1,187 sixteen to 18 year old parents who are receiving financial assistance from the Government.

Youth Service providers deliver intensive wrap around support to vulnerable youth to improve their educational and social outcomes and reduce welfare dependency or the chance of them coming onto benefit. Providers assist these youth to meet their obligations and transition them to independence over time. A youth coach regularly engages with a young person providing mentoring and advice to improve the young person's educational participation and achievement, financial literacy, parenting skills and other outcomes, such as health.

Young people who are receiving financial assistance from the Government:

- receive the Youth Payment (YP) or Young Parent Payment (YPP)
- have youth activity obligations (education, budgeting and, for parents, parenting education) and can receive incentive payments (\$10 a week) where they meet these obligations
- have their money managed by MSD with an associated sanctions regime and
- for young parents, receive additional support to cover childcare costs.

Providers have incentivised outcome-based contracts which consist of administration fees, milestone payments and success fees for achieving outcomes. The outcomes sought include:

- sustained participation in education achieving at least NCEA level 2 or equivalent

- a plan for further education or training on exiting the Youth Service, and
- to not be receiving a benefit or serving a custodial sentence within three months of exiting the Youth Service.

Early findings suggest the Youth Service is working well for vulnerable young people. Although it is too early to say definitively, the 2014 Youth Service evaluation showed that the Service is having a positive impact on assisting young people.

At the end of March 2014, the number of YP recipients transitioning to a working-age benefit dropped eight percentage points compared to previous young beneficiaries (from 38 per cent to 30 per cent). In addition, YP and YPP recipients are more likely to gain NCEA credits than their predecessors, meaning they will have a greater chance of achieving NCEA Level 2 and gaining sustainable employment.

Anecdotal findings also found that the youth coach played a pivotal role in helping young people set goals and focus on their education. Many providers tell us that the young people they work with face many challenges and that supporting them to get their lives back on track takes time. As well as assisting new clients, providers will be able to build on the relationships they have forged with the young people in service.

Social Security (Extension of Young Persons Services and Remedial Matters) Amendment Bill *Policy intent of the Bill*

The Bill amends the Social Security Act 1964 (the Act) to extend the Youth Service to a broader group of young beneficiaries with the aim of providing them with more support and reducing the likelihood of being on a benefit long term. The extension applies to 19 year old parents, and 18 and 19 year old clients who need more support and are at significant risk of being on a benefit long term.

By extending the upper age of eligibility for the Young Parent Payment from 18 years to 19 years, all teen parents will have access to the Youth Service intensive wrap-around support. Nineteen year old parents will have the same youth activity obligations and incentives as younger teen parents who are currently in the Youth Service. It is estimated that 1,200 nineteen year old teen parents could be referred to or continue in the Youth Service each year.

The Bill will allow MSD to refer 18 and 19 year old beneficiaries (without dependent children) who are considered at significant risk of being on a benefit long term to the Youth Service. They will receive wrap-around support, while remaining on their existing benefit. All 18 and 19 year olds in this extension group will continue to have work-related obligations (either the work test or work preparation obligations) in addition to obligations related to the Youth Service. As educational attainment significantly lowers the risk of long-term benefit dependency, MSD will have discretion to allow clients receiving Jobseeker Support to have a deferral of their work obligations to allow full-time study where they do not yet have NCEA Level 2.

Not all 18 and 19 year old beneficiaries are at significant risk of being on a benefit long term and need the wrap-around support that the Youth Service provides. Because this is a costly and intensive service, it will be directed to those considered as most at risk and who will most

benefit from the service. MSD will use a risk model to assess an 18 or 19 year old beneficiary's risk of future welfare dependence which is likely to include risk factors such as a young person's education level, gender, the reason for leaving school, and whether they have had contact with Child, Youth and Family. It is estimated that around 2,700 eighteen and 19 year old beneficiaries will be referred to the Youth Service each year as a result of the extension.

Timeline for the Bill

The Bill was read a first time in the House of Representatives on 23 July 2015 and referred to the Social Services Committee.

Submissions on the Bill are due by 9 September 2015, with hearings on submissions scheduled for mid to late October. The Social Services Committee will report back to the House of Representatives in January 2016.

Limited Service Volunteer

In addition to the Youth Service, MSD is also responsible for Limited Service Volunteer (LSV). LSV is a partnership programme between the Ministry, the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and the New Zealand Police.

It is a six-week, voluntary training programme for 18 to 25-year-old jobseekers who are at risk of long-term unemployment. It aims to increase the number of young people entering employment by improving participants' self-discipline, self-confidence, motivation and initiative.

Since 2012, the Ministry has contracted with the NZDF to deliver the programme from three sites, for up to 1,500 places per year. From 1 July 2015, the programme is delivered from two sites, for up to 800 places per year. The change in the number of sites and places is because of falling youth unemployment rates following the global financial crisis and the reduction in the number of suitable clients to refer to LSV.

Approximately 50 percent of participants who complete the programme go into work or training.

11 September 2015

State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (part of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research), Swiss Confederation – Written evidence (SMO0117)

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Evidence to House of Lords Social Mobility Committee:

Preparing Young People for the World of Work – The Case of Switzerland

Evidence submitted by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (part of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research), Swiss Confederation

21.9.2015

Management Summary

1. The main system for preparing young people for work in Switzerland consists of **two pre-dominant and equally respected path-ways**: around two thirds of young people choose a three- or four-year apprenticeship at the age of about 15/16 which qualifies them directly for skilled work, while a minority follow an academic track via selective “high schools” and universities.

2. The apprenticeship route typically consists of practical training (work-based learning) in a company with one or two days per week spent at a local vocational college (**dual-track apprenticeship**). A full apprenticeship lasts three or four years (depending on the complexity of the occupation) and leads to a federal diploma, which represents the national standard for each occupation. There are also two-year apprenticeships for the more practical oriented learners that lead to a federal certificate and Bridge courses for students who require more support and/or time in finding an appropriate apprenticeship place at a host company. Those students who choose high school usually only enter the labour market upon completion of an academic degree on the tertiary level.

3. As the two main routes into employment, **both the academic and the vocational route are well known**. Choosing between the different options is facilitated by support from families (most families have personal experience of the apprenticeship route), schools, the regional and national education authorities and from employers. The positive aspects of vocational training are relatively easy to communicate since it is the main route into work which offers good and prestigious career progression opportunities, a well-developed system of continuing professional education at the tertiary level, and recognized commercial rewards. The main responsibility for general provision of career guidance lies with the regional authorities, the cantons. **Career counselling in schools starts during the pupils’ early teens** to find out about specific opportunities; it is complemented by local centres which offer information and

advice. Pupils have to apply for an apprenticeship place at a company before they get enrolled in a regional VET school. Very important therefore is the **practice of taster apprenticeships** (pre-vocational traineeships with a duration up to two weeks), which allow them not only to gain first-hand information on a certain occupation but also to get to know their potential future employer. For companies this practice serves as a recruiting tool. **Employers' associations** (who actually take the lead in defining the content of each apprenticeship framework) are very active by providing information and promotional material for young people and by organizing job fairs. The engagement of the private sector is strong because companies have an interest in attracting the best-suited learners.

4. During the transitions between school/apprenticeships and apprenticeship/working world, young people are monitored by their school and their regional authority. Difficult cases are supported on an individual basis and "life skills" modules are taught in school to help young people into transitional education. **Case management** has been introduced with the aim to identify vulnerable young people at an early stage and help them through the transitions ultimately integrating them into the working process. At the macro level, the "**apprenticeship barometer**", is used to monitor the transition into vocational training. It is a statistical tool that monitors the match of apprenticeship demand and supply and is based on a written business survey carried out twice a year as well as on a telephone survey of young people between the ages of 14 and 20. In addition, the cantons carry out a monthly survey of supply and demand in the apprenticeship market. Another tool, the "**graduate employment barometer**" monitors first-time job prospects of VET students after graduation.

5. **The chances of finding employment and the subsequent career trajectories for people in Switzerland who do not choose the academic "high school"/university track are very good.** Youth unemployment stood at 8.5% in 2013. The employment barometer for vocational students showed that about 66% of all VET degree holders immediately entered the working world after graduation while about 20% enrolled in continuing education at tertiary level and only about 9% of all VET graduates were unemployed or job-seeking in the year right after their graduation. Because of a wide range of opportunities for further study and training at universities of applied sciences, specialized schools and through professional development modules, career trajectories for vocational learners are very good and economically attractive, even in comparison to university graduate careers.

The Swiss Education and Training System

Answer to Question:

- *What is the system in Switzerland for preparing young people for the world of work?*

6. In Switzerland there exist **two pre-dominant and equally respected path-ways for young people to enter the labour market after compulsory education**⁹⁵. At the age of about 15/16, they may embark upon **vocational education and training** (VET) by applying for an

⁹⁵ Compulsory education lasts eleven years in most cantons and is subdivided into primary school (8 years) and lower-secondary education (3 years).

apprenticeship at a host company on the self-regulating apprenticeship market⁹⁶ or they may follow the **general education track** by passing an entrance exam to one of the **general education schools**. In most of the cases, following the general education track means postponing the entering of the labour market until having achieved an academic degree on the tertiary level while with the completing of a VET apprenticeship young people will already have achieved a national qualification that is well recognised on the labour market at the age of about 18/19 (Federal VET Certificate or Federal VET Diploma).

7. In the following, figure 1 presents a diagrammatic overview of the Swiss education system.

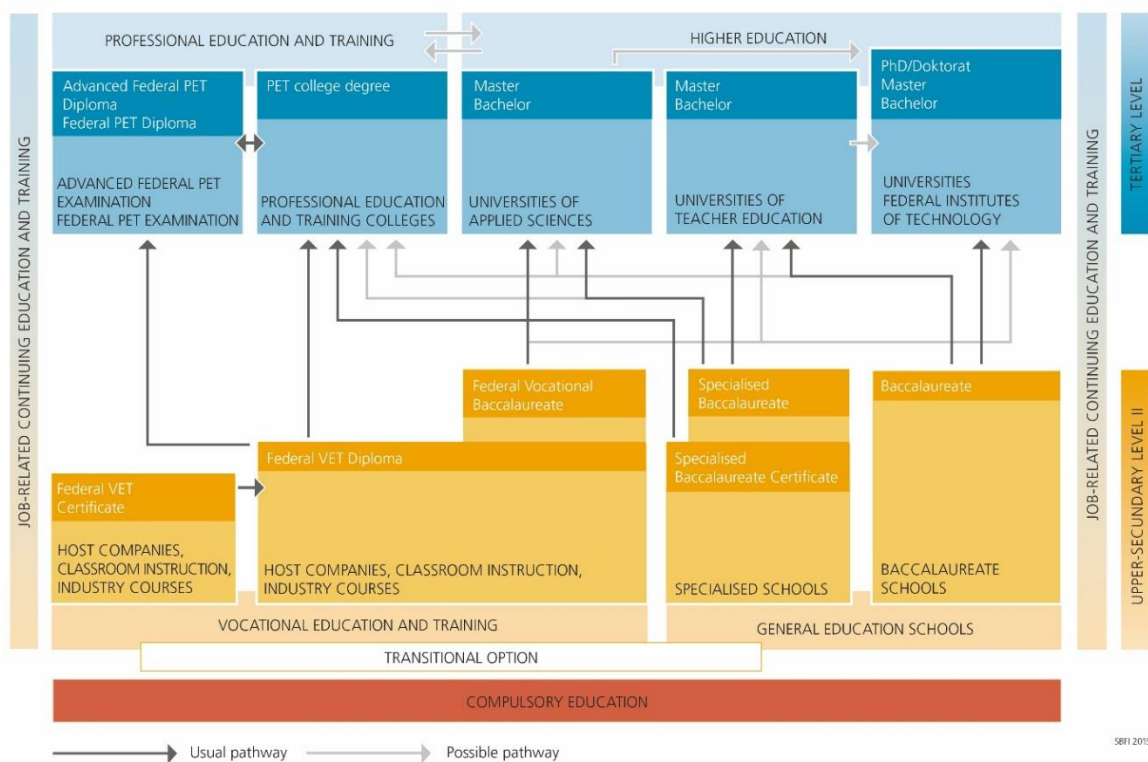


Figure 1: The different paths after compulsory education in Switzerland (SERI, 2015b)

8. As laid down in the Swiss Constitution⁹⁷, the Confederation and the cantons, within the scope of their powers, not only jointly ensure the high quality and accessibility of the Swiss Education Area, but also they ensure that equal recognition of general and vocational courses of study is achieved in society. This paragraph was adopted by a popular vote in May 2006 by an overwhelming majority of the Swiss population showing that VET and also general education schools are both well respected options for young people in the Swiss educational landscape.

⁹⁶ In Switzerland, the most common variety of apprenticeship is the dual-track type consisting of practical training at a host company and the VET school as compared to fully school-based apprenticeships.

⁹⁷ Federal Constitution, Art. 61a, Sec. 1 & 3

9. Considering the Swiss education system, regardless of following the VET track or the general education track, two transitions are critical in determining the future prospects of young people and young adults: the transition from lower-secondary (compulsory school) to upper-secondary level (transition I)⁹⁸ and the transition from upper-secondary level to working life or to tertiary academic and professional education (transition II).

10. At transition I, nearly two-thirds of students leaving compulsory education opt for an apprenticeship in one of approximately 230 professions in vocational and educational training (VET). Since the overwhelming majority of Swiss VET programmes follows the dual-track variety, students opting for that option first need to find an apprenticeship place at a company on the free apprenticeship market. After the conclusion of an apprenticeship contract, they will be assigned to a VET school for the theoretical part of their education. **Only about one-third of all students decides to attend a further general education school (baccalaureate schools or upper-secondary specialised schools),** which also requires the passing of a selective entrance exam. The direct relationship of VET with the world of work helps to integrate young people into the labour market. Switzerland has a low rate of youth unemployment⁹⁹: in 2013, this figure stood at 8.5%¹⁰⁰.

11. At transition II and by the ending of upper-secondary level, the majority of VET degree holders enter the job market as qualified labour force. The principle of self-regulation on the apprenticeship market and a strong private sector involvement in curriculum development leads to a relatively good match of VET graduates and the labour market because companies offer only those apprenticeship places that are useful for their business. Even though apprentices often leave their training companies and seek work elsewhere¹⁰¹, the collective training commitment of a given sector is a good indicator of its actual demand for skilled labour. Therefore, those apprentices who decide to start working directly after having received their VET diploma usually find a job that fits their qualifications. **The majority of the students having chosen the general education track opts for continuing education at tertiary level** since their degree qualifies them to enter university in most of the cases directly without further examination. However, a general education degree on upper-secondary level does not qualify them for skilled work on the labour market.

⁹⁸ Here, the alternative to upper-secondary education would be to enter the labour market as an unqualified employee. However, almost 95% of the 25-year-olds in Switzerland (including migrants) are holders of an upper-secondary degree.

⁹⁹ SECO definition of youth unemployment rate: the number of registered unemployed people aged 15-24 divided by the size of the labour force (4,322,899 people as of 1 January 2010) according to the 2010 structural survey conducted by the federal population census, multiplied by 100.

¹⁰⁰ Youth unemployment rate in 2013 according to the ILO, FSO: http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/03/03/blank/data/02.html#parsys_00161, 6 February 2015.

¹⁰¹ After graduation, about two of five apprentices remain employed at their host company thus reducing the company's recruiting costs. (SERI, 2012b, p. 3)

12. **The Swiss education system is characterised by a high degree of accessibility and permeability, which encourages mobility between educational levels and tracks.** Therefore, regardless of having finished upper-secondary level with a VET or a general education degree, the foundation is laid for life-long learning at tertiary level education. The tertiary level of the Swiss education system consists of tertiary A education (academic/cantonal universities, federal technical institutes of technology, universities of applied sciences, universities of teacher education¹⁰²) and tertiary B education (professional education and training). At and after transition II, several options exist to pass from the VET-track to university education and vice versa from the general education track to professional education and training. The VET track as well as the general education track and their likely career paths are outlined in more detail in section 2.

13. Thus, having the majority of students leaving compulsory school education at the age of about 15, occupational preparation and career counselling starts early and is integrated into the syllabus at lower-secondary level with respect to transition I as well as at upper-secondary level with respect to transition II. The system of career counselling and its several instruments are presented in section 3. For young people who do not enter upper-secondary level directly after lower secondary level, interim solutions in the form of bridge-year courses are provided by the government.

14. Further, the Swiss education system is characterised by federalism and subsidiarity, which means that governmental power and responsibilities are shared between the central state (confederation) and the 26 federal regions (cantons) and that nothing that can be done at a lower political level should be done at a higher political level. Also, the private sector with its numerous associations and organisations is meant to regulate itself to the highest degree possible. **Therefore, the Confederation, cantons and professional organisations (trade associations, social partners and companies) all work together in Private Public Partnerships (PPPs) to establish the general conditions for the occupational integration and training of young adults.** The division of tasks between those three partners as well as specialised support provided to young people with difficulties is outlined in section 4.

15. Increasing the graduation rate at upper-secondary level has been one of the six education policy objectives established by the Confederation and the cantons in 2011 and reconfirmed and expanded in 2015¹⁰³. By 2020, 95% of all 25-year-olds should have an upper-secondary level qualification (VET or general education diploma). Today, the graduation rate at upper-secondary level stands almost at 95%. Still young people from a migration background, who have not gone through the whole Swiss education system, put a challenge to the system and

¹⁰² There exist three types of universities in Switzerland, which form the sector of tertiary A education: academic universities (10 cantonal universities and 2 federal institutes of technology), 9 universities of applied science and 18 universities of teacher education

¹⁰³ http://www.edudoc.ch/static/web/aktuell/medienmitt/erklaerung_18052015_d.pdf

special efforts need to be done in order to better integrate them as well. Data collected by the government on the whole process of the transition of young people into the labour market is discussed in section 5 of the paper at hand.

The VET-Track and the General Education Track

Answer to Questions:

- *What options do young people have after they leave school to prepare them for the work place?*
- *What are the likely career trajectories for young people who do not go to university in Switzerland?*

16. There are two predominant path-ways young people are responsible to choose at transition I when leaving compulsory education: the VET-track or the general education-track. **It's one of the key features of the Swiss education system that at the tertiary-level, regardless of the initial choice, these two path-ways may reunite again at continuing academic education or professional education and training.** In the following, these two fundamental path-ways are described in detail before explaining the many possibilities of tertiary education for degree holders of both types of upper-secondary level education.

17. The VET-track (Upper secondary level)

Two-thirds of all young people coming out of compulsory education in Switzerland choose vocational education and training (VET). This will lead to a solid foundation in a given occupation. There are around 230 different apprenticeship professions to choose from. **Dual-track VET programmes are by far the most common form of vocational education and training in Switzerland. They consist of both part-time practical training accompanied by a VET trainer at a host company as well as part-time classroom instruction at a VET school¹⁰⁴.** The less common type in Switzerland are school-based VET programs with full-time classroom instruction and no company-based training¹⁰⁵. Figure 2 shows the distribution of all 76'897 students embarking on upper-secondary level education in 2014.

¹⁰⁴ The term apprenticeship in general refers to both, dual-track VET programmes (also referred to as a combined school/work-based VET programme) and school based VET programmes. www.vpet.ch

¹⁰⁵ SERI (2015b)

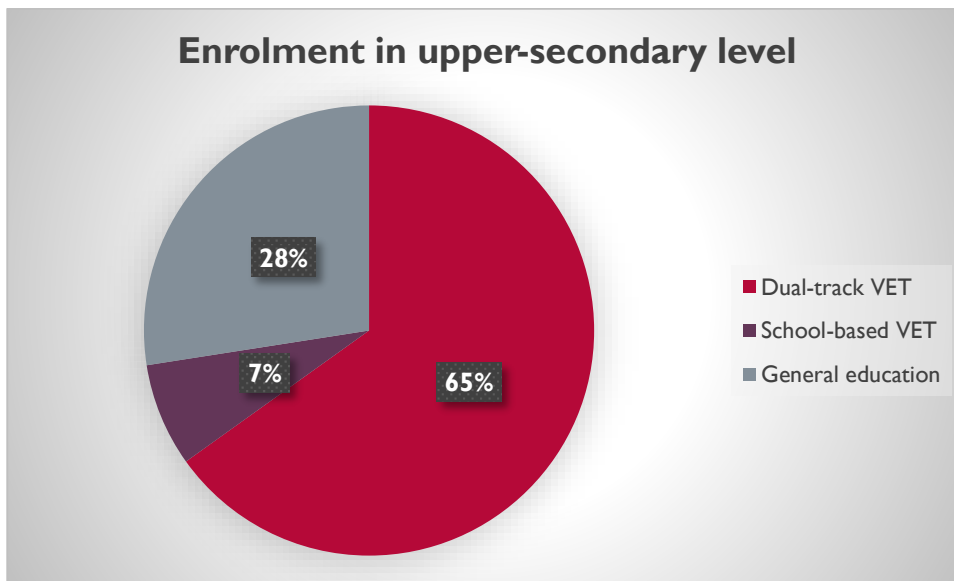


Figure 2: Enrolment in upper-secondary level (Federal Statistical Office, 2015)

18. Pupils initially may apply for either a three- or a four-year VET apprenticeship to receive the **nationally recognised and standardised Federal VET Diploma in a profession** or a two-year VET apprenticeship to receive the Federal VET Certificate. **Entry in such a VET programme happens through application for an apprenticeship position offered by a host company on a mostly self-regulated, voluntary market. State involvement only happens after such an apprenticeship contract is signed between apprentice and company to assign the apprentice to a corresponding VET school for the theoretical part of the education.** A shorter (two-year) option, the Federal VET Certificate, is especially designed for the more practical talented students and was a measure taken in 2004 in accordance with the above mentioned common education policy objective to increase the percentage of young people holding an upper-secondary qualification. Since graduates of the two-year VET program may afterwards enrol directly in a three- or four-year VET program, up-ward mobility is also given to that option. **However, the Federal VET Diploma and the Federal VET Certificate both qualify their holder with a well acknowledged degree to enter the labour market or, after some years of work experience, to continuing professional education and training also at tertiary level.**

19. Very strong learners on three-or four year apprenticeships have the option to add an additional academic module to their education which will give them access to the university sector: **The Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (FVB) will qualify them for further studies at Swiss universities of applied sciences (UAS) directly after their apprenticeship.** Further, FVB holders who pass the university aptitude test (UAT) have the option of even enrolling in an academic (cantonal) university or one of Switzerland's two Federal institutes of technology (FIT). All other holders of a VET diploma still have the possibility to attain the FVB whether full-time in one year or part-time in two years after their apprenticeship. In 2014, about 15%

of all VET graduates also obtained a FVB of which about 60% will enter a university of applied science in the subsequent years of their graduation¹⁰⁶.

20. The general education track (Upper secondary level)

Baccalaureate schools prepare students for further education especially at tertiary A level. There are baccalaureate schools (gymnasium) in all cantons. The structure and duration of Baccalaureate education vary according to the canton. It takes at least 12 years of schooling at primary, lower-secondary and upper-secondary level to obtain a Baccalaureate¹⁰⁷. Enrolment in a Baccalaureate school usually occurs in the last year of lower-secondary level. Entrance examinations are generally taken in written form. In some cases, additional oral exams are conducted. Apart from medical careers and some other exceptions mostly in the creative sector, there is the principle of examination-free access to Swiss universities for baccalaureate holders. In 2014, 20% of all 19-year-olds permanently resident in Switzerland obtained a baccalaureate, while regional deviation of over 6% in both directions can be observed¹⁰⁸.

21. Different from the VET programmes, the Baccalaureate itself is not sufficiently qualifying for the labour market. In order to become a qualified employee, further education either at tertiary-level in form of university studies, or, by far less common, an apprenticeship program specially designed by certain companies for Baccalaureate holders (leaving out the general education part) has to be completed¹⁰⁹. In the two years following their graduation, about 93% of all Baccalaureate holders attend tertiary A level education at either an academic university (76%), a UAS (10%) or a university of teacher education (7%).

22. A special case of further general education are upper-secondary specialised schools. They provide entirely school-based preparation for education later at tertiary level B, oriented towards a particular occupational field. Again, supplemented by a FVB, the specialised schools certificate qualifies for further studies at a university of applied sciences or a university of teacher education. Around 5% of all young people enrolled at upper-secondary level education complete the 3-year upper-secondary specialised school program and the specialised Baccalaureate program. Common tertiary-programs chosen afterwards are the universities of teacher education or the universities of applied science in the field of healthcare or fine arts.

23. Transitional options after compulsory education

Transitional options in the form of bridge-year courses are practical, workplace-related courses taken after the end of compulsory education. They focus on the requirements of vocational education and training. Bridge-year courses are in-tended to support young people in their choice of career and get them established in the world of work. They prepare them in readiness for vocational and professional education and training or general education at upper-secondary level. Key skills are nurtured and individual shortcomings addressed. Bridge-year courses are voluntary, and some are fee-based. They have specific admission procedures

¹⁰⁶ Federal Statistical Office (FSO) (2013). Education System in Switzerland – Indicators. <http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/portal/de/index/themen/15/17/blank/01.indicator.404303.4044.html>

¹⁰⁷ <https://swisseducation.educa.ch/en/baccalaureate-schools>

¹⁰⁸ <http://www.skbf-csre.ch/en/education-monitoring/education-report-2014/>

¹⁰⁹ cf. Way-up apprenticeship at a large Swiss IT provider. <https://ict.swisscom.ch/tag/way-up-lehre/>

and usually last up to one year. In 2014, about 13% of all students in the final year of lower-secondary school enrolled in a transitional option¹¹⁰.

24. Tertiary level education

Since Switzerland promotes a principle of potential upward mobility regardless of the initial choice at transition I, degree holders of a Federal VET Diploma as well as degree holders of the Baccalaureate have many possibilities for accomplishing further qualifications on a tertiary level. **Tertiary level education is divided into more academic oriented tertiary A and more practical and labour market oriented tertiary B education¹¹¹**, but young people and adults coming from both tracks (VET-track and general education track) still have the possibility to attend both types of tertiary education by achieving additional qualifications.

25. Professional Education and Training (PET) (tertiary B) usually takes place after the individual has qualified under VET and several years of relevant work experience. It leads to federally recognised qualifications at the tertiary level. The existence of vast opportunities in professional education and training (PET) at the tertiary level is virtually unique in Europe. **PET provides professionals with specific competences and prepares them for highly technical and managerial positions.** Switzerland's PET programmes and examinations are well recognised by employers and have good labour market outcomes¹¹². On the one hand, the Federal PET Diploma Examination and the Advanced Federal PET Diploma Examination are national professional examinations available for individuals with some years of professional experience and holding a VET diploma. The preparation for these national examinations is not regulated, only the content of the examination itself. Individuals are therefore free to attend preparation courses offered on the free market or to acquire the necessary competences in other ways, mainly through practical work experience. On the other hand, learners may attend PET programmes at Swiss professional colleges which provide practical preparation in many occupational areas. Such PET programmes are conclude with a PET college degree. A total of about 500 different qualifications are provided by professional education and training facilities and courses as depicted in figure 3.

¹¹⁰ FSO (2015)

¹¹¹ Tertiary A education consists of academic universities (10 cantonal universities and 2 federal institutes of technology), 9 universities of applied science and 18 universities of teacher education. Tertiary B education includes the Federal PET Diploma, the Advanced Federal PET Diploma and diplomas from colleges of professional education and training.

¹¹² OECD (2009)

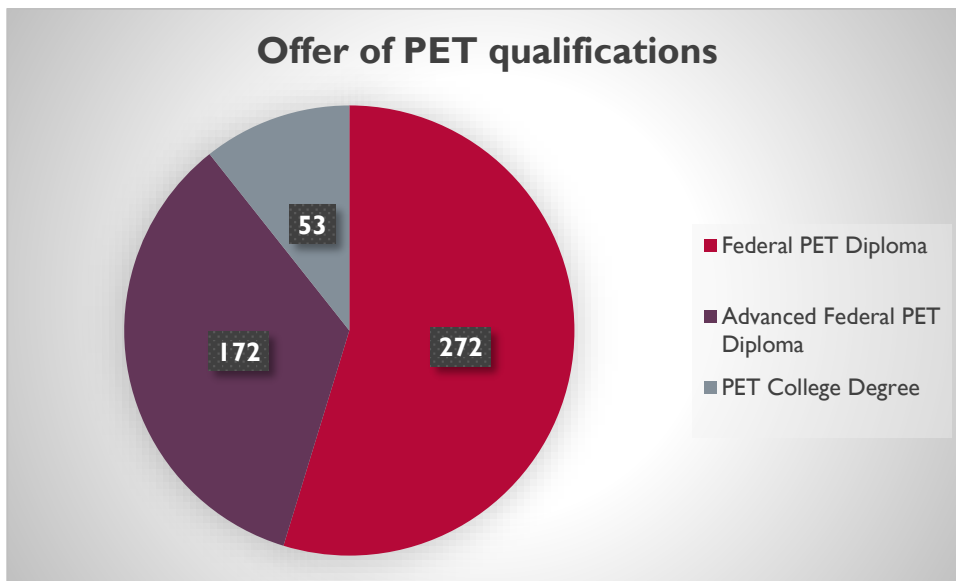


Figure 3: PET qualifications by type (VPET Directory, SERI)

26. In other European countries, numerous qualifications that can be acquired in Switzerland via tertiary level professional education and training are mainly covered by academic courses of study, continuing education and training or adult education.

27. **To sum up, starting an apprenticeship at the age of about 15/16 and completing a federal VET diploma or certificate at the age of about 18/19 is the most common way for young people in Switzerland to enter the labour market.** As compared to other countries, this way in general enjoys a **high reputation among the Swiss population and Swiss companies.** Like this, **a first diploma which qualifies for the labour market can be achieved at a comparably early stage in a student's life** at the same time still leaving open several options for continuing education at all levels. By contrast, students who opt for a baccalaureate school at upper-secondary level constitute a minority supposed to pursue an academic degree. However, key to the overall Swiss education system is the principle of lifelong learning and permeability, which means that there exist no dead-ends and every diploma, regardless of being a VET or a general education diploma, opens up a wide range of opportunities in continuing education and training.

Occupational Information and Counselling in Switzerland

Answer to Questions:

- *How do young people know about their occupational options?*
- *How are they supported in making the choice to decide what route (university/vocational/other) to do?*
- *How are the positives and negatives communicated for each route into the work place available for young people?*

28. Since the majority of students are leaving the school-based education system at the age of 15, occupational preparation starts early. As a consequence, **the most important place to prepare students for their first choice at transition I remains compulsory school** where

occupational advice is usually offered from age 12 or 13 onwards and where career counselling is a part of the curriculum. Even afterwards, at upper-secondary level, occupational and career counselling remains a part of the official curriculum. As an example, for 95% of students enrolled in a VET programme, career guidance is formally scheduled into their time at the vocational school. The same holds true for the general education schools. Switzerland has established a strong system of career guidance and counselling to help students at various transition points in their educational and professional career. Different means complementary to in-class information are presented in the following.

29. The most important means to smoothen the transition from compulsory school to VET is the **practice of pre-vocational traineeships**¹¹³. **They allow young people (aged 14, towards the end of their compulsory school period) to become acquainted with a given occupation and host company before they sign their apprenticeship contract.** This allows for informed choice based on actual experience and reduces drop-out during VET. **For companies, the pre-vocational traineeships is an instrument to assess potential apprentices.** The duration of a pre-vocational traineeship varies from one day to a maximum of two weeks. Normally, no salary is paid for the pre-vocational traineeship. In certain cases, VET trainers provide a brief written report that the candidates can then include in their apprenticeship application file. Sometimes, the young people can even take the work they have personally completed back home. In 8th grade (age 14) and 9th grade (age 15), students have to fulfil a certain amount of pre-vocational traineeships, mostly in two or three of their areas of occupational interest during schooldays or during holidays.

30. Other relevant information about occupational careers is made available by trade associations and by host companies themselves. They also have a keen interest in attracting young talents for their apprenticeship-places. Therefore, they produce brochures, fliers, videos, websites and other communication media for the purpose of raising the profile of their occupations and drawing young peoples' attention. In addition, **job fairs** are organised each year in Switzerland, where young people, teachers and parents can meet representatives of the host companies and current apprentices. The visit of job fairs usually forms part of an annual school excursion¹¹⁴.

31. **The main responsibility for general provision of career guidance lies with the cantons.** Their actions are coordinated and supported by the Swiss Service Centre for VET, Occupational, Educational and Career Guidance (SDBB)¹¹⁵, an institution established by the cantons themselves that bundles information of all the regional information centres and runs a comprehensive website on the topic¹¹⁶. **The regional information centres run by the cantons are well informed about the particularities of the different regions and are – apart from in-class information – the main source of information during the selection process.** The

¹¹³ VPET Glossary (2015). Pre-vocational traineeship. Retrieved from <http://www.berufsbildung.ch/dyn/11014.aspx?lang=DE&action=detail&value=572&lex=0>

¹¹⁴ SERI (2012a)

¹¹⁵ The SDBB is an institution of the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK). The EDK has a secondary function and fulfils tasks that cannot be performed by the regions or cantons. <http://www.edk.ch/dyn/11553.php>

¹¹⁶ www.berufsberatung.ch.

scope of activity in the centres includes: individual interviews, areas skills testing¹¹⁷, documentation centres and multimedia libraries, the provision of information to people individually, the provision of information to groups (in class, at evening sessions for parents) and extensive online information. The counsellors in the centres can be met by appointment or at specified drop-in times. They are trained through special programmes thus making sure that they are well-informed about VET programmes and the associated regional labour markets.

32. In addition, www.vetplus.ch, a long-running, **joint VET marketing campaign of the Confederation, the cantons and professional organisations**, encompasses an online platform to provide a uniform presentation of the VET and PET system. One purpose of this platform is to raise awareness among young people, their parents and other reference persons, of the possibilities that VET offers (smoother transition to employment, career prospects). Another purpose is to raise awareness among companies of the importance of VET and therefore to promote the creation of apprenticeship places.

The Role of the Government and the Private Sector

Answer to Questions:

- *What is the government's role in supporting young people through this transition?*
- *What is the private sector expected to do?*
- *How is local labour market information used in Switzerland so that young people are trained for jobs that are required by the economy?*
- *How does the government come to understand what employers want in their new employees and how is this information used to inform practices in educational establishments?*

33. As outlined in section 1, the Swiss education system is characterised by federalism, PPP, and the principle of subsidiarity. The private sector is the most important partner in setting up the vocational education and training system at upper-secondary level. As a consequence, there is little governmental involvement in the planning and management of the supply of apprenticeship positions. Companies decide whether to offer positions and areas of growth, where skilled labour force will be needed in the future, can thus be detected and served early. **In Switzerland, the apprenticeship market of supply and demand (young people) is self-regulating and free. The role of the state is limited to ensuring adequate framework conditions of the self-regulating market and to establish VET schools that provide apprentices with the theoretical part of their education. Class size and the number of classes in VET schools are adapted according to the number of apprenticeship contracts and not the other way round.**

¹¹⁷ The Area skills testing is a means applied by the cantonal occupational information centres, to help young people find out about their areas of interest or likings. At the cantonal occupational information centres, these tests can be taken for free by any interested student and will be analysed by a specially trained career counsellor who is capable of interpreting them. The results of the tests will further be discussed during an individual appointment (VPET Glossary, 2015).

34. **The main contribution of the private sector is the creation of apprenticeship positions.** Nowadays, around 40% of the companies in Switzerland that could offer apprenticeships actually do so¹¹⁸. They provide VET apprenticeships as far as they are able and where they need them. All collaboration happens on a voluntary basis. Where companies are too small or too specialised to cover the whole range of tasks a high quality VET program is supposed to include, the creation of host company networks is possible¹¹⁹.

35. Trade associations and industry organisations, social partners and other responsible organisations are all subsumed under the term of professional organisations and form part of the private sector. **Trade associations and industry organisations organise the interests of their member companies in a given sector. They fulfil the second important function of the private sector in VET/PET by determining the training content and national qualification procedures for all the VET and PET programs. In addition they are key drivers in developing new job profiles.** A very strong advantage of this private sector's contribution to the system is a high flexibility in adapting to the constant need for new skills and competencies on the labour market. Finally, branch associations check on the need for revision (every five years) of the training content of every VET programme as prescribed by the Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act¹²⁰. **The Confederation enacts the ordinances for each profession and thus officialises and nationally recognizes the training content which has been defined, developed and updated by the private sector.**

36. Beside a strong involvement of the private sector, the main responsibility for the implementation of the education system lies with the cantons. They are responsible for implementing VET schools and general education schools at a cantonal level, for overlooking the general education curricula as well as for providing occupational, educational and career counselling services. If necessary, they can also provide other support services such as coaching and mentoring. The cantons engage in apprenticeship marketing and are very involved in further development and planning of the Swiss VET and the general education system. Cantonal VET offices coordinate their activities through the Swiss Conference of VET Offices (SBBK)¹²¹, a coordinating institution set up by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK).

37. The Confederation (SERI¹²²) seeks to ensure optimal general conditions, supports the VET/PET sector as a whole and provides funding to cantons as needed. An emphasis is given on facilitating and enhancing interinstitutional cooperation. Working with cantons and professional organisations, the Confederation creates the condition for a functioning and self-regulating apprenticeship market and supervises the high-quality of the VET/PET system. The Confederation guarantees the national recognition of qualifications in the VET/PET sector.

¹¹⁸ SERI (2015b)

¹¹⁹ Information about the creation of host company networks is provided in German, French and Italian under following link: www.lbv.berufsbildung.ch/

¹²⁰ Federal Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act (2002)

¹²¹ www.sbbk.ch

¹²² SERI = State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation

38. In recent years, the Confederation and the cantons have taken a series of measures to help young people find suitable apprenticeships. These are measures of enhanced support complementing general advice and assistance as described in section 3. Such measures include enhanced transitional solutions, coaching and tutoring programmes, the introduction of two-year VET programmes and VET Case Management. In the following table, an overview is given over the different supporting measures provided by the public to facilitate the transition of young people that are in need of enhanced assistance.

Table 1: Overview over supporting measures for young people

Transitional options	Transitional options such as 10 th school year, bridge-year courses, pre-apprenticeship, or preparatory courses are available to young people who have been unable to enter upper-secondary level directly. This might be due to social barriers, poor academic performance in lower-secondary school, or even indecisiveness with respect to the right carrier path.
Coaching /mentoring	Coaching and mentoring are intended to provide individual support to pupils in lower-secondary school and in VET programmes. Examples include measures to develop relevant occupational, social skills and application skills. The programmes and projects are sponsored by both the cantons and private organisations.
VET Case Management	VET Case Management is a structured process providing holistic support to young people whose entry into the working world is greatly jeopardised. A single agency which goes beyond institutional boundaries ensures a coordinated and controlled process. The aim of the case management vocational education and training is to prevent young people to drop out of the education system, respectively, to make them take a first post-compulsory examination and to integrate them into the working process.
Apprenticeship placement services	These are measures to help learners find a suitable apprenticeship beginning from the fourth quarter of the last year of lower-secondary school. They provide assistance in last-minute placements and between companies that still have places available for apprentices with the apprentices themselves. Apprenticeship placement services are an additional means of easing the transition from lower-secondary to upper-secondary level.
Individual tutoring	Individual tutoring is intended to provide slower learners in two-year VET programmes with complete support. Host companies, VET schools, third-party training centres and social workers all work together to ensure the learner's progress. Individual tutoring is provided for in Art. 18 para. 2 of the Vocational and Professional Education and Training Act. While mainly intended for learners in two-year VET programmes, learners in three-year

	and four-year VET programmes may also benefit.
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Source: SERI (2012a), Educa (2015)

39. As a consequence of the above mentioned principle of PPP, funding of Switzerland's upper-secondary level VET programmes is shared between public sources and the private sector. **About 60% (5, 3 billion)¹²³ of the entire VET costs are contributed by companies** in the form of the apprenticeship places and practical training on the job guided by an employee with a VET trainer qualification¹²⁴. **Studies have shown that for two thirds of Swiss host companies on average the benefits outweigh the costs by the end of the apprenticeship period¹²⁵. This means that companies cover almost half of the systemic costs largely because it is cost-efficient for them to train young people. One of the main reasons for this is that apprentices are paid relatively low wages compared to what a skilled worker would earn, and because they are integrated as soon as possible into the productive processes of the company, where they actually produce a real output and are not only involved in training or simulated tasks.** Where the ROI of training does not outweigh the costs, the training of apprentices can also be seen as an investment of firms and branches for the next generation of young talents.

40. Of course, maintaining such a differentiated education system is costly. The public sector therefore contributes accordingly. In 2013, overall public expenditure (Confederation and cantons) to the VET system added up to 3, 4 billion. Of that amount, about 75% is financed by the cantons and only about 25% is covered by the Confederation. The share for preparation and enrolment of young adults in VET added up to 228 Mio. CHF which corresponds to approx. 6% of overall public contribution. To compare, expenditures for VET school running added up to 2'511 Mio. CHF¹²⁶. The distribution of the funding of the VET system between the three partners is shown in figure 4.

¹²³ SERI (2015b)

¹²⁴ The VET trainers in charge are those that are designated as such by the host company; their name is mentioned in the apprenticeship contract. They hold a Federal VET Diploma in the occupation in question or have received equivalent training, have at least two years work experience and possess adequate teaching, methodological and educational expertise. They refer to the training plan that accompanies each VET ordinance.

¹²⁵ Wolter, C., Mühlemann S. & Schweri, J. (2006). Why Some Firms Train Apprentices and Many Others Do Not, *German Economic Review* 7(3)

¹²⁶ SERI (2015b)

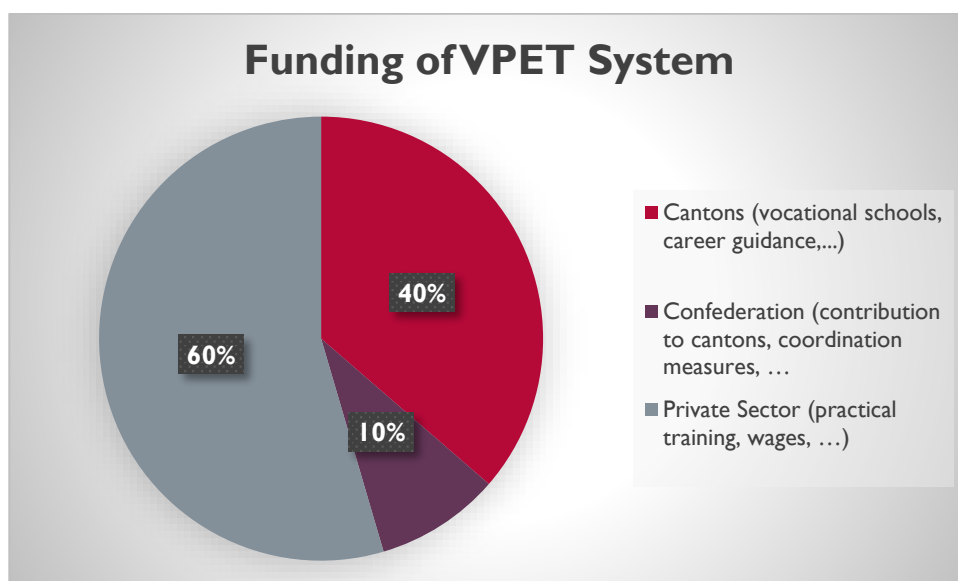


Figure 4: Funding of VPET System (SERI, 2015b)

Statistics and Monitoring of the Transition

Answer to Questions:

- *What data is collected to monitor and capture young people's progression through this transition into work? How are those who do not go to university monitored through the process?*
- *What are the employment outcomes for young people who do not go to university in Switzerland?*

41. Economic and evidence based approaches are important in policy making. In Switzerland, evidence is used routinely to support policy arguments. One example is the use of economic analysis to convince employers, the main partners of the system, to be engaged. **As an example, it has been proven through cost-benefit analyses that from a business point of view investing in VET programmes is worthwhile for a majority of host companies**¹²⁷. To acquire a solid base of evidence and research, Switzerland has established a series of instrument and research institutions.

42. The **Swiss Education Report** is the most comprehensive scientific publication on the Swiss Education System and published by the Swiss Coordination Centre for Research in Education (SKBF)¹²⁸ on a four-year regular basis. This report serves partly to advise policy makers, but it also helps identify data gaps and research needs that should subsequently be dealt with by the Leading Houses – a network of research institutions attached to university chairs and independently quality monitored. In the introduction of the 2014 edition it is stated that for the next edition in 2018, after the introduction of a pupil identifier into the educational statistics, the transitions between education levels (and, in some cases, between the different

¹²⁷ Wolter, C., Mühlemann S. & Schweri, J. (2006)

¹²⁸ <http://www.skbf-csre.ch/en/news/>

education types) will be better mapped, thus making it possible to analyse individual educational paths.

43. Another statistical tool used to monitor the occupational transition is the **apprenticeship barometer**. It monitors the match of apprenticeship demand and supply and is based on a written business survey carried out twice a year as well as on a telephone survey of young people between the ages of 14 and 20. In addition, the cantons carry out a monthly survey of supply and demand in the apprenticeship market. The apprenticeship barometer has been put in place since 1997 and is carried out until today¹²⁹.

44. The **VET graduate employment barometer**¹³⁰ was published last in 2012. It is commissioned by the SERI and the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and monitors first-time job prospects of VET students after graduation. Last publication showed that about 66% of all VET degree holders immediately entered the working world after graduation, of which two of five graduates continued employment in their host company. About 20% enrolled in continuing education at tertiary level and only about 9% of all VET graduates have been unemployed or job-seeking in the year right after their graduation.

Annex

Glossary

Abbreviation	Signification
EDK	Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education
FIT	Federal Institute of Technology (Zurich and Lausanne)
FSO	Federal Statistical Office
FVB	Federal Vocational Baccalaureate
PET	Professional Education and Training (tertiary level education)
SDBB	Swiss Center for Occupational Information and Counselling
SERI	State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation
SFIVET	Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training
UAT	University Aptitude Test
UAS	University of Applied Sciences
VET	Vocational Education and Training (upper-secondary level education)

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¹²⁹ SERI (2015a)

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<https://www.admin.ch/opc/en/classified-compilation/20031709/index.html>

Useful Links

- “Swiss Education Report 2014”
<http://www.skbf-csre.ch/en/education-monitoring/education-report-2014/>
- “Vocational and Professional Education and Training in Switzerland – Facts And Figures”
<http://www.sbf.admin.ch/berufsbildung/index.html?lang=en>
- „Entering the Labour Market“

<http://www.sbf.admin.ch/berufsbildung/index.html?lang=en>

- **Document server for education**
www.edudoc.ch
- **Eurydice. Description of national education systems**
<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfis/mwikis/eurydice/index.php/Countries>
- **Information on the Swiss Host Company Label**
www.vignette.berufsbildung.ch
- **Leading Houses**
Leading Houses are responsible for a SERI programme to support the continuing development of VPET research activities in Switzerland.
www.sbf.admin.ch/bbforschung
- **List of occupations and professions**
List of all federally recognised occupations (VET) and professions (PET): Legal bases and addresses.
www.sbf.admin.ch/bvz
- **Portal on VPET system**
www.berufsbildung.ch
- **Host company label**
www.vignette.berufsbildung.ch
- **Federal Statistical Office (FSO)**
www.education-stat.admin.ch
- **Swiss Conference of VET Offices (SBBK)**
www.sbbk.ch
- **Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK)**
www.edk.ch
- **Swiss education information platform**
www.educa.ch
- **Swiss Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (SFIVET)**
<http://www.ehb-schweiz.ch/en>
- **VPET Glossary**
www.lex.berufsbildung.ch

22 September 2015

Employers and business organisations

BAE Systems – Written evidence (SMO0114)

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY

BAE SYSTEMS RESPONSE TO THE CALL FOR EVIDENCE

1) What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment of young people in the transition from school into the workplace?

- The opportunity to take **relevant work experience** in their preferred career areas is critical – it helps young people understand what work is like and what apprenticeships can offer. It can help them too with preparing for the selection process and make them more confident and knowledgeable at an interview. **BAE Systems provides around 400 work experience opportunities (to typically 14-16 year olds) each year.** We prioritise these placements to a mix of schools close to our major sites; with the aim to help a range of young people with different interests and abilities.
- The **knowledge and support networks that schools** are able to offer are important factors. Schools should encourage positive links with local employers and help their young people gain experiences that, in turn, will help them apply for work. The **knowledge and connections of parents** also play an important role.

2) There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

- The key group in this area is likely to be **those who may wish to follow an apprenticeship route.** There is much that is known about these young people (Department for Business, Innovation & Skills has done many studies).
- Apprenticeships in our advanced manufacturing and engineering sector have always been vital to our long term skills capability, and this year **BAE Systems is planning to employ over 800 apprentices** to meet our requirements.
- **Apprenticeships provide an excellent pathway into work** that combines vocational experience, underpinning academic knowledge, and a focus on learning the behaviours (and experiences such as Outward Bound) that help make young people successful in work. They provide an excellent opportunity to “earn while you learn” at a range of skills levels – up to and including taking full degrees with the new higher/degree apprenticeships.
- **The career trajectories of apprentices in the advanced manufacturing and engineering sector are excellent.** BAE Systems apprenticeship programmes

provide a pipeline to jobs at all levels in our organisation, and we see little difference between the long-term careers of apprentices and graduates. For example, half of the senior managers in our Military Air & Information business started as apprentices.

3) Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

- The **quality of careers advice that young people receive can be patchy**. Some schools with good employer links are able to offer good advice and opportunities to meet with employers and create work experience. However, this is far from the standard. Many teachers go straight from school to university/teacher training and then back to school, with limited understanding of the range of career options open to young people and, having had little experience of the workplace outside of the teaching environment.
- **Employers need to support teachers** to better understand the workplace and apprenticeships. BAE Systems has close links with schools close to its major sites and uses its **300 plus STEM Ambassadors** to promote careers in engineering. We are, with the National Science Learning Centre, providing **80 teacher placements** this year for teachers in Barrow, Warton, Glasgow and Portsmouth with a specific aim of raising their understanding of apprenticeships and helping them understand too that these are a career for young women as well as men.
- Even though apprenticeships provide a good pathway for young people, they can be regarded by some as **an inferior pathway** to the traditional academic pathway to university. Employers have reported experiences of teachers actively discouraging young people from applying for apprenticeships.
- The current system fails, in particular, those young people who don't get an apprenticeship or a job on completion of school and fall into unemployment. These are not necessarily the traditional NEETs, but young people often with good grades at GCSE, A level (and indeed at HE too) who in the current economic climate find it difficult to get their first job. The key issue for these people is **a lack of real work experience allied with a lack of self- confidence and knowledge about how to apply for work**. BAE Systems is one of the founder supporters of **Movement to Work**, which is an employer led initiative designed to provide young unemployed people with work experience and employability skills training to help them find their first job.

- Movement to Work involves **partnership between employers and voluntary sector partners such as the Prince's Trust**. We as employers provide the work experience and the charitable partners the employability skills training. BAE Systems has had great success with Movement to Work. **Over the last year, 54 of the 100 who have completed the programme with BAE Systems have secured employment with us or another organisation or gone into further education**. 30 young people have joined our apprenticeship programmes, 1 has joined our graduate programme, 2 taken full time positions and a further 10 have temporary positions with the company.

4) How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- **Better access to careers advice** is important – and we hope that the new Careers Company will lead to more consistent high quality advice for young people.
- **Better access to relevant quality work experience** prior to leaving school – in years 10 and 11 if possible. Schools and employers need to work together at a local level.
- **Movement to Work** has been a great success and is building momentum in terms of the numbers it can support through an extension of the scheme and work placements provided through to the suppliers of the big companies who have signed up at a national level. Over 22k placements have been provided by partner companies this year and the programme is working hard to secure extra partners through the supply chain. **Expanding Movement to Work would provide a real quality pathway for those young people who struggle to get on the career ladder to get their first job.**
- **University Technical Colleges** are providing a fresh approach to preparing young people for work and in particular for engineering related careers. BAE Systems is with the Royal Navy supporting the UTC in Portsmouth and we are also supporting the Medway Towns UTC. Expansion of the UTC network and of the type of quality employer engagement involved in the UTC model will help young people transition to work.
- The best encouragement is to **hear from other employers that young people can add value economically to their businesses**. This can be done through case studies which can be used via traditional and social media, as well as through face to face briefings. We need to de-mystify some of the concerns too around the complexity and cost of running apprenticeships and other learning programmes for young people.

5) Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- **Government should have overall policy responsibility.** It has responsibility for the school and college system and has a duty to ensure that education helps prepare young people for work.

However employers have a critical role. Employers can provide school/college age young people with work experience and can help provide careers advice. Employers can also work with Government and education providers to improve the system. They can do this through representative bodies such as the CBI, but also on an individual businesses. BAE Systems would be very happy to contribute.

- **The voluntary sector has a key role to play too.** Organisations like the Prince's Trust play a vital role in helping provide young people with employability skills and we can learn much from their expertise in this area.
- There would be value too in **consulting young people themselves.** BAE Systems routinely works with our apprentices and graduates in developing their programmes, and they play a key role in helping design improvements. There would be value in running a number of consultation events. Education providers or voluntary sector partners would be able to host such events.

Richard Hamer

Education & Skills Director, BAE Systems

17th September 2015

18 September 2015

Barclays PLC – Written evidence (SMO0115)

Call for evidence on the transition from school to work

We welcome the opportunity to respond to this Call for Evidence. Improving social mobility and the employment outcomes of all young people is of real importance to Barclays. Ensuring that no one is left behind is central to our approach to innovation, accessibility, recruitment and citizenship. We understand our role both as a major employer in the UK and one which supports many small, medium and large businesses. We are keen to lead by example and provide frameworks for others to join us.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Youth unemployment continues to be one of the biggest challenges in the UK today. Under-25s are almost four times more likely to be jobless than their elders, with a devastating impact on not just the next generation but our society as a whole.

The preparation young people receive to move from education to employment is crucial in determining their outcomes in the labour market. From our evidence acquired by running both entry level employment activity and skills training programmes, we have noted that successful transitions are dependent upon the following factors:

- Academic performance

Academic attainment remains important in giving young people access to the widest breadth of opportunities. Good literacy, numeracy and communication skills are key across the employment spectrum.

- Attitude/behaviour

A positive, can-do approach to opportunities, combined with a passion or interest in the area young people wish to move into is essential for securing a role and making a great first impression.

- Employability skills

There are numerous skills it is important for young people to demonstrate either as they go through an interview process or as they start a role. Team-working, problem solving, confidence, presentation skills and resilience to name just a few. These need to be acquired through the education system as well as through social and professional interaction.

- Aspiration and roles of influencers

The world is rapidly changing, with new types of role being created all the time. For young people to understand these new opportunities they need to hear about them from accessible role models and those who have influence upon their choices. Parents, educators and figures on social media all have a role to play in supporting them to shape their choices and encouraging them to approach new horizons.

- Guidance leading to clear direction

It is essential that timely support is provided to channel young people's ambitions so that they are able to both establish their direction and then acquire the skills or qualifications required to move into that chosen field.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

In 2012, Barclays had fewer than 300 employees under the age of 21. Employee turnover was up to 70 per cent in some entry-level roles. Things had to change. We decided to help tackle youth unemployment and support social mobility efforts with an integrated, inspiring and far-reaching solution. We reviewed our current youth employability strategy, reviewing internal processes for ad-hoc work experience, recruitment of 16-24 year olds, our own internal ageing population and identified where the gaps were to then go on and create a joined up youth programme to support the bank's Citizenship strategy - The Way We Do Business; Supporting Growth; Supporting Our Communities. The strategy mapped out the following journey for young people:

- To equip one million young people with the skills, experience and confidence to enter the world of work by running LifeSkills workshops in schools and online to give young people employability skills
- To equip teachers with 51 hours of curriculum-led LifeSkills content to run in-class
- To provide a consistent and high quality work experience programme either through taster days or a week across the UK and all head office
- To provide Foundation Apprenticeships, for those with limited education and work experience
- To provide Higher Apprenticeships for high-potential Apprentice Graduates, internal colleagues, school-leavers and military service leavers
- To provide a leading-edge Traineeship initiative to those with little or no experience to become work ready through 5 weeks' extensive training and a 2-week work placement with us before applying to a Foundation Apprenticeship.
- To provide a framework for other organisations to offer work experience, Traineeships or Apprenticeships both to create opportunities

Programme results:

- 1651 young people have registered and/or completed the Traineeship initiative. All of these young people were not in education, employment or training; 40 per cent had been unemployed for more than 12 months and 69 per cent from a disadvantaged area.
- Over 2000 apprentices have secured permanent careers with Barclays since April 2012, with 520 of these in the last year. 5 per cent have a disability or learning disability,

- BAME diversity, 20% of Apprentices under 18 in 2014 50/50 gender split.
- A reduced cost of recruiting and training by building a pipeline of engaged, loyal and skilled people (75% retention rate target in 2014 after 6 months on programme). By enabling young people to come into the business and take part in work experience opportunities in advance of moving onto an apprenticeship, we have ensured that those who move onto the programme really understand what they are applying for.
- 1.4m young people have participated in LifeSkills sessions either online or in school;
- Longer term progression for example for Foundation Apprentices to move onto the Higher Apprentice programme; for Higher Apprentices to join the Graduate programme, or for any individuals to move onto opportunities advertised on internal job boards and direct marketing
- Over 5,000 young people have been positively impacted by the programme through moving into roles in Barclays, other businesses or completing Traineeships.

To see an example, please feel free to watch the story of Lewis, one of our recent Apprentices <http://hereisourwork.co.uk/bitc2015/barclays/lewis/>. All LifeSkills content is available at barclayslifeskills.com

There are a number of ways in which other employers can be encouraged to employ more young people who are either NEET or who have followed a different path to employment. These are:

1. For employers to share successes

When organisations, both large and small, actively promote the successful engagement they have had with recruiting a particular demographic it can be persuasive for others to follow suit. Barclays recruitment has explicitly aimed at young people who are not in education employment or training who are from disadvantaged areas. This has had strong business benefits as well as benefits for the young people taking part with improved incomes and future career trajectories – both clear outcome measures for social mobility. We are keen to share our journey so other organisations can understand the impact our programmes have had.

2. Government support

Continued and clear support from Government on the importance of this agenda with supporting policies and frameworks, drives business engagement. Clear guidance on what should be defined as an apprenticeship would help drive quality of opportunities and broader understanding for both young people, parents and educators on apprenticeships as valid future career routes.

For example, a key initiative that has supported our apprenticeship work to date has been the Government's traineeship programme. This has played a vital role in helping young people enter work, and offering employers a wider talent pool. We very much hope the Government continues to pursue this direction of travel over the coming five years.

3. *Skills, unpaid and paid experience opportunities*

Research demonstrates that young people are leaving education more qualified than ever before but struggling to find opportunities¹³¹. As such, it seems there is a gap between the expectations or needs of employers and the skills or experience which young people can demonstrate. For young people who may have fewer qualifications, and more limited aspirations, the challenge can be seen as even more significant.

Activities which both give young people exposure to the workplace and employers exposure to young people, are therefore essential to encouraging greater opportunities to be made available for this cohort. This may be unpaid work experience from the age of 14 upwards, consisting of a day, a week or more for individuals or larger groups; paid work experience opportunities, or a mix of sessions which could consist of employers coming into schools to interact with students. It seems from our engagement with schools, that work experience remains of interest, but following changes to statutory guidance, it is being delivered in many more different ways than before and is often now the responsibility of the student to complete outside of term time rather than as part of the curriculum. One consequence of this could be for students with more limited contacts available to them through friends or family that their opportunities for employer engagement are more constrained by a lack of education involvement.

Employability skills development programmes, such as LifeSkills, complement academic learning. The UKCES and other employer bodies such as the CBI have identified the importance of skills such as personal presentation, resilience, impact and leadership for young people moving into employment both now and in the future. As the labour market continues to be competitive for all young people, excelling in these areas could help differentiate candidates for roles and encourage employers to recruit young people in favour of other candidates. These skills need to be effectively integrated across teaching time so appropriate support should be given to teachers to do so both in teacher training and ongoing CPD sessions.

4. *Careers education*

Effective, timely and relevant careers information advice and guidance is essential to supporting all young people when considering their future choices. This guidance needs to:

- keep pace with a changing labour market and entry level opportunities;
- be balanced with a reflection on predicted areas of growth;
- demonstrate the importance of developing employability skills to equip students to be able to succeed in a labour market which will be more fragmented and change significantly due to technology every few years;
- be tailored for the recipient and cognisant of their circumstances.

¹³¹ <http://www.educationandemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/What-do-recruiters-think-about-todays-young-people-September-2015-003.pdf>

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

This is a collective responsibility: it is in the interests of all organisations to support young people and educators in this transition and in the interest of both future talent and the output of the UK economy. Through our programmes we have demonstrated that it is possible to form collaborative partnerships which can effect positive change for both our business, schools and for the young people themselves. Demanding one part of the system takes ownership of this will not lead to success, however there is a key role for government in facilitating collaboration, and creating the right forums for information sharing.

We would be more than happy to supply any further information if required.

Yours sincerely,

Kirstie Mackey

Director of LifeSkills and Consumer Affairs

Mike Thompson

Director of Apprenticeships

Barclays

- Barclays is an international financial services provider engaged in personal, corporate and investment banking, credit cards and wealth management with an extensive presence in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia. Barclays' purpose is to help people achieve their ambitions – in the right way.
- With 325 years of history and expertise in banking, Barclays operates in over 50 countries and employs over 130,000 people. Barclays moves, lends, invests and protects money for customers and clients worldwide.
- For further information about Barclays, please visit our website www.barclays.com.

22 September 2015

BBC – Written evidence (SMO0126)

BBC Submission to the Select Committee on Social Mobility inquiry into 'The transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds'.

The BBC is committed to seeking out the brightest talent – graduate and non-graduate alike - from the broadest range of backgrounds.

Historically, our industry's heavy reliance on graduate recruitment has acted as a barrier to entry for many, especially those from less advantaged backgrounds.

To redress this imbalance, the BBC is committed to offering high quality, industry-designed apprenticeships and pre-employment opportunities, alongside our long established graduate level trainee programmes. This ensures that everyone with the raw potential to succeed is given a fair chance to apply for opportunities, opening our doors to all the talents our country has to offer.

What we do:

- Long established graduate level programmes; our alumni have gone on to become many of the industry's iconic leaders.
- A fast growing portfolio of high quality apprenticeships aimed at those who have not been to university but who have the raw potential to succeed in our industry. The BBC Academy has been at the heart of designing new vocational qualifications with other employers in our sector.
- Pre-employment programmes to create a level playing field for people who might otherwise find it difficult to compete for entry level roles.
- Targeted disability recruitment programme.
- A wide range of work experience and outreach opportunities.
- All supported by a strong following on social media.
- In the autumn of 2013, the BBC's Director General set a target for 1% of the BBC's workforce to be apprentices by the end of the Licence Fee period.
- By 1st November 2014 (2 years ahead of schedule) we met this target when the BBC welcomed 177 non-graduate apprentices .
- New in 2014/15 were Local Apprentices spread right across the UK in all the BBC's local radio stations and nations' radio services, Degree level Business Apprentices, Digital Media Apprentices and Legal Apprentices also came on stream. These joined existing apprentices in TV and Radio Production, Broadcast Technology (Degree level) and Broadcast Operations.
- New in September 2015 is the 'Trailblazer' designed Digital Journalism Apprenticeship which the BBC Academy developed with the sector under the expert guidance of the National Council for the Training of Journalists.

- We hire BBC Apprentices right across the UK; on every local radio station, and in BBC departments in London, Bristol, Birmingham, Salford, Glasgow and Cardiff.
- We are passionate about opening up the doors of the BBC to everyone – diversity really matters to us. The 2015 intake of TV Production Apprentices is 45% BAME with 64% coming from families where neither parent went to university – and our 2015 Digital Journalism Apprentices are 50% BAME with 60% come from families where neither parent went to university. These levels of social and ethnic diversity are unprecedented in our industry and are driven by us reaching out to all communities across the UK; offering a wide range of entry level opportunities, appropriate to everyone with the raw talent to succeed.
- BBC Make It Digital Traineeship: The BBC Academy launched this highly ambitious Pre-employment Traineeship in August 2015 in partnership with the Skills Funding Agency, Scottish and Welsh governments, and Department for Work and Pensions. It is an eight week pan industry programme aimed at unemployed 16-24s. Drawing on the inspiration of BBC content, and the BBC Academy's existing training assets and know-how, we aim to reach up to 5,000 young people right across the UK, growing strong employability and digital skills which research tells us are in short supply across UK industry.
- The BBC Academy's award winning Extend Recruitment Programme is aimed at people with disabilities who are hired onto six month placements across the BBC. The scheme has been running for 18 years and, during this time, we've reached 628 people.
- BBC North, Young Ambassadors: As part of the BBC's move to Salford in 2011, we hire eight 16-19 year olds on an annual basis as part of our commitment to the local economy and to young people. These roles are designed as a first job for those who have very limited, or no experience, of the world of work and few, or no, academic qualifications. The roles are only open to young people who live within the BBC's local footprint of Salford and Trafford in Greater Manchester. We work with local community partners and youth groups who refer candidates to us.
- We offer approx. 1,200+ work experience placements every year. These opportunities are open to all, access is via a central website and anyone can apply. In addition to this, we are now embarking on a new partnership with Job Centres whereby we will ring-fence places for young people who are unemployed – working with Job Centres to identify young talent. We also offer work placements to students from broadcast related higher education institutions e.g. we reserve production placements for the National Film and Television School and 200 journalism placements are offered to universities.
- BBC Radio 1 Academy: Now in its 4th year, the Academy is a key part of the Radio 1 Big Weekend music festival, with career sessions, live radio show experiences and advice surgeries. This is done in partnership with local authorities.

- There are shorter pre-employment opportunities e.g. Radio 1's Where It Begins programme, BBC English Region's Kick Off Sports reporter scheme and BBC TV's Mama Youth programme for BAME talent.
- Last year we launched a Pre-employment Traineeship with the Stephen Lawrence Trust. This saw our two organisations working together (with Job Centres across London) to identify and develop young BAME talent. Everyone who successfully completed the traineeship was fast-tracked to near the end of the application process for BBC Production Apprenticeships.
- We also work with schools to enthuse young people about taking up a career in broadcasting e.g. the BBC's annual School Report, now in its ninth year, helps young people develop skills in journalism. Last year, 33,000 students from 1,034 schools took part and 300 staff gave up their time to be mentors for the schools. In particular we worked closely with disadvantaged areas in the North East and the number of special school participating went up from 33 to 48.
- Each year, through BBC Outreach's Community Doorway scheme, 1,000 staff volunteer with 9,000 young, BAME and disadvantaged individuals, supporting employability and skills development, whilst gaining valuable insights into present and future audiences.
- In Bristol, BBC Bristol's Talent Ticket offers workshops, careers advice and other support to 1500-2000 young people from 12 of Bristol's lowest attaining schools.
- Reaching out to diverse young people via social media. The BBC Academy's twitter site @BBCTrainees has been ranked as the UK's top employer for the most interaction with young people on Twitter. Overall, @BBC Trainees has been recorded as the second most active employer on Twitter. We have grown very quickly to 50,000+ followers – and continue to grow rapidly.
- In the recent 'School Leaver 100' poll of school students aged 16-18 (not planning to go to university) the BBC was voted the number 1 employer.
- In October we will be included in the Sunday Telegraph's Top Apprenticeship Careers List.

Case Study: BBC Raw

Based in BBC MediaCityUK in Salford, this is an 'incubator' programme for diverse young film makers and journalists. Its aim is to develop digital skills and grow young talent who can compete for entry level programme making roles in BBC News, BBC Current Affairs, BBC3 and BBC TV.

- Film-makers learn by doing; content produced by BBC Raw is distributed across three social media sites aimed at C2DE, BAME youth audiences. This teaches them to work within the BBC's core editorial values.
- BBC Raw's You Tube channel show-cases new work to the industry and our aim is make this a 'go to' place for recruiting exciting new talent. Raw's Facebook page and Twitter account drive views to the YouTube content. This instils the importance of digital marketing and builds vital work- based skills beyond pure film-making. The

starting point of any idea is to produce evidence of identifiable social media demographics through which content can be promoted – film makers are then responsible for every view that they get on YouTube. Learning how to build a social media audience is a big step towards establishing a successful career in a rapidly changing media landscape.

- BBC Raw's social media sites also test content which connects with C2DE youth audiences and feeds audience insight back into the BBC. In the digital world it is vital that we understand the internet habits of our audiences. Raw actively targets young people from underserved demographics – ethnic minority communities, LGBT, and people from working class backgrounds. As a result of Raw, the BBC is getting better at identifying with our underserved audiences – communicating with them via the language of social media.
- In the digital age we are seeking to move away from hiring entry level talent based on application forms and interviews, preferring to assess capability based on real examples of creative output. During the recent recruitment process for BBC Production Apprentices, one of the best films came from a young man with Asperger's, demonstrating very high levels and shooting and editing skills and impressive story telling flair. It's doubtful whether this talent would have come to the fore in a traditional interview environment .
- Another benefit of BBC Raw's social media sites is that we have created a place where we can advertise the BBC's entry level jobs. A recent post to BBC Raw's Facebook page got 2,645 clicks through to the BBC's online Careers Hub.

Successes:

- Film-makers new to the BBC:
 - Three have won places on the BBC's Journalism Training Scheme in Salford
 - One is a freelance digital camera assistant for The One Show's current affairs films
 - One is going on to Radio Manchester's freelance rota
 - One has got a place on the London based Production Apprenticeship
 - One has been working ad hoc freelance shifts as a runner for the Academy in Salford
 - One has secured work in community radio in Brixton
 - One has secured a job as project coordination at the Contact Theatre Manchester
- Film makers who've been on a BBC apprenticeships/training scheme:
 - Two have got Broadcast Journalist jobs with BBC Breakfast
 - One has moved into a role with BBC Trending
 - One has been offered a contract as a camera assistant role in Network News

- One has gone to work as part of BBC3's short form team
- One has been promoted is now a researcher on CBeebies YouTube Channel
- One has been promoted is now a researcher at CBBC interactive
- One has gone from a runner on Dragons Den to a development researcher, and is now a researcher in Religion and Ethics
- One has been promoted and is now an Assistant Producer on Newsround
- One is now working as a shooting researcher at ITV

This is the link for the BBC Raw YouTube Channel :

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdXuOP-zn9uluRcdImJIMsg/vid>

The film below was shot on an iphone5s and edited on a laptop. It was completed in 36 hours the film maker, Emilia Mincheva. It is only the third film she has ever made. View it here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4mZEkuP89t4>

1 October 2015

Crossrail – written evidence (SMO0139)

Select Committee on Social Mobility

Response to Committee Questions

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

The Crossrail Job Brokerage began delivery in late 2011 through a partnership with Job Centre Plus, with the aim of connecting local people with opportunities to work on the Crossrail project. The Job Brokerage delivers on the commitments outlined in the Crossrail Skills and Employment Strategy and Crossrail's obligations under the Crossrail Act 2008.

An important part of the work of the Brokerage is to engage with local training providers, employment support agencies and local people living along the route. From September 2013 to date, Crossrail has engaged with 462 organisations providing information, advice and guidance to local people across London. In addition, Crossrail advisers have met with over 7,300 individuals seeking employment, advice and support, of which 5,000 (68%) were men and approximately 2,300 (32%) were women.

Through this engagement, anecdotal evidence suggests the following key factors as significant issues affecting access to employment advice and guidance, and social mobility:

- Lack of effective careers advice. High-quality careers advice should be obligatory and available to students in all schools
- Educational achievement. Students with lower education achievement generally transition into careers/occupations with lower skill requirements which are generally lower paid
- Access to meaningful work experience. Meaningful work experience provides an opportunity for students to experience careers/occupations which align to their strengths and interests
- Access to role models and/or mentors who can provide informed support. Role models/mentors need to have access to information so that they can assist young people to make informed decisions.
- Social background. The socio-economic background of a young person can impact their transition from school to work

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the ALevel and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

The majority of young people who do not follow the high education route and are not classified as NEET generally end up on FE programmes. These young people often study lower qualification programmes such as pre-employment, Level 1 or Level 2. For the young people

who do not choose to undertake an FE programme, they may instead, move into low skilled/ low pay work.

The experience in the construction industry is that some young people end up in this position because training offering is not fit-for-purpose or does not reflect or meet the needs of the industry. This results in a mismatch between the needs of the industry and of the skills of available staff. The mismatch can mean that these young people do not have the necessary skills and experience to access higher skilled/higher paid work, or that they miss out on employment opportunities all together.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

To October 2015, Crossrail has created 4,398 new jobs for local and/or unemployed people. Of these 4,214 (96%) were filled by local people i.e. living in London or within one mile of our surface works and of this 890 (20%) were previously unemployed.

Crossrail capture supply chain diversity of this total workforce on site as a 'snapshot' at one point in time over a particular quarter/ The most recent point of this capture only 9% of the workforce were under the age of 25 years old. Given this data some of the current challenges within the transition system appear to be;

- a lack of effective careers advice and expertise within schools to provide guidance and support to young people
- Lack of engagement and partnership working between businesses and schools
- Access to information AND support, which, if it is to be effective cannot simply be transactional such as the services provided by JCP.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

The Young Crossrail programme works with schools and young people, particularly those closest to the route. Through the activities in schools, work place visits and other events, Young Crossrail ambassadors aim to change perceptions of the engineering industry and encourage more young people consider engineering and construction-related careers.

In 2014/15, the Young Crossrail programme engaged with over 13,000 students and with the help of over 270 ambassadors. Since 2012, the Young Crossrail programme has also delivered around 100 work experience placements to students from our partners schools.

Through the engagement with young people, the Young Crossrail programme considers that transition from school to work could be improved for all young people by:

- Introducing mandatory careers advice, which is linked to online support systems which could provide ongoing support such as Plotr¹³² which helps 11-24 year olds by matching careers to their skills, interests and personality
- Improving the access and availability to teacher placements which provide teachers with an insight into routes into the industry for dissemination to young people. Young Crossrail has hosted five STEM teachers from secondary schools over the last two years with feedback from teachers being that the programme has improved their understanding of the industry and the information provided to students.
- Ensuring all schools have the capacity to organise effective work experience placements for all students. The experience from the Crossrail corporate work experience programme is that some schools do not have a dedicated work experience resources, meaning that placements do not match the students career aspirations, reducing the outcomes from placements.
- Ensuring parents and teacher have suitable resources to assist their child to make an informed decision, particularly on apprenticeships. Parents and teachers help young people transition from school to work, however, they often do not know about the apprenticeship route meaning that apprenticeship opportunities are not given equal weighting to other higher education pathways.

Employers can be encouraged to employ more people from this group by:

- Ensuring that apprenticeships are more accessible and attractive to small and medium enterprises by reducing the financial and administrative burden. This could include increasing the funding provided to SMEs, particularly for higher-level qualifications or for sectors with acute skills shortages.
- Incentivising high apprenticeship take up and the provision of higher-level apprenticeship qualifications by increasing funding for high-level qualifications or sectors with acute skills shortages. This benefits of this approach would mean that employers have access to the necessary skills and young people are encouraged into sectors with strong demand.

2 December 2015

¹³² <https://www.plotr.co.uk/>

EMC – Written evidence (SMO0086)

EMC written submission to the House of Lord’s Social Mobility Select Committee’s enquiry: How can young people be best prepared for the world of work?

Introduction

EMC welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Lord’s Social Mobility Select Committee’s important inquiry into helping young people be better prepared for the workplace.

About EMC

EMC is a global technology leader, employing around 70,000 people worldwide, with a mission to help organisations store, manage, secure and interpret information. We operate as a federation of businesses – EMC Information Infrastructure, VMware, Pivotal, RSA and VCE – to offer agile solutions that harness opportunities for transformational change. This requires a mix of sales, support, development, engineering and data science teams. EMC Computer Systems (UK) Limited was incorporated in the UK in 1986 and now has around 1,800 staff here and 3,000 in Ireland, across 11 sites.

EMC’s Commitment to Skills and Diversity

EMC focuses on expanding access to education, particularly for underrepresented groups. We rely on partnerships with non-profits and schools around the globe, a robust internship program, and inspired employees to encourage greater uptake of STEM subjects, as well as providing consultation on class curricula. We’re starting new partnerships in regions such as Africa and Latin America with educational foundations and incorporating the skills of employees to engage students from around the world who might not otherwise be reached.

In the UK, EMC was a founder member of [Plotr](#), the youth careers advice service, providing £250,000 funding and technical support to help establish Plotr’s online platform.

EMC has also provided [X-Forces](#) with £250,000 to tackle the IT skills shortage and will be providing 20 former military personnel with training and support to begin careers in the IT industry after leaving the Armed Forces. X-Forces is a social enterprise which aims to encourage entrepreneurship in the UK military community.

Furthermore, EMC is a Platinum Patron of The Prince’s Trust and has been part of the Technology Leadership Group since 2007. The company is involved in many initiatives with the Trust, including the Million Makers programme, which EMC has won for the past two years, raising more than £320,000 for young people across the UK. EMC also supports some of The Trust’s largest and most successful fundraising events, helping to support more young people across the UK. The Prince’s Trust and EMC Leadership Dinner raises £500,000 annually, and brings together over 600 leaders from the UK Technology community.

We also have a best in class training and development focus, and an active diversity programme. Our priority is talent management. Our work in this area has been recognised and awarded:

- Gold Award winners – ‘Best Staff Development programme’ in Europe
- Top Companies for Graduates to Work For – EMC was ranked as the 3rd best IT Services and IT Consulting company for graduates to work for by TheJobCrowd in both 2014/15 and 2015/16. Described as a 'TripAdvisor for jobs', TheJobCrowd is the UK's leading graduate job review website. The site hosts thousands of reviews, all written anonymously by graduate employees at graduate employers.
- Great Place to Work 2014 – In October 2014 EMC was named as one of the top 25 global multinational employers by the Great Place to Work Institute. EMC's ranking was based on employee feedback that the company provides ongoing professional opportunities and career development; promotes a flexible, friendly environment; and recognises employees' collaborative, cohesive energy towards achieving and exceeding results. EMC's global ranking is based on inclusion on 17 national Great Place to Work lists from around the world, including: Austria, China, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, Poland, Saudi Arabia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, UAE, and UK.

Response to specific questions

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

The system in its current state could be much more supportive to these young people. We have found that education does not necessary equip students with the right tools for transition to the world of work. Within the existing candidate pool of young people, employability needs to improve to ensure access to business. The 'three legs of the stool' need to come together to support this – businesses, a consistent level of understanding around careers and opportunity for all student groups and educators. Indeed, educators and businesses can work together to develop programmes for students which firms will value.

In the case of the tech sector, this could be an apprenticeship which can lead to an IT degree, as we have been developing with the [Tech Partnership](#), which would incorporate training relief for the apprentice. Alongside this, it is vital to inform businesses of the incentives available in hosting apprentices, including funding, which would help ensure further take-up. We would like to note that we have received excellent help from the National Apprenticeships Service, The Skills Funding Agency, an executive agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Tech Partnership to review what contribution we can make.

The critical time for young people to become interested in developing an idea of the career route that they could follow is between the ages of 12 and 14, pre-options. There is a real

window of opportunity for students at this stage, outside of the school environment. In order to help them make the best educational choices, businesses could engage with students, an example being the [Big Bang Fair](#) which EMC sponsor. This Science and Engineering careers fair provides educational recruitment information to those in the under 14 age group. Similar events could and should occur more regularly and in more regions across the country, as targeting students directly can prove very powerful and it would be good to see more initiatives that get businesses out into schools.

Other creative initiatives like [Plotr](#), of which we are a founding member, also provide engaging youth careers advice on an accessible, online platform developed with the private sector to show a diverse range of opportunities across sectors. This demonstrates the wide range of careers which are available, but could be publicised better. Businesses can be more effective at educating and marketing our employment offers to this age group. Of course, the importance of studying STEM subjects should be consistently promoted alongside this, especially to young females. We must also ensure schools are helping to encourage students to investigate broader options, with the Government providing consistent information to inspire and appeal to under-privileged groups. A focus on disadvantaged and differently abled groups would be welcome.

In addition, parents need to be greater informed on new pathways for education in order to provide as much guidance and support as possible to their children making subject and career choices. Businesses can help significantly through informing their employees of the alternative routes to business and careers. This would help offer the next generation of job-seekers' wider options when seeking career advice. Positive communications about these different options is key to changing perceptions and businesses hold a unique position in influencing this. Employers can be encouraged to take a broad approach that offers career opportunities to a wider range of young people. This will enable recruitment to occur from a more diverse pool of applicants in the future; a nod to many business agendas.

We have found that fellow large technology companies are motivated to share information and collaborate to this end. Indeed, apprenticeship ambassadors are also very welcome and certainly inspiring.

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

We believe one organisation needs to be solely responsible helping businesses to navigate and address these issues; shared responsibility does not provide enough accountability or adequate support. A Business Partnerships team in the Department for Education or Business, Innovation and Skills, who work to link business and education together, would be welcome. More needs to be done to make it easier to navigate the system for businesses – this would lead to a lot more engagement.

Any further support needed from Government?

The actions taken to date are welcome, but EMC believes there is an opportunity to go further to unite educators, businesses and Government, the 'three legs of the stool', in order to deliver more effective progress. We stand ready to support and advise the Government as it continues to develop this agenda.

ENDS

14 September 2015

EY – Written evidence (SMO0134)

Dear Baroness Corston

House of Lords Social Mobility Committee: Call for evidence

EY and the EY Foundation are pleased to have been invited to give evidence to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee (the Committee) in connecting with the Committee's inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds.

We note that the Committee is focusing its inquiry on young people falling between the route of A-Levels and Higher Education and those classified as NEET – in particular, young people aged 14-24 who are not on, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A-Level to Higher Education pathway.

Our responses to the specific questions raised by the Committee in its Call for Evidence are set out in Annex I to this submission, which forms the main body of our written evidence.

In this letter, however, we would like to provide the Committee with an overview of:

- The EY Foundation
- The EY Foundation – bringing employers and school leavers together
- The role of EY as a Social Mobility Champion
- Recent changes to EY's recruitment process

More detailed, supplementary information on the EY Foundation and its programmes and EY work experience and recruitment is included as Appendix II.

The EY Foundation

The EY Foundation is a new independent charity founded by EY in the UK which launched in July 2014 – EY is the charity's first major corporate donor. The charity helps young people disadvantaged in the labour market to find alternative routes into employment, education or enterprise.

EY Foundation's work involves designing, developing and running its own programmes - Smart Futures, Our Future and Accelerate - as well as raising independent funds to support new initiatives and reach more young people across the UK. The EY Foundation's video is available from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTwgCr4_qXw

The charity aims to support young people aged 11-30. However, its investments in the next three years are most concentrated around those aged 16-18 who have a range of hurdles to overcome when attempting to transition smoothly from statutory education to further education, employment or self-employment. (The EY Foundation's new three-year strategy will be made public by the end of this year.)

The EY Foundation is unique in its position as the link between employers and young people, having strong existing relationships with both. This allows the programmes that the

Foundation delivers to have the capability to make both young people become employer-ready and employers become young people-ready. It also supports social entrepreneurs to grow their businesses so that they can also help young people get work-ready and create local jobs for them.

The EY Foundation also works with charitable partners: Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation, Princes’ Trust, Social Business Trust, Think Forward and UnLtd - providing them with access to volunteers and business resource to support the delivery of their activities.

The commitment from EY has assisted in increasing significantly the impact of the charity’s existing programmes, raising money to grow these programmes more quickly, and in the provision of skilled staff to support its mission and aims. The charity’s full vision, mission and purpose are set out in Annex II.

We have also included, in Annex II, a summary of the EY Foundation programmes that are aimed at helping young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds prepare for and get into work.

The EY Foundation - bringing employers and school leavers together

We note that, amongst other things, the Committee is particularly keen to hear what could be done to encourage employers to employ more school leavers (both at the age of 16 and at 18).

In the experience of the EY Foundation charity team, it is clear that targeted employer engagement at the right moments in a young person’s life can be transformational in two ways – it can:

- Produce work-ready young people fit for the economy of today and tomorrow
- Demonstrate that many young people are already work-ready, but need a chance to shine

Employers often struggle to fill vacancies due to a real or perceived lack of suitably talented people in the local labour market. There is a growing desire amongst UK businesses to invest more in developing young people’s skills. The challenge for many organisations is not making the case for why they should invest in the skills development of young people, but how to do it: this can include very practical issues such as knowing how to engage with young people.

Encouraging more employers to recruit school leavers is often about providing both young people *and* employers with a great experience of work together.

The EY Foundation, through its programmes, gives local employers access to talented young people - who they might not have recruited on paper – and access to skills, knowledge and expertise to offer meaningful paid experiences of work to young people. In crude terms one could refer to this as a ‘try before you buy’ approach.

The role of EY as a Social Mobility Champion

As you will be aware, EY is a Social Mobility Champion and we are committed to outreach work to accelerate social mobility through taking direct action and facilitating other organisations (including other employers) to take action. For example, EY:

- Is a founding member of Access Accountancy, a group that has come together to launch a social mobility drive to provide equal opportunities and fair access to all in the accountancy profession
- Co-hosted a young people led roundtable discussion with the Rt Hon Alan Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission on "What makes a great experience of work?"
- Hosted a debate on the role of employers, including social enterprises, in developing the employability skills of young people
- Will also be hosting a debate on 2 December, in conjunction with Leicester University, on Social Mobility: the business case. This will be the fourth in the Leicester Exchanges Social Mobility series, with up to 120 employers attending

Recent changes to EY's recruitment process

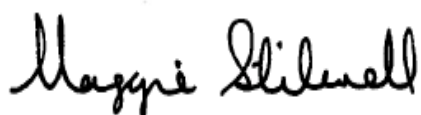
In August 2015 EY transformed its recruitment selection process by removing academic qualifications from our entry criteria for the 2016 graduate, undergraduate and school leaver programmes¹³³. Instead, EY will use a new and enhanced suite of online 'strengths' assessments and numerical tests to assess the potential of applicants for 2016.

This decision comes after an 18-month analysis of the firm's student selection process by talent management firm Capp, which confirmed EY's strengths based approach - used in the recruitment process since 2008 - is a robust and reliable indicator of a candidate's potential to succeed in role. We believe that transforming our recruitment process will open up opportunities for talented individuals regardless of their background and provide greater access to the profession.

We have included, in Annex II, further information on EY work experience and recruitment.

We hope that the information provided in this written evidence will be useful to the Committee in its inquiry. We would, of course, be happy to provide further detail. Please do not hesitate to contact us if that would be helpful.

Yours sincerely



¹³³ The text in paras 3.6 to 3.8 was included in the EY press release of 3rd August 2015: "EY transforms its recruitment selection process for graduates, undergraduates and school leavers"

Maggie Stilwell
UK&I Managing Partner for Talent, EY

Maryanne Matthews
Chief Executive, EY Foundation

Annex I: Response to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee's Call for Evidence

Please note that our responses below draw on desk based research looking at the labour market landscape for young people and the provision of work experience, which was conducted to help inform strategic choices around the work of the EY Foundation over the next three years. The research was for internal purposes only. The analysis included a read across of a number of publicly available pieces of independent research conducted by a variety of organisations in the UK. See also Annex II.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

- 1.1. We perceive that, amongst other things, the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place are effected by both a “talent and skills gap” and a “guidance gap”.

The talent and skills gap

- 1.2. There is an increasing mismatch between young people's skills and experiences on leaving statutory education and those needed by employers, leading to a talent and skills gap. Employer engagement in schools is key to helping young people better prepare for the world of work. The Education and Employers Task Force survey states that young people who have four or more engagements with business whilst at school are better prepared for work than peers that don't.
- 1.3. Employers want to get more involved in schools to help young people prepare for work. However, many barriers exist including: limited support to ensure good quality programmes, young people/schools not interested in engaging and practical problems around timings/resources.
- 1.4. A large number of frameworks exist to help organisations (including businesses) better understand the needs of young people as they prepare to move from education to employment, e.g. New Philanthropy Capital's JET framework, Impetus Private Equity Foundation's 'ready for work' quantitative scale and the CIPD's youth engagement map.

The Guidance gap

- 1.5. We have provided, with this written evidence, a copy of the July 2015 survey “Parental Influence: the key role played by parents in their children's decisions about routes and pathways post-18” prepared by Chris Phillips, GTI Media Research and sponsored by EY. This YouGov survey of 1,018 parents looked at their role in giving careers guidance; their attitude towards schools; and whether young people are adequately prepared for the workplace.

- 1.6. As we stated in this survey, the research results highlight that the amount and quality of information available for the parents of today's school leavers is not sufficient for the majority to be able to help their children make informed career decisions post-18. It is clear that the right time for parents to have this information is much earlier than employers like ourselves had previously anticipated, with over 50% of the opinion that GCSE choices in Year 9 is when careers advice and information would be best delivered, and of most value. Without this guidance it would seem many of today's school leavers are left unsure as to what they should do after completing formal education, a clear action point for anyone working with, and seeking to encourage them to pursue a career path leading to their particular sector or profession.
- 1.7. Over half of the parents surveyed (53%) said they will have the biggest influence over their child's next steps. This was followed by teachers on 23% and their children's friends on 23%. Careers advisers were ranked in fourth place with 21%. However, the results suggest that there is a 'guidance gap' between what parents expect their role to be and the knowledge they have at their disposal. More than half of parents (64%) recognised that they needed better information and called for more resources to help them to support their children and give the best advice possible at this important juncture¹³⁴.
- 1.8. In particular, in the absence of information and awareness about alternative career routes, such as an apprenticeships or school-leaver schemes, university is often seen as the default option by parents. Although the reasons for this are valid, many of these reasons also apply to the huge range of alternatives available including school leaver programmes, apprenticeships and other vocational qualifications. As the research reveals, most parents surveyed were not fully aware of the non-university options available - only 1% of parents said they knew 'a lot' about school leaver programmes; only 6% knew of 'vocational further education courses'; and only 9% were fully aware of apprenticeships or higher apprenticeship programmes.
- 1.9. Regardless of whether students ultimately opt for university, a school leaver scheme, apprenticeship or another route entirely, it's important that they are able to make well informed choices about their career path. This requires parents, schools and employers to work together to fill the current perceived guidance gap.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

- 2.1. The EY Foundation piloted a new programme in the spring for young people aged 16-19 that the Committee has termed as "the missing middle". The programme

¹³⁴ The text in paras 1.7 to 1.9 was drawn from/ included in a joint press release of 12 August 20165 "Parents fill in 'guidance gap' over career advice for school-leavers"

convenes young people who are furthest away from the labour market with employers that are looking for local talent.

- 2.2. The programme – which has been named Our Future, by the students that participated in the pilot – seeks to address key gaps in the existing provision for youth employment across the UK. It focusses on young people (aged 16-19) in statutory education who have significant barriers to transition into the workplace.
- 2.3. It convenes and prepares UK employers who recruit school leavers but require support to meet and engage with young people in their local labour market.
- 2.4. Details of the programme and a student case study can be found in Annex II, paras 1.11 et seq.
- 2.5. All of the young people on the programme have struggled with academic attainment and are from low-income communities. What we have learnt about them beyond this is that they range across a spectrum of need. For example, they may be young carers or young parents; they may have a disability, or have had a challenging home life; they may have been negatively influenced in terms of life choices, or been told that they would not achieve in their lives.
- 2.6. 90% of the young people that took part in Our Future said that they believed that the programme would increase their chances of obtaining a job. They also said that they are now more likely to know what career they would like to pursue, and the qualifications that they need to obtain it. It was noted that there was a significant increase in the number of young people reporting that they were very confident meeting new people.
- 2.7. The indicative outcomes for young people on the programme:
 - Improved awareness of own strengths and weaknesses
 - Improved willingness to learn and adapt
 - Greater determination and motivation to succeed
 - Better equipped to cope with change and rejection
 - Increased understanding of the local labour market and better able to access opportunities
 - Improved ability to build positive relationships
 - Increased confidence in own abilities
 - Better equipped to engage with people from different backgrounds
 - Improved time and organisation skills
- 2.8. The indicative outcomes for employers on the programme:
 - Greater awareness and understanding of how to find and recruit young people
 - Increased understanding of the employer benefits of offering a range of pathways into work for young people

- Better understanding of how to support and train young people
- More receptive to employing young people from a broader talent pool
- More equipped to build and sustain relationships with young people

2.9. Young people who left, or intend to leave, school at 16 and are in employment and/or training will have, or have had, different employability needs. Unless these needs are met at an early stage there is likely to be an impact on their career trajectories.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

3.1. Many young people are not being actively prepared to transition from education to employment. For young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds this leads to low social mobility and unemployment or underemployment.

3.2. From the desk research that was undertaken, it appears to us that:

- There is a lot of overlap in the types of intervention offered
- The geography of interventions is patchy
- There is a lack of brokerage services to help employers and schools connect in meaningful ways
- There is a lack of partnership working to help young people (and schools) navigate from one intervention to the next
- Interventions are often short term in nature, lack meaningful impact measurement, not connected to measurement frameworks such as the Journey to Employment framework devised by New Philanthropy Capital
- Employer engagement is often viewed as a 'good thing to do' by business with limited, quantifiable business benefits leading to sustainability issues
- The Micro and SME community face additional barriers to engaging in schools

3.3. There is growing concern over the lack of transparency and knowledge of what happens to post-16 NEETs i.e. 16-17 year olds who have dropped out of education but not appeared on the 18+ picture in job centres, as they do not qualify for benefits. Local Authorities often do not have the resources and data to track them and schools have no incentive to follow their progress. In our analysis above these are the 'unknowns' – post-16 NEETs, with very little provision identified in any local picture.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

4.1. The EY Foundation conducted a small number of employer consultations in late spring/ early summer under Chatham House rules. The discussions were conducted

to help inform where the charity could have the biggest impact and how this might help shape and define its three-year strategic plan. The insights gathered during this process highlighted a number of reasons why employers choose to engage with broader a range of young people:

- Can't fill roles
- Can fill roles from current applicants but diversity is poor
- Staff development
- Brand
- Right thing to do

4.2. To improve the transition from school to work for all young people, it is important to increase the supply of business engagement and unlock the potential in a large number of employers (including SMEs, charities and social enterprises) that don't actively support young people with preparing for work.

4.3. However, what is needed is targeted engagement, rather than generic CSR. It is important that:

- The culture of employers viewing activities as just 'the right thing to do' is ended
- There are activities to support business needs and encourage more resources and sustainability
- An engagement framework is created to enable employers to map where and how they can make the biggest impact in relation to their strengths and needs and remove overlap
- Interventions are targeted at specific cohorts of young people, demonstrating impact through mapping back to recognised frameworks.

4.4. Whilst support is needed, such as local engagement maps, large firms have an important role in promoting social mobility with their suppliers and by making expertise available to other firms. For example, EY champions young people and employability issues and works with employers to help them engage more young people:

- We are a founding member of Access Accountancy, a group that has come together to launch a social mobility drive to provide equal opportunities and fair access to all in the accountancy profession.
- Through our status as one of 12 Social Mobility Business Compact Champions EY has been encouraging and supporting other businesses to work with a broader range of young people.
- Our tender documents ask bidders about their actions to promote social mobility.
- A new employability pilot run by the EY Foundation (see Annex II) is working with EY service providers to help them recruit more difficult to reach young people.
- We are exploring plans to expand the EY Foundation Smart Futures' programme (See Annex II) reach through:
 - delivering the programme in partnership with other employers
 - delivering the programme on behalf of other employers

- providing Smart Futures material 'open source'
- 4.5. Particularly given the guidance gap discussed in our response to Q1, information and pathways are also crucial to improving the transition for young people e.g.:
- The provision of quality, locally tailored careers guidance for all young people
 - The promotion of vocational pathways and transitioning from education straight into employment as creditable alternatives to university
 - A focus on high quality apprenticeships, relevant to local labour market
 - The creation of interventions which specifically help young people, with known barriers to social mobility, to make successful transitions from school into the work place
 - The promotion of self-employment or entrepreneurship as a career choice for schools leavers

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- 5.1. Clearly many stakeholders, including employers, have key roles to play in improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers.
- 5.2. As discussed above, though, it is important that initiatives are kept local and joined up, with interventions identified, designed and delivered at the local level, in partnership, based on local mapping of labour market needs and trends.

Appendix II: Supplementary information

Note: this annex draw on material from the EY Social Mobility Business Champion application

1. The EY Foundation

- 1.1 The EY Foundation helps young people disadvantaged in the labour market to find alternative routes into employment, education or enterprise. Its work involves designing, developing and running its own programmes - Smart Futures, Our Future and Accelerate (a programme that provides skills capital to grow social enterprises) - as well as raising independent funds to support new initiatives and reach more young people across the UK. The charity aims to support young people aged 11-30. However, the investments it will make in the next three years are most concentrated around those aged 16–18 who have a range of hurdles to overcome when attempting to transition smoothly from statutory education to further education, employment or self-employment.
- 1.2 The EY Foundation is unique in its position as the link between employers and young people, having strong existing relationships with both. This allows the programmes that the Foundation delivers to have the capability to make both young people become employer-ready and employers become young people-ready.
- 1.3 The charity also:
 - Supports social entrepreneurs to grow their businesses so that they can also help young people get work-ready and create local jobs for them
 - Works with charitable partners: Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation, Princes’ Trust, Social Business Trust, Think Forward and UnLtd - providing them with access to volunteers and business resource to support the delivery of their activities
- 1.4 EY Foundation: vision, mission and purpose:



1.5 The EY Foundation has also undertaken market analysis¹³⁵ to:

- Understand the current landscape of need, provision and outcomes for young people aged 14-18 in preparing for and making transitions from statutory education into employment, higher education or training, with a focus on employment
- Focus, in particular, on needs, support and outcomes for young people who have characteristics which indicate they are more likely to have limited social mobility, including those who are more vulnerable and at risk of becoming NEET¹³⁶ on leaving statutory education; and
- Identify how it can make the biggest impact.

1.6 The analysis is desk based research looking at the labour market landscape for young people and the provision of work experience. The research was conducted to help inform strategic choices around the work of the charity over the next three-years. The research was for internal purposes only. The analysis includes a read across of a number of publicly available pieces of independent research conducted by a variety of organisations in the UK.

1.7 The findings of this analysis, which we refer to in more detail in Annex I, show that there is a clear disconnect between the work-readiness of many young people and the skills required by employers - leading to a talent gap. Furthermore, existing programmes tend to focus on CV preparation, employability skills sessions and not providing sustained, structured experiences of work with local employers which have relevant entry level vacancies. There are also a large number of businesses who want to do more, including offering work experience, but are unsure how to.

¹³⁵ Market scan restricted to England & Wales and Scotland

¹³⁶ As identified by 'Risk of NEET Indicators' (RONIs), including qualifying for free school meals, parent/ guardian's employment status job, school attainment targets, school attendance and behavioural issues.

1.8 The EY Foundation helps young people in a number of ways including delivering programmes specially aimed at helping young people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds prepare for and get into work. The current portfolio of programmes includes the following.

1.9 **Smart Futures** - aims to help young people aged 17-18 to secure a good first job or as a progression path to further education. The programme is aimed at young people who attend state school or college and are from low-income communities. The programme offers a series of interactive learning experiences, structured paid experiences of work with local employers, mentoring and networking events over a 10 month period. The programme is designed support to young people:

- Develop their employability skills
- Boost their confidence
- Develop a greater understanding of the local labour market, employment opportunities and how to access them:
 - Gain work experience at a local employer
 - Meet local employers and develop a network of contacts.

1.10 The Smart Futures programme is underpinned by employer engagement. It is designed to enable local employers to spend structured time with local young people who they may not come into contact with outside of the Foundation's work.



I've always lived on the edge of Glasgow. Because of the area I lived in, I never went out much. My biggest challenge was during one year of school I didn't do very well in trying to get the grades I needed. It knocked my confidence and I felt I wasn't going to achieve much. After I went to EY I worked hard and managed to get my grades and confidence.

Smart Futures is one of the best things I have done. It's been really helpful for my confidence. If I was to advise someone to do Smart Futures I'd say go for it: it's been really helpful for me in applying to colleges and jobs and for my confidence.

I'm going to college now to do an HND and then carry on to do a degree at university. I would like to find a job in software: I'd love to code software for video games.

Jamie - Smart Futures Glasgow programme (2014)

1.11 **Our Future** - is a paid experience of work for young people with significant barriers to making a smooth transition from statutory education onto the labour market - including low academic attainment. It starts with three weeks of paid experiences followed by six months of mentoring. The programme works with UK employers who recruit school leavers but require support to meet and engage with young people in their local labour market.

- 1.12 Our Future is structured to create local career awareness, provide employability skills training and offer extended periods of work experience to its participants. It is tailored to the needs of employers and young people, creating an environment where misperceptions of both groups can be addressed and employers can help unlock future talent and meet their business needs.
- 1.13 The programme started in 2015 as a pilot in London, with 10 young people completing the programme. Work experience opportunities were offered to the 10 participants by five UK employers (all organisations that are within EY's supply chain.) The EY Foundation's Board of Trustees has taken the decision to invest in Our Future as part of the charity's programmatic portfolio, to be funded by employers involved in the programme and charitable donations to the EY Foundation.



The reason why I wanted to take part in the Our Future programme is because teachers at my school often told me I wouldn't pass any of my GCSE's. The Our Future programme was promoting something different to me and saying I could achieve anything I wanted. Being on the Our Future programme is the reason why I've been able to achieve so much education-wise.

Even the mentors and the people I've met have had their own struggles in their own lives. It's been inspiring to be told don't let it stop you and strive for more.

My career ambitions are either to go into criminal psychology or continue with what I do best, which is write songs or use spoken word. I hope in five years' time I have completed university; I've got a degree and get into a field that's musically based. And make lots of money!

Hodan - Our Future programme (2015)

- 1.14 **ThinkForward** - is a programme that intervenes early on in the lives of young people to improve significantly the prospects of those most at risk of becoming a NEET. Its objective is a 50% reduction in the number of NEETs in the pilot area of Shoreditch. Working with Impetus - The Private Equity Foundation, EY provided pro-bono support to design and develop ThinkForward in 2011. Subsequently, EY financially committed to supporting ThinkForward for a minimum of five years as a founding partner. EY currently supports over 120 ThinkForward students across five schools in London through the EY Foundation.
- 1.15 Each programme has a clear set of output and outcomes measures which success is measured against. This includes outcomes for young people, volunteers and other stakeholders
- 1.16 **Business voice for young people** - the EY Foundation's aim is to be more than a delivery charity; it also wants to be a business voice for young people on employability issues and to represent employers on making an investment in young

people's futures: acting as a convenor and bringing key players together to help young people. The EY Foundation also:

- Launched an online volunteering portal to help match EY people with opportunities nationwide
- Provides funding and in-kind support for charities helping young people such as The Prince's Trust, Social Mobility Foundation and Bright Ideas Trust
- Maintains relationships with a number of schools in challenging areas providing mentors and governors.

2. EY work experience and recruitment

Work experience

- 2.1. EY runs a wide range of work taster programmes open to all young people. However, we target educational institutions/young people with above average levels of disadvantage. As noted above:
 - We offer young people work experience opportunities in EY through the EY Foundation's Smart Futures. The programme is linked to real job opportunities at EY, targets young people who are eligible for free school meals and/or the first in their family to potentially go to university. EY helps to promote the programme at schools with above average free school meal percentages.
 - EY volunteers support the delivery of the new EY Foundation programme – Our Future – which is a work experience programme linked to real job opportunities at a range of businesses some of which are in EY's supply chain. The programme targets young people who are further away from the labour market and have been identified as being at risk of not transitioning from education to employment.
- 2.2. Where we have a presence across the UK, we have committed to offering work placements in all areas.
- 2.3. All EY work experience opportunities are openly and formally advertised online and we believe that recruiting from the widest possible talent pool enhances the diversity of our firm. We put all applicants through a standard applications process and adhere to best practice in managing both internships and placements.
- 2.4. EY and the EY Foundation firmly believe that all work experience and internships should be paid.
 - All young people on Smart Futures are paid the national minimum wage (plus London weighting for students on the London programme)
 - All young people on the Our Future programme receive the same pay rate as Smart Futures students
 - The EY Foundation is considering establishing a 'hardship' fund for young people on our programmes who need upfront assistance with travel

- EY seeks to provide financial assistance for those doing work experience if they are not entitled to the minimum wage
- 2.5. As discussed previously, in 2015 the EY Foundation’s Smart Futures programme expanded to more locations to have a wider impact – offering 135 places to young people in 10 locations across the UK, targeting schools and colleges with a higher than average percentage of students on free school meals, and areas where we can have a real impact.

The EY recruitment process

- 2.6. EY is one of the UK’s largest student recruiters. In addition to recruiting for over 1400 graduate trainee positions and 500 places on our undergraduate programmes, we are currently recruiting for over 120 school-leavers.
- 2.7. In August 2015 EY transformed its recruitment selection process by removing academic qualifications from our entry criteria for the 2016 graduate, undergraduate and school leaver programmes¹³⁷. Instead, EY will use a new and enhanced suite of online ‘strengths’ assessments and numerical tests to assess the potential of applicants for 2016.
- 2.8. This decision comes after an 18-month analysis of the firm’s student selection process by talent management firm Capp, which confirmed EY’s strengths based approach - used in the recruitment process since 2008 - is a robust and reliable indicator of a candidate’s potential to succeed in role. We believe that transforming our recruitment process will open up opportunities for talented individuals regardless of their background and provide greater access to the profession.
- 2.9. Academic qualifications will still be taken into account and indeed remain an important consideration when assessing candidates as a whole, but will no longer act as a barrier to getting a foot in the door. Transforming our recruitment policy is intended to create a more even and fair playing field for all candidates, giving every applicant the opportunity to prove their abilities. We also believe that the changes to our recruitment process will help us to access the widest and deepest possible talent pools.
- 2.10. We try to make all recruitment social mobility friendly, including advertising all entry level roles and making them available to as wide a group as possible. The EY Recruitment team runs a wide range of skills and awareness sessions in schools cross the UK including ‘back to school’ which encourages employees to speak at their schools

¹³⁷ The text in paras 2.7 to 2.9 was included in the EY press release of 3rd August 2015: “EY transforms its recruitment selection process for graduates, undergraduates and school leavers”

2.11. All of EY's entry level roles are advertised on the EY careers website and school-leaver roles are actively promoted in schools and through external partnerships with organisations such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants for England and Wales (ICAEW), Sponsors for Educational Opportunities (SEO), PurePotential, and Bright Network. All work experience opportunities are listed on ey.com and also the ukcareerguide.ey.com where students can find opportunities that are relevant to their level and career objectives.

The EY School Leaver programme

2.12. We offer well-structured non-graduate entry routes providing opportunity to attain parity with graduate entrants, including qualification and skills which are recognised by other employers.

2.13. The EY School Leaver programme is a five year training contract. During the first two years students complete their Certificate in Finance, Accounting and Business (CFAB) qualification ICAEW / Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland (ICAS), receive relevant technical training for their service line and gain valuable on the job experience. After completing CFAB, students study towards the same qualification as their peers on the graduate programme.

2.14. After year two, school leavers fall in line with the progression route of graduates. They go on to study a range of professional qualifications depending on the service line they join, with the majority going on to gain the Associate of the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ACA).

2.15. Salary progression across the programme recognises the experience and value students add to the business. At the end of the five year programme there is full parity with graduates with respect to salary, professional qualification, job title and grade within the organisation

2.16. This programme has been recognised industry wide and attracted multiple awards including:

- Best Attraction Strategy (School Leavers) - 2014 AGR awards - Awarded for the way that we engage with and attract school leavers to the firm
- Top 30 Employer of School Leavers – RateMyApprentice - Awarded No.9 overall and No.1 Professional Services firm

2.17. We are very proud that a number of our school leavers have made it all the way to the top of the organisation – and stayed. This includes Liz Bingham OBE, a Transaction Advisory partner (who previously held the role of UK&I Managing Partner for Talent until July 2015) and Jon Hughes, Managing Partner for the UK firm's Transaction Advisory Services.

2 November 2015

KPMG – Written Evidence (SMO0121)

**Evidence submitted by Marianne Fallon, Partner and Head of People at KPMG
22 September 2015**

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1.1 Skills gap and expectations of employers

Research suggests young people are not being equipped with the right employability skills prior to entering the workplace and 22% of employers are providing remedial training to school and college leavers as a result¹³⁸. This is also accentuated in the disparity between the skills required to pass exams versus those required in the workplace, such as communication and the ability to challenge and to collaborate. KPMG worked with the National Literacy Trust and the All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Literacy on a major report on youth literacy and employability that revealed a significant gap between literacy levels among school leavers and employer expectations¹³⁹.

As a responsible business, KPMG aims to address this skills gap at an earlier age through programmes such as ‘Work Ready’. Developed in conjunction with EdComs, ‘Work Ready’ helps students in Year 9 and 10 develop employability skills in a fun, interactive way. The summer 2015 programme supported over 1,950 pupils across 15 schools; 91% agreed they had a better understanding of what employers are looking for and 86% agreed they had developed their CV skills as a result of the workshop.

1.2. Poor academic attainment

Although disadvantaged children are doing better at school, the gap between them and their better-off peers still remains wide¹⁴⁰. Several employers have recently removed academic qualifications from their recruitment practices, but grades – whether at GCSE, FE or HE – provide a useful benchmark for employers when assessing applicants. KPMG’s approach is three-fold; help improve the academic attainment of disadvantaged young people through subject specific-tutoring via brokers such as The Access Project; attract a broader range of young people by offering a range of entry routes and at younger ages; and better evaluate context in recruitment.

1.3 Misconceptions of alternative pathways

Inconsistent careers guidance can prevent young people from making fully informed choices – in particular when following non-traditional routes. Without a national

¹³⁸ CBI (2012) CBI Education and Skills Survey, http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/1514978/cbi_education_and_skills_survey_2012.pdf.

¹³⁹ APPG on Literacy (2013) Youth Literacy and Employability Commission, http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/9628/Youth_Literacy_and_Employability_Commission_final_report.pdf.

¹⁴⁰ Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission (2015) Bridging the Social Divide, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/bridging-the-social-divide>

framework of careers guidance and promotion of a mix of entry routes, young people risk missing out on vital information.

KPMG commissioned an online social mobility public opinion survey from independent agency Red Dot (see Appendix I). 52% of adults and 62% of 16-17 year olds think there is good Information, Advice and Guidance on alternative options to university, however, the results demonstrate that young people's perceptions of alternative pathways still need to shift. KPMG encourage less emphasis from schools and colleges on University education being the best/only way to achieve success in a professional environment and more emphasis on matching the best career paths to young people.

1.4 Poor access to work experience and internships

Experience of the workplace is essential in raising aspirations of young people and de-mystifying the workplace environment prior to interviews etc. Opportunities are not always offered openly, formally or indeed paid – providing barriers to young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 2014, KPMG and professional body ICAEW saw an idea we had jointly initiated and championed come to realisation – the ambitious industry-wide collaboration Access Accountancy¹⁴¹. Designed to improve access to the profession for young people from low income families, Access Accountancy is now backed by over 25 firms and professional bodies and members have committed to providing a total of 3,750 quality work experience placements by December 2019.

KPMG supports Intern Aware's call to government to change legislation and cap all unpaid work experience and internships at four weeks. All KPMG interns are paid at least the Living Wage; this is subject to an annual internal audit each November as part of our Living Wage accreditation.

1.5 Lack of variety in entry routes into business

In KPMG's poll, 82% of adults and 80% of 16-17 year olds agreed that getting a job straight from school is harder than it used to be. 91% of UK adults agreed companies should offer a variety of routes (83% 16-17 year olds). See section 2.1 for detail of KPMG's school and college leaver programmes.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

2.1 KPMG recruits over 250 school and college leavers annually across several programmes, employing young people who do not follow the traditional A-Level and Higher Education route¹⁴². KPMG's education outreach work is targeted to educational institutions/young people with above average levels of disadvantage. For example the Business Support

¹⁴¹ See Access Accountancy's website for further information: www.accessaccountancy.org

¹⁴² KPMG's school and college leaver programmes can be accessed here: <https://www.kpmgcareers.co.uk/school-leavers>.

Academy (BSA) work closely with local councils and social workers to encourage looked-after children to apply, although the opportunities are open to all.

2.1.1 Business Support Academy

The BSA apprenticeship is a 13 month formal apprenticeship where 30 candidates per annum work as either a team secretary or graphics operator, whilst studying for NVQ Level 2 or 3 in Business and Administration. The BSA apprenticeship offers an alternative training route into the firm for GCSE students with lower academic grades (5A*-C including English and maths). BSA started in 2013 and has grown from 7 apprentices based in our London office to over 25 apprentices based in our regional offices including Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, Manchester and Reading.

2.1.2 STAR programme

STARs was a 12-month paid work experience programme for A-level school leavers (BCC required). It opened in 2010 in the London office, targeting 25 students from East London, and expanded to our Bristol, Birmingham, Watford, Manchester and Leeds offices in 2014 to take on 70 students. The STAR programme has now become the first year foundation level of KPMG360°, with 59% of 2014-15 STARs progressing onto the programme.

2.1.3 KPMG360°

In October 2015 110 apprentices will join KPMG360° in Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Leeds, London and Manchester. It will give young people the opportunity to rotate around Audit, Tax and Advisory whilst also studying for a professional accounting qualification. The scheme is open to A-level school leavers (BCC required). KPMG has been working with the Government on the Trailblazer initiative for the Level 4 and Level 7 Accountancy / Taxation Standards, aimed at driving greater social mobility in the accountancy profession as a key element of widening access.

2.1.4 Audit School Leaver Programme

This is a five year programme for A-level school leavers (ABB required). Candidates split their time between working with audit teams, studying for a degree in Accounting (Durham or Birmingham University) and studying to become a chartered accountant (Chartered Accountant with ICAS or Associate Chartered Accountant with ICAEW). KPMG pays for all education and accommodation fees. The trainees are also full salaried employees of the firm throughout the duration of the programme. It is a national programme with presence across our 22 UK offices.

24% of candidates joined the Audit School Leaver Programme at the ages of 19-24, demonstrating that young people can have a variety of pathways post A-levels and still enter established professions.

2.2 The profile and destinations (where applicable) of the young people entering onto these programmes are shown in Appendix II.

2.3 Increasingly young people are looking for opportunities to start work earlier and not necessarily attend the traditional university route to access higher professions. A variety of reasons will encourage them to undertake alternative routes – personal, cultural, the desire to start earning, attraction of work over further study and in some cases the lower grades required. One young person explains why they joined the KPMG STAR programme: “After my A-Levels, I was unsure about what field I wanted to enter and which career path to take. By being at KPMG I am better able to understand the different businesses and sectors within the world of work and therefore will be able to identify which path I would like to follow.”

One of the BSA apprentices said “I left sixth form with an interest in art and design, and was split between going to university and enrolling onto the Business Support Academy. Choosing the BSA option, I am now part of KPMG’s design team, utilising my skills within a real, working environment. I sit amongst KPMG’s finest designers, learning programmes such as illustrator and Muse on a day to day basis. The Business Support Academy has helped build my confidence and knowledge, providing a different perspective to learning. I started the apprenticeship with an interest, and have ended the apprenticeship with a career path.”

2.4 The STAR programme is the only programme that has been running long enough to assess progression of candidates. Since 2010 64% have been offered permanent jobs at KPMG. All are professional roles with clear career progression; some roles have a mix of client facing/internal elements and some started as internal facing and are now client facing.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

3.1 All of KPMG’s school and college leaver programmes feature structured support. This is both pastoral as well as developmental (including general employability skills). It is a vital requirement to ensure that the young people are fully equipped for the work place. To give examples, the BSA apprentices have a personal BPP assessor, a buddy within business support and the opportunities for mentors within the business. They also have the traditional performance management support. The new KPMG360° apprentices will have a five star support programme, a robust Learning and Development curriculum and induction programme.

3.2 KPMG provides a number of staff benefits as part of ‘Our Deal’ that further assist with the transition to the workplace for school leavers. This includes financial assistance such as season ticket and student loans, a daily lunch allowance and access to online discounts. KPMG has also provided further financial support, e.g. to cover the purchase of a suit, on an exception basis when deemed necessary based on the individual’s personal situation. This level of support is critical in ensuring that the practicalities of work do not become a blocker in performance.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

4.1 Incentives in current system

KPMG support the renewed focus on “modern apprenticeships” across the political parties and industries to help address the clear skills gap and increase opportunities and productivity. The Government funding available to support young people is a strong incentive for employers. We believe quality apprenticeships will help young people to break into the jobs market, and gain experience and sustainable life skills to build a career.

4.2 Integrating work-related learning further into the curriculum and better careers guidance

Building greater alignment between business skills and the curriculum, for example ensuring each school has a work-related learning strategy and encouraging the development of employability skills in subjects such as English, is key.

As referenced in section 1.4, work placements are vital in assisting a young person’s transition from school to the work place and should be encouraged. In 2015 KPMG ran a work placement programme for 325 students across the UK. 148 were Access Accountancy (see section 1.4) five-day placements in our Birmingham, London, Manchester and Reading offices. Over 70 two-day placements were run across our remaining offices specifically for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. KPMG worked with the broker Social Mobility Foundation to provide residential placements for students outside of London.

As referenced in section 1.3, better careers advice is paramount. Assistance in equipping young people with basic workplace skills is also recommended; for example, how to reply to a work email.

4.3 Business-to-business collaboration

Business has a key role to play in supporting the transition of young people from school to work. Over the past few years a number of initiatives have been developed for and across the business community to help drive change. Access Accountancy was referenced in section 1.4 and the Social Mobility Business Compact, developed by government, is another example.

As one of twelve Social Mobility Business Compact Champions appointed in November 2014, KPMG is leading the way in setting a new benchmark for social mobility across the UK. The Champions have helped build a stronger network of members and share best practice. We are also encouraged to work more closely with our supply chain to promote social mobility. At KPMG we have hosted a roundtable on social mobility with our top suppliers, revised our supplier conduct such that it now makes explicit reference to social mobility issues and actions and our procurement request for proposal documents now include a question about their actions to promote social mobility. This demonstrates the appetite amongst businesses of all sizes to collaborate.

4.4 Cross-sector collaboration

It is also critical to ensure that all sectors collaborate to support young people in their transition. KPMG support more active engagement of employers with education providers, to drive forward students' employability. We support fuller engagement of education providers with technology where it can enhance education and training. KPMG is there to provide long-term support with experience in providing assurance and advisory services across Higher Education, Further Education and work with the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) on skills strategies, combined with our global network of Education professionals.

In 2013/14 KPMG worked with over 130 schools and colleges across the UK through the firm's education outreach programmes, supporting over 12,100 young people improve their experience of work, skills or academic attainment. Employability skills workshops allow us to increase awareness of available opportunities and raise aspirations. We seek to demystify the application processes, equipping potential applicants with the capability and confidence to get through recruitment processes.

Following eight years of support, KPMG's co-sponsored The City Academy, Hackney became the best mixed comprehensive in the country for student progress and value added with its first set of GCSE results. Lastly, KPMG is supporting the National Literacy Forum, a group of 15 child poverty and literacy charities, in the development of a Vision for Literacy Business Pledge, ensuring businesses play their part in addressing the literacy challenge.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

5.1 A cross-sector approach is required to support the transition into work for school leavers; whether it be the students, schools, Education Business Partnerships, local authorities, LEPs, businesses and parents. As mentioned in section 4, collaboration is key.

5.2 There is a role for government in producing a national and impartial framework around careers guidance and one which encourages a full range of pathways into the work place. The introduction of the new Careers and Enterprise Company for schools may address this gap.

5.3 The business community in particular have a vested interest in the success of this transition.

At KPMG, we recognise that our most valuable asset is our people. A highly skilled and socially diverse workforce is key to meeting the demands of our clients and securing the continued success of our business. As a Social Mobility Business Compact Champion, we have demonstrated our desire to become a leading business in providing greater equality and improving social mobility but it cannot be achieved alone.

Appendix I – KPMG's social mobility public opinion poll data

KPMG commissioned an online social mobility public opinion survey from independent agency Red Dot. The survey targeted 5,000 nationally representative people across the UK. A summary of the key findings from the poll are included below:

- 88% of UK adults think schools should be responsible for improving literacy and 80% think parents should be responsible
- Just half (50%) of UK adults think it's the government's responsibility and under half (47%) the individual's responsibility to improve literacy
- Adults and 16-17 olds agree that communication skills are the most important type of skills for young people entering the workplace (68% and 63% respectively)
- Adults think literacy skills (67%) and numeracy skills (62%) are next most important. By contrast 16-17 year olds chose people skills (59%) and self-management/attitude (47%)
- 16-17 seem to undervalue the importance of numerical skills; only 36% see them as important compared to 62% of adults 18+

- 80% of UK adults and 74% of 16-17 year olds believe that success is driven by how hard you work and how talented you are; but 70% agree that success is driven by who you know and 65% by class or socio-economic backgrounds
- 91% of UK adults and 83% 16-17 year olds agree companies should offer a variety of routes into the firm, with 82% of adults and 80% 16-17 year olds agreeing that getting a job straight from school is harder than it used to be
- 71% of adults agree that 'private schools dominate the best paid or most respected job'
- While 81% of adults agree that apprenticeships are a great route into high calibre careers, only 67% of 16-17 year olds agreed
- 67% adults think it is more important to get a top quality job than a university education (compared to 56% 16+17 year olds)
- 60% 16-17 year olds think university is still the best route to get ahead in the job market (compared to 50% of adults) and 65% think university is more prestigious than apprenticeships (56% adults)
- 52% adults and 62% of 16-17 year olds think there is good IAG on alternative options to university

22 September 2015

Pinetree Enterprises Ltd – Written evidence (SMO0015)

My name is Martyn Kiddey and I run two micro businesses

Pinetree Enterprises Ltd www.pinetree.uk.com and

Shop Display Systems Ltd www.sds.uk.com

We manufacture display equipment in Hampshire and have been established for 17 years. We employ 10 people and 50% of the workforce are under 24 years old.

These are my views as prompted by your questions

The transition from school to work is one of the most confusing times of life. Many young people do not know what they want and are getting mixed messages from school, family, friends and social media. In addition to this, expectations of young people, along with their parents and educators, are very much higher than they have ever been. Most young people have many material items and wish to maintain their status. Peer pressure adds to this.

Two generations ago, young people started work at 14 and became adults at 21. That is well on its way to being reversed.

Independence and freedom are another two serious factors in the choices that young people make. I wonder how many go to university in order to gain 3 years of independent living.

As an employer, I am looking for employees who are able to think about what they are doing and have a positive attitude to work. For me, specific qualifications are not necessarily important on their own, but as an indicator of the intelligence and application of the candidate. The most important qualities I look for are tenacity and enthusiasm. A willingness to learn is more important than existing skills in our workplace.

I have interviewed and employed people from many backgrounds and social classes. They have come with qualifications ranging from minimal to a 1st class honours degree. I have found that often, their domestic background has contributed very significantly to their attitude and subsequently to their success.

From my experience of my own education and as a parent of 3 children who have been through the education system, I have found that the emphasis is on academic subjects such as mathematics, English and science. This seems to be a very good route for young people wanting to move on to an academic higher education. There seems to be a more difficult route for those seeking a more practical progression and skills such as bricklaying, plastering or plumbing, care work, railway working and gardening - subjects that could keep their interest in school and could be supported with necessary skills in arithmetic, reading, writing and practical problem solving.

In their formative years, young people are greatly influenced by their parent or guardian, who are often not aware of the options available. Parents, young people and educators seem to feel that a failure to reach university is just that - failure.

I am very interested in the progression of young people into work, and am involved as an apprenticeship ambassador, also working with other bodies such as the FSB, learning providers and councils. I am speaking at networking events to promote apprenticeships and would like to promote them to parents in schools.

In my experience, there are very many organisations involved in apprenticeships. However, I feel that they don't work in unison and in some cases there is discord and they are actually in competition with each other.

In order to improve the system, I feel that it is important that there is a single point of contact, well known and well publicised, where parents, young people, employers, schools and colleges can all go to get the correct and consistent information.

With a forecast that 50% of students will not earn sufficient money to repay their student loans, does this mean that the taxpayer is set to receive a very large bill every year? Is it possible that it would have been better for certain of these students, for the economy and for the progression of their non-academic careers if they had not gone to university in the first place?

On a final note, as a piece of information, my company is looking to offer an apprenticeship in sign making. Even with all of my contacts, this is not that easy. Only four colleges in England offer the course, only one is prepared to support the course in my area and then only at level 2, not the level 3 we want to offer. The vacancy has been advertised for 3 weeks and so far, only 3 candidates have applied and none of them in easy commuting distance. If it is that difficult for me, why would other small companies make the effort?

In Summary

Everyone has a talent. Sometimes it is difficult discovering what it is, harnessing it and finding a way to hone it.

Young people should be encouraged to think about their future at the earliest age possible.

There are many options already available for entry into the workplace, all young people should be made aware of all of them.

There should be one source of information for everyone regarding apprenticeships - parents, schools, employers and young people.

All agencies involved in the transition from education to work should communicate and work together.

Vocational qualifications need to be perceived to be on a par with academic ones. After all, plasterers often earn more than admin workers.

In closing I would like to add that I have tried to keep my contribution brief. This is a subject I am very passionate about and I am more than happy to help if I can.

2 September 2015

Pret A Manger – Written evidence (SMO0041)

Select Committee on Social Mobility – call for evidence

Submitted by Kate Nicholls (School Leaver Programme Manager) 11th September 2015

Question 1 – what are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?
From our time in schools and through talking to all the young people we have met it is apparent that the education system is very geared to prepare young people for A Levels and then to apply for university. School targets mainly appear to be about Academic results and Ofsted. The Career Advisors that we have met in schools are passionate about providing the best service to their students, but many seem to be juggling a number of school responsibilities in addition to providing career advice. They are also swamped with the amount of information that they receive and there appears to be very little room in the curriculum to add in career modules. As a result some students lack job knowledge, interview experience; and the confidence to apply for jobs. It feels that career information available to students who do not wish to progress with A Levels is delivered a little late in their school journey with many only receiving this information at the end of Year 11. This results in a group of people who are unaware of the employment options available to them until they are already making preparations to study A levels. What we have found is that these young people are understandably nervous about starting work, despite having a lot of the skills and the desire required. They are driven & determined, they have good communication skills; they have pride in themselves but they can lack the belief that these skills exist in them.

Question 2 – There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

From our experience this group of young people have decided to leave education because: they have not been enjoying education, they have found it frustrating; and they have felt they lacked the academic skills require to complete A Levels. Some have been going through personal difficulties at home or school and some have just felt that they learn better by doing a task rather than by studying. Some have had bad experiences – i.e teachers have labelled them as trouble makers. Some have moved to sixth form but have not settled in well; and some have not enjoyed their A Level subjects and it's been too late to change. Some have rebelled against the discipline of schools. Some have not seen the 'purpose' of the subjects they are learning.

We have found that these young people have felt significant peer & parent pressure to continue with their school studies, and as such have to be strong willed and determined to make a decision to leave school and work instead. This has in fact meant that we have found that all of our 'non A Level' achievers that we have recruited have all done extremely well.

Question 3 – Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

From our experience some young people have had career support from their schools or colleges, but most that have been successful at moving into work have also had support and guidance from family and friends. Some schools work hard to provide employability modules to their students, but this takes a lot of organization, effort; and resource on the part of the schools. From what we have seen the Career Advisors with good employment contacts make this work well, whereas for others it is a mammoth task to deliver this well. From our experience this is not because of a lack of interest on the part of the Career Advisors, but more because of the lack of time schools have within the National curriculum. As mentioned earlier, it is also because Career Advisors are bombarded with information. Sifting through this to find which elements are relevant to each young person is time consuming. Encouraging employers to go into school also takes a lot of resource on the part of schools who may not have the contacts to hand or the support of fellow teachers. We have been involved with career fairs and presentations in schools, but the majority of these are delivered to those in Year 11 who have just finished, or about to finish, their GCSEs.

Question 4 – How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Adding employability modules to the curriculum should be compulsory and will help to better prepare young people for work (regardless of if they go onto higher education or not). Without doubt one way to encourage more employers to employ more young people would be to produce information on how to do this. Employers are nervous about employing younger people because they perceive it to be more challenging than employing people with experience. There is a perception that employment laws, and health & safety legislation can be restrictive; and sadly there is a perception that employing young people will be time consuming and stressful. We have found that this is most certainly not the case. Employers should be informed of the benefits of employing young people and the best practice that exists in other Companies. Employers are also unsure of how to get involved in schools and also how to talk to students in an engaging way. An independent organization that can provide this type of support to employers should they need it would therefore be of benefit.

Question 5 – Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

The system can only be improved by schools and employers working together. Employers should be able to communicate to educators about what it is that they need and education should be encouraged by government to add this into national curriculum. Employers should be encouraged to impart their knowledge and expertise by working with teachers to deliver this curriculum. One independent organization would be useful in bridging this gap and providing the support that both schools and employers need.

11 September 2015

Other Public and Third Sector Groups (including Think Tanks and non-governmental organisations)

Ambitious about Autism – Written evidence (SMO0039)

Ambitious about Autism response to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee consultation

11th September 2015

1. Ambitious about Autism

2. Ambitious about Autism is the national charity for children and young people with autism. We provide services, raise awareness and understanding, and campaign for change. Through TreeHouse School and Ambitious College we offer specialist education and support. Our mission is to help children and young people with autism to learn, thrive and achieve.

3. We run active research programmes funded by the Department for Education and other sources, which aim to turn policy into practice for children with autism in education settings. Currently we are running Finished at School and Succeeding at College, two projects looking at supporting young people with autism who would otherwise be NEET to get into college, gain skills and qualifications, and prepare for employment.

4. Our evidence

5. We have drawn much of our evidence for this response from our experiences of working with young people at Ambitious College. Ambitious College is a day college for young people with autism and complex needs. Our learners fit the profile of the group being examined by the Committee, since they are neither NEET, nor pursuing A levels and higher education.

6. In addition to our service users, we are in regular contact with children and young people with autism, parents, and professionals from across the country. Our extensive engagement network includes our 15 Youth Patrons, along with 19 active participants of myVoice (a programme funded by the Department of Health). Through this network we have developed first-hand familiarity with the various paths that young people with autism take beyond school, and the challenges they face with moving into employment.

7. Introduction

8. Autism is a lifelong developmental disability which affects 1 in 100 people in the UK. It affects the way a person communicates and how they experience the world around them.

9. Autism is described as a spectrum condition. This means that while people with autism, including Asperger's Syndrome, share certain characteristics, they will be highly individual in their needs and preferences. Therefore, although many young people with autism fall into the group of people being examined by the Committee, the reasons they are in this group may vary.
10. Our experience shows that in order for young people with autism to access employment, they must have access to high quality further education provision, tailored to their needs, in order to develop their skills and independence. There must also be strong links between schools, further education providers and employers, to ensure that young people with autism can move seamlessly from one stage to the next.
11. **Response to Question 1: What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?**
12. Some young people are able to move straight from school to work. But in our experience, for most young people, further education is a critical intermediate step. As a result, there is no single transition from school to work, but two transitions: from school to further education, and from further education to work. Therefore, the factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place are:
- The availability of quality further education provision, in which young people are properly supported;
 - The strength of the links between school, further education and employment, which enable young people to move from one stage to the next without falling through the gaps; and
 - The quality of planning for these transitions delivered by schools and local authorities. For many young people with autism, this should be delivered through their Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan.
13. **Response to Question 2: There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**
14. Young people with autism are a group that will be interest to the Committee, since many are not following the A level and higher education route, but are also not NEET.

15. Young people with autism who have an EHC plan

16. Under the new SEND system, there is an increased focus on preparing young people with SEN for adulthood, and to support them to reach positive outcomes in four areas, including employment. To facilitate this, the Children and Families Act sets out that young people with SEN who remain in education can retain the support in their EHC plan up to the age of 25.

17. If a young person with autism has an EHC plan, it is likely that they require support in many different areas in order to prepare for an independent life. Therefore, those young people with autism who stay in education beyond school, and who have an EHC plan, most commonly follow a study programme. The content of the study programme varies, and is designed to be personalised to the needs of the individual learner. At Ambitious College, we prioritise the development of communication, vocational and independent living skills. All 16-19 study programmes must include an element that prepares learners for work, and this includes work experience, but some providers fulfil this component more effectively than others.

18. Young people with autism who do not have an EHC plan

19. Those young people with autism who have lower levels of needs, and who do not have EHC plans, might also stay in education and training beyond compulsory school age. In contrast to those with an EHC plan, young people with autism who do not have a plan are more likely to be studying mainstream courses.

20. Some will go on to study A levels and pursue higher education, and therefore do not belong in the group being considered by the Committee.

21. Others do not study A levels and instead study some kind of vocational training. The reason that they opt to take a vocational course varies. In some cases, the young person has made a positive, informed choice that vocational training is right for them. But others fall into vocational training because they cannot find the right support to enable them to study for A levels. The support they require is not support primarily targeted at improving their capacity to learn – instead, they require support to cope with the social and emotional aspects of studying at college, or to develop independent study skills (independent study being a key part of further education that young people with autism can struggle with). We have also heard from young people who are deterred from pursuing A levels and higher education because they anticipate that they will not receive

the correct support to cope at university – something which makes us very concerned about potential changes being made to Disabled Students Allowance.

22. With the system in its current state, many young people with autism (those with EHC plans and those without) face significant obstacles to entering the workforce. Only 15% of adults with autism in the UK are in full-time paid employment.¹⁴³

23. **Response to Question 3: Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?**

24. 79% of adults with autism who receive out of work benefits say they would rather work.¹⁴⁴ Given the low employment rate for this group, it is clear that people with autism are faced with significant barriers which make employment inaccessible to them. There are two key reasons that explain why young people face challenges in making the transition into work:

25. Lack of quality further education provision, focused on employment outcomes, for young people with autism

26. Our Finished at School programme showed that in order for young people to succeed in further education, the provision they receive must be person-centred, and delivered by those who have received autism awareness training.¹⁴⁵ There is not enough provision of this kind, so many young people with autism are unable to continue in education beyond compulsory school age. As a result, they do not develop skills that are crucial to gaining and keeping a job.

27. Problems with the pathways between school and further education, and between further education and employment

28. Many young people with autism are facing difficulties in making the transition from school to further education, for a variety of reasons – some of which are related to problems currently being experienced in the implementation of recent SEND reforms:

- There is often insufficient planning in the months and years before a young person leaves school;

¹⁴³ National Autistic Society (2012), The way we are: autism in 2012

¹⁴⁴ National Autistic Society (2012), The way we are: autism in 2012

¹⁴⁵ Ambitious about Autism (2011), Finished at School summary report

- Careers guidance delivered in schools can be lacking for children and young people with SEN and/or disabilities;
- Colleges are being allocated at a very late stage; and
- Few young people who were receiving Learning Difficulty Assessments under the old system are being given EHC plans under the new system. Statistics show that of 470 children and young people with Learning Disability Assessments who were assessed for an EHC plan, only 30 were issued with an EHC plan.¹⁴⁶ This is of serious concern.

29. The pathways between further education and employment are also weak in some areas, despite there being pockets of good practice:

- Many further education providers do not offer work experience opportunities, or lack a strong emphasis on building vocational skills – despite this being a requirement of 16-19 study programmes;
- There are insufficient partnerships between families, colleges and employers; and
- There is more work to be done around the autism awareness of employers.

30. Response to Question 4: How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

31. Firstly, there needs to be more quality further education provision for young people with autism, tailored to their individual needs.

32. Our experience with Ambitious College shows that building the life skills and independence of young people with autism through quality further education is the first step towards employment. For an illustration of this, please see appendix 1, which is a case study of an Ambitious College learner.

33. In addition to expanding specialist provision for young people with autism, all further education providers have a role to play in making their offer accessible to those with autism – by using a person-centred approach, and by making sure their staff are autism aware.

¹⁴⁶ Department for Education (2015), Statements of SEN and EHC plans: England 2015

34. Secondly, the links between school and further education, and between further education and work, must also be strengthened, enabling young people with autism to make successful transitions from one stage to the next.

35. Appendix 2 is a case study of Ambitious about Autism's Civil Service work experience partnership, which gives young people with autism the opportunity to experience working in a government department. More partnerships like this will encourage employers to become more accessible to people with autism. The government should also consider investing more in supported internships. Like apprenticeships, supported internships give young people solid experience in the workplace, but are accessible to people with SEN, including autism. Supported employment models, such as supported internships, have been shown to be very successful.¹⁴⁷

36. Response to Question 5: Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- The further education sector has a responsibility to develop study programmes for young people with autism, so that there is a greater focus on gaining vocational skills and experience;
- Central government must ensure that further education providers have sufficient funding. Disabled Students Allowance must also be protected to ensure that young people are not deterred from pursuing higher education if it is right for them;
- Third sector organisations, including Ambitious about Autism, must roll out our vocational experience programmes, connect young people with employment opportunities, and share our learning about what works; and
- Local authorities have a responsibility to ensure that EHC plans have a strong focus on transitions to employment. Placements to further education must be made in good time. Local authorities also need to commission a range of quality further education options for young people with SEN, including autism, as per their duties with respect to the local offer.

37. Appendix 1: Josephine, an Ambitious College learner

38. As an Ambitious College learner, Josephine takes part in community-based activities and learning and receives 2:1 support. She is currently studying for an entry level accreditation

¹⁴⁷ Steve Bayer and Carol Robinson (2009), A Review of the Research Literature on Supported Employment

in independence and a certificate in personal progress. Her mother says, “Before Josephine started at Ambitious College she was hyper and her behaviour challenged. Now her behaviour has really improved because the staff know how to support her.

39. “Josephine really enjoys being independent and going out to do things. In the past she couldn’t do this and she wasn’t sociable, she was always by herself or wanted to be on her own.”

40. Since starting at the college in January, Josephine has completed work experience at the RAF Museum (admin), Saracens (retail) and Traid (retail). The independence Josephine has developed at Ambitious College was crucial to her success in her work experience placements.

41. Appendix 2: Ambitious about Autism’s civil service work experience partnership

42. Ambitious about Autism worked with the Civil Service to pilot a work experience programme that placed young people with autism in the Department for Work and Pensions and HMRC. Employees at both departments were offered basic autism awareness training, and young participants received coaching and workshop training during the programme. Thomas Kingston, a participant in the programme, said: “Throughout the two week placement, I found that my health had improved. My anxiety was reduced because I had a stable routine and I felt like I had accomplished something. I also feel like I’ve had a massive boost in self-confidence.”

11 September 2015

ASDAN – Written evidence (SMO0054)

House of Lords Select Committee: The Over-looked Middle

Written evidence submitted by Maggie Walker, CEO, on behalf of ASDAN

ASDAN is a charity with awarding organisation status that provides courses to thousands of schools, colleges, youth centres and training providers. Our curriculum programmes and qualifications offer flexible ways of accrediting skills for employment, learning and life in a range of skills and settings from Entry level to university entrance. Our aim is to provide opportunities for all learners, of all ages and from all walks of life, to develop their personal and social attributes and raise their levels of achievement through the use and attainment of ASDAN awards and qualifications. We are pleased to contribute to this inquiry, following an invitation from Baroness Corston.

Response to Questions: ASDAN Summary

1. Apart from the formal qualifications received by individuals which set the potential framework for progression, the next most significant of factors are expectations, of those close to young people, and stakeholders, dominated by the message from Government that academic success and access to HE seems most important. However, good quality careers guidance is significant, if it is available at the right time and is independent, along with stronger local links between schools and employers.
2. This group of young people are in the majority – they make up over 50% of the age-group and are those who achieve a wide-range of GCSEs and Entry Level qualifications and who see their progression pathway through Further Education and training/apprenticeships to employment. It is significant that this group is defined as not being one of the other two groups, which labels this group in a negative way as those who do not go on to HE.
3. There is support, but not enough, given the emphasis on academic and access to HE. One of the biggest challenges is skills development in schools, both for young people and for schools themselves. Employers are still saying that young people do not have the skills that are required to be an effective employee, and they are not perceived to be a priority, because traditional academic study is prioritised through the school performance measures set by the Government.
4. Developing a standardised approach to recognising relationships between potential employers and young people is key, built through better partnerships between schools and employers. Quality Work Experience from Key Stage 4 is a good starting point for this, as well as the development of soft skills, skills for employment and skills for life, which will assist the transition from school to work. ASDAN has been developing these skills for over 30 years, using programmes and resources, and offering qualifications like CoPE (ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness), and have built in structured work placements which help to develop and value these skills. CoPE has been researched and evidenced as making a difference, with real benefits: engaging young people, building confidence and resilience, improving qualification performance, enhancing routes to employment, backed up by independent research from UWE indicating enhanced performance in English and Maths. Employers have publically stated their support for this work.
5. Schools should be encouraged and supported by Government as well as employers to develop skills that prepare young people for life and the workplace. Stakeholder groups should be set up to maximise institutional collaboration on a local basis to provide leadership

in developing and delivering independent careers advice and guidance, and enhance pathways into employment.

6. Ashton Park School in Bristol has provided a case study which identifies some of the key issues and concerns, and outlines their plans for the future in meeting the needs of individual students, particularly in collaborating with employers and business partners.

7. Thomas Keble School is an ASDAN registered centre, and asked us to include their thoughts.

Response to Questions: ASDAN

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1.1 Apart from the formal qualifications received by individuals which set the potential framework for progression, the next most significant of factors are expectations:

- of parents, often influenced by their own experience, ambition and tradition
- of peers, what their friends are doing
- of teachers, often influenced by performance measures, reputation of the school and push for maximising elite destinations (e.g. Higher Education (HE))
- of Government, through performance measures, encouraging traditional subjects at GCSE and A Level, and HE route for as many as possible
- of Employers, whose needs are often outweighed by expectations of the above, especially Government.

1.2 There is a general feeling that the current Government and previous Coalition have focused their attention on a return to traditional academic success, with its inherent emphasis on routes to HE. The impact of the Wolf Report and the removal of 1000s of qualifications from performance measures have consolidated this trend and although there is a more recent acknowledgement of the importance of vocational qualifications and the push for apprenticeships, there remains a feeling that this is a less than equal alternative. Employers have continued to say what they want, but this has often been interpreted as, and translated into, an academic vision, as happened with Diplomas.

1.3 Another significant factor is *quality careers guidance at the critical time*: for young people to know their options well in advance, to understand their own personal skill set and to be able to acknowledge the skills and additional learning required to achieve aspirations – all implemented when they get access to good quality CEIAG when they need it.

1.4 Looking specifically at the ‘over-looked middle’, we need teaching in schools that relates directly to the local and regional context. The chances are greater with this group that these young people are less likely to move on to other areas of the country so they need to understand their own context well and what it is they need in order to give them the best chance for employment and life opportunities.

1.5 It is vital that the link between employers and schools is made stronger. Partnerships need to be harnessed so that schools and employers are working together to benefit young people and facilitate the transition into the workplace.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group—who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

2.1 This group of young people are in the majority – they make up over 50% of the age-group and are those who achieve a wide-range of GCSEs and Entry Level qualifications and who see their progression pathway through Further Education and training to employment. They may have made a conscious decision that University is not for them, either because it does not appeal, perhaps they perceive it to be beyond their capability, and/or because they cannot afford, or are not prepared to pay, high tuition fees. Alternatively they are drawn to a specific employment pathway in which HE is inappropriate. They may have also been given advice that HE is inappropriate. Career trajectories will involve sixth-form or FE, into further training, apprenticeships and/or employment.

2.2 It is significant that this group is defined above as **not** being one of the other two groups, rather than being the majority. It somehow labels this group in a negative way, as those who do not go on to HE, because so much emphasis is on widening participation to HE.

2.3 This group will be in sixth form/further education or training/apprenticeships.

2.4 It might also be worth highlighting that the notion of social mobility is itself underpinned by a notion of meritocracy, and that what counts as being ‘of merit’ has been raised by government interventions such that less young people are likely to meet the criteria set for example for passing GCSE.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

3.1 There is support, but not enough. As mentioned above, the HE route has hitherto been considered the ‘highest’ goal, and so anything else is second best, or seems that way. The Government has reinforced this with their emphasis on academic qualifications, and their secondary attempts to promote vocational qualifications. Their push now to encourage employers to take responsibility for what they want in terms of apprenticeships, skills development etc. is right, but there is a feeling that it is long overdue, and that it is still tempered by a priority given to academic achievement to enable progression to HE. There needs to be a clear message that the route through to Employment, without going to HE, is a priority for many young people, and clear pathways need to be identified.

3.2 These pathways need to be equally resourced, and that resourcing/funding to employers needs to be carefully monitored so that there is no doubt that high quality work based learning and training is being offered, rather than any additional funding simply subsidising labour costs to employers for low quality provision.

3.3 Information, advice and guidance should energetically be applied to this end. There has been too much disruption to this service. Not all CEIAG is independent, not least because it is based in educational institutions which are in competition with each other. In addition there are often insufficient skilled resources devoted to it, because of limitations in funding.

3.4 One of the biggest challenges is skills development in schools, both for young people and for schools themselves. Employers are still saying that young people do not have the skills that are required to be an effective employee, or have not been given the time to develop them. Skills are not perceived to be a priority, whereas traditional academic study is prioritised, as determined by the school performance measures set by the Government. A closer relationship between employers and schools would help to ensure that young people are being given the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to be an effective employee, and this must be recognised and supported by Government.

3.5 Apprenticeships are the main alternative to FE/HE – the vocational training route is good for some young people in terms of matching them with the right learning opportunities/conditions. Research does support increased earning potential by being matched to the right apprenticeship level and programme at the right stage, just as there is more widely known research which demonstrates graduates can earn more over a lifetime than an apprentice (see research from the Education and Employers Taskforce). We must remember that one route does not suit all.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

4.1 Developing relationships between potential employers and young people is key, built through better partnerships between schools and employers. This would allow relationships to grow, the development of key skills facilitated for the young person while the employer would have the opportunity to spot potential employees of the future. Any activities which can enhance that relationship and understanding of what employers want and need, that provides the opportunities, and builds the skills, are crucial. For example, a school business department used to work closely with a local employer in order for students to complete coursework based on that organisation. This was a relationship that developed over several years. The additional benefit was that 4 or 5 young people from the school ended up working at this organisation at varying levels every year. This would prove that partnership development works between schools/colleges and employers. This sort of local relationship was commonplace in the past, and not in the distant past where trades were passed on from parent to child, but more recently in the 1980's where a local identity was more apparent and government sponsored projects such as TVEI were high profile.

4.2 Quality Work Experience should be the first step in a 2-way relationship between supportive employers and education; students should get a relevant and worthwhile work experience and Employers get to know young people and build future talent pools and relationships. This should start at the latest in Key Stage 4.

4.3 All stakeholders should provide clear and consistent messages which join up will assist decisions on appropriate transition pathways. For example, in the Pye-Tait report (supported by AELP), into the Functional Skills (FS) v GCSE question, employers overwhelmingly say they need people to have c or above in GCSE for two reasons:

1. The loud message from DfE and media that this is an important yardstick
2. That legislation now says that if the applicant is under 19 and doesn't have these qualifications then the employer has to fund and facilitate their acquisition. However, the researchers then went on to ask employers what English and Maths specific skills they wanted employees to have, and these were actually all covered in Functional Skills. So there needs to be a public acknowledgement that whilst the GCSEs might be a great yardstick for school performance they are not always that relevant to work-readiness, and that young employees could do FS instead of GCSE.

[\(http://www.pyetait.com/makingmathsandenglishworkforall/\)](http://www.pyetait.com/makingmathsandenglishworkforall/)

4.4 Developing skills for employment and skills for life will assist the transition from school to work, and will encourage employers to employ more young people from this group. A recent campaign by McDonalds (backingsoftskills.co.uk) focused on the importance of soft skills, and the contribution they make to the economy. This was backed up by a range of organisations, including NIACE who have launched their website "What Employers Want", and have done some interesting research in Dorset and, more recently, Humberside on STEM traineeships in the LEP area, highlighting the significance of local arrangements (<http://www.niace.org.uk/>). McDonalds are following up a positive response to their research with additional work, supported by partners such as DofE, NYA, Learndirect, CIPR, CIPD, Tesco, CBI and ASDAN.

4.5 ASDAN has been developing soft skills, transferable skills, for over 30 years, using programmes and resources in a structured way to develop these skills, and offering qualifications like CoPE (Certificate of Personal Effectiveness) which recognise and value these skills, and enhance resilience and the ability to maximise potential in other qualifications, therefore improving overall achievement. ASDAN contributes much already to providing opportunities for clarifying pathways to employment by building structured work placements and experience within the curriculum programmes offered, by building skills for employment, skills for learning and skills for life, and by improved performance in other subjects.

4.6 To give one example the ASDAN Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE) has been researched and evidenced as **making a difference**. The learners, parents, teachers, employers and educationalists involved all agree that there are real benefits:

- engaging young people
- building confidence and resilience
- improving qualification performance
- enhancing routes to employment
-

proven by the young people themselves, backed up by statistical analysis.

4.7 Over 7,000 young people will have achieved certificates in personal effectiveness this year, across the three levels 1, 2 and 3, with an estimated 70,000 involved over the last 4 years, from over 2000 schools and colleges registered.

4.8 With guidance on standards, schemes of work, and resources, there is a rigorous framework for success, but the student has to deliver – take responsibility for doing challenges which demonstrate they have met the standards. A young person who has achieved CoPE can Work in a Team, Self-Manage, Problem-Solve, Research, Present and Discuss.

4.9 “I like the days I do CoPE, I enjoy coming to school on those days” “CoPE gives us skills for the rest of our GCSEs” say the students, and a father says “...I think this course has done a huge amount for my son in terms of confidence and the way he is progressing with other subjects in school”.

4.10 Independent research by UWE, based on analysis of data from more than 500,000 students, has found that young people who passed Level 2 CoPE raised their chances of achieving A* to C grades in GCSE English by 10% and achieving five A* to C grades including English and Maths by 5%. The impact was most significant on those in less privileged groups, those with low KS3 attainment, those in BME communities and those on free school meals, all of which are likely to be in “the over-looked middle”. In the research teachers and young people report that CoPE boosts confidence, self-esteem, motivation and attendance (www.asdan.org.uk/uwe-research) and also at: <http://bit.ly/1MkamU0>.

4.11 ASDAN has worked for well over a decade on widening participation and our latest initiative to tackle disadvantage by intervening earlier in the school and learner life cycle at key stages 2 and 3 is being funded nationally by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

4.12 ASDAN has also worked closely over many years with both local and national employers, and national employers locally. Neil Carberry, the CBI’s Director for employment and skills, writing exclusively for ASDAN, has highlighted the importance of resilience and self-management skills “Business is clear that developing the right attitudes and attributes in people – such as resilience, respect, enthusiasm and creativity – is just as important as academic or technical skills”.

4.13 “One of the best ways to ensure meaningful engaged learning for students is by giving them the opportunity to link the CoPE qualification with their work-related learning sessions. This course has a proven track record at our school of developing life, employability and transferable skills in our learners, including skills and attributes such as communication, teamwork, problem solving, and confidence. These skills are hugely important to the British economy, with many businesses benefitting from employees with practical, hands-on experience” (*Deputy Head, Kenton School, Newcastle*)

4.14 Employers have said of ASDAN’s work:

“CoPE gives skills a status, enabling employers like me to spot the bright, enterprising types”
(James Caan, Entrepreneur)

“CoPE allows young people to be recognised and rewarded for their individual talents” (Cath Kidston, Designer)

“Waitrose Learning and Development is proud to be associated with ASDAN and the CoPE qualification, which promotes personal development and skills acquisition” (Learning and Development Manager, Waitrose)

“TNT Express has a strong reputation of investment in our own workforce. As a further extension of that ethos...TNT Express recognises that organisations such as ASDAN play a valuable part in that process. ASDAN’s work in local schools and colleges contributes and helps to ensure that employers have pools of work-ready individuals who are equipped with the skills and ability to enter business in a contributory and worthwhile fashion. It is these employability skills and behaviours that we would look for when recruiting” (General Manager – Talent, TNT Express).

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

5.1 There needs to be a clear, workable, common sense solution. The problem is that there have been a number of different services and structures to deliver, for example, Careers guidance and IAG, some independent, some less so, and we have been left with a confusing picture.

5.2 Ultimately it is for the government to decide which way they wish to proceed. Work done by Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours at London Institute of Education has identified many of the issues emerging for “middle & lower attainers” where there is a need for local institutional collaboration, made more difficult by reduced Local Authority role and increased central control. They write about the need for a collaborative “Local learning ecology”, with the emphasis on high opportunities for progression (<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/>). Similarly the Institute for Public Policy Research have concluded in their report “Moving On Up” that a broad, stretching programme of study for all students over a four-year period (14-18), underpinned by clear vision, transition, accountability and fairer funding, should have local oversight involving Commissioners, LEAs, employers and educational institutions in partnership (<http://www.ippr.org/publications/moving-on-up-developing-a-strong-coherent-upper-secondary-education-system-in-england>)

5.3 There is a need for a stakeholder group which does not serve a political ideology to start with, and where there is no agenda for leadership. This group would ideally be made up of Local Authorities, careers professionals, employers and employer groups, teaching professionals and young people, with a common understanding that all have a part to play. It may be that the new ‘Careers Company’ development has a part in this?

5.4 Ultimately it is about schools and colleges having broad and balanced curriculums that prepare young people for life and the workplace in its broadest sense which will then ensure that young people from all walks of life have the best preparation possible.

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6. Annex: Case Study: Enhancing social mobility: transition from school to work The future development of Ashton Park's post-16 education and skills centre.

6.1 Context

With regard to the issue of social mobility, there are three main problems facing a school.

6.1.1 Firstly, public perceptions about the comparative status of academic and vocational courses and the way schools are judged on a narrow range of performance indicators puts pressure on everyone to focus on the all-important GCSE and A levels results. Courses that focus on practical, physical, creative or inter-personal intelligences are often seen as second best, despite the fact that these are essential for many jobs and careers. The false dichotomy of the academic-vocational divide needs to be challenged and overcome at a national level.

6.1.2 Secondly, many young people have self-limiting beliefs about their own career/job prospects, influenced by their own family backgrounds and peer groups. Going to university, pursuing a professional career, or taking a high-level apprenticeship may all be outside the scope of their ambitions. In an area where self-employment and "white vans" are commonplace, getting a job with a relative or a mate may seem the obvious option.

6.1.3 Thirdly, at a sixth form level, there exists a tension between providing what young people genuinely need with regard to their skills and aptitudes, and the way we are funded. Our effectiveness is judged entirely on examination results and our funding is reliant on students staying with us for the full academic year. However, these factors might work against the best interest of the student. Half way through a course we could find a meaningful, good quality apprenticeship for a student, but would then be penalised under retention criteria which cuts our funding.

6.1.4 Ricky, a year 13 student, recently gained an excellent apprenticeship with a leading aerospace company in Bristol. This offer was based on his GCSE qualifications taken two years previously and was not reliant on his A level results, so he had no need to worry about his final grades. Was this a wasted two years? Definitely not as we have helped Ricky develop a range of skills and the confidence that helped him succeed at interview. But his A level results mattered to the school and this highlights the need to reflect on a government policy intent on increasing the number of apprenticeships at a time when schools could be penalised for promoting them.

6.1.5 A major challenge remains the lack of quality careers advice and guidance that is available to young people. With funding cuts companies like Connexions are no longer available to advise young people. Schools are left to take responsibility for giving good quality advice without the additional funding needed to train and employ such advisors. In a school like Ashton Park where a significant number of students do not get the support from home to help them make informed choices, this support is critical – and is crucial if we are serious about enhancing social mobility. Donna, now 20 years old, works on the checkout at a local superstore along with a number of other ex-students. Two years spent completing and

passing A levels has done little to enhance her earnings. Mistakes like these, where we have seen youngsters following inappropriate courses or ending up being over qualified for the roles they are employed in, will continue without high quality advice and guidance.

6.2 Current situation

6.2.1 Ashton Park has a traditional 6th form offering almost exclusively level 3 courses (A levels and high level BTECs). The numbers attending post 16 average 100 per year. Students study here from the ages of 16 through to 19. Like other 6th forms mindful of funding criteria, its declared purpose has been to prepare pupils for university, despite the fact that during the past 5 years between 25% and 30% of our students have progressed into higher education.

6.2.2 At the same time businesses in Bristol are struggling to recruit young people with the skills and characteristics they need to work effectively.

6.2.3 It is clear that our historical provision is not suited to the needs of all the students we attract and our current offering certainly limits social mobility. Irrespective of appropriateness, students have been expected to follow courses that ensure the school receives maximum funding, rather than ensuring that the priority is what will be of maximum benefit to the student..

6.2.4 Our goal should be to provide the full ability range with high quality and appropriate learning experiences that enable them to progress to further or higher education or meaningful employment.

6.3 Proposal for September 2015 onwards

6.3.1 In addition to the formal qualifications followed by students we will be running a programme called 'The Edge', which will have a whole day devoted to it. During the programme (whose aim is to give students the edge in the competition for employment or further education) students would undertake a range of activities including work placements and visits, personal development and challenge activities (outward bound, rock climbing adventure sports, etc), professional mentoring, interview preparation and CV writing skills workshops.

6.3.2 We are looking to provide a structure to this programme through ASDAN's employability qualifications framework. The credibility offered by such a framework means that the work carried out in this area of the curriculum will be recognised by formal qualifications. The ability to offer ASDAN's employability qualifications at levels 1-3 means we can cater for the full range of students at post 16.

6.3.3 In addition to this all students will be developing their English and Mathematics skills and we will be looking to ensure all students achieve the ECDL which is an ICT qualification that focusses on skills relevant to the world of work.

6.3.4 Our partnership with Bristol based employers will add quality and relevance to our study programmes. In the key areas indicated for our level 2 and 3 professional vocational qualifications we are looking to provide work placement opportunities, professional mentoring, workplace visits and employer-led school-based seminars and workshops.

6.4 Key indicators of success

6.4.1 In order to achieve effective transition from school to work and/or further and higher education, with the attendant impact that will have on social mobility, greater emphasis needs to be given to ‘judging’ providers on **retention rates** and the **destinations** of our young people. The local context needs to be taken into account, so that providers can be given more freedom to do what’s best for their students, rather than what will maximise funding under the current and very flawed system



Our “Edge” programme of challenging activities will look to ASDAN for formal accreditation

6.5 Summary

The Ashton Park offer, which represents a significant break with the traditional aim of a sixth form, is all about:

- *Tailoring the offer to each student's individual need*
- *Collaborating with our business partners to prepare our students for the world of work*
- *Offering flexibility and progression In our courses*
- *Developing the whole person through 'the Edge' programme*
- *Not sacrificing quality for quantity*
- *Providing the care and support every student needs*

7. Annex: Evidence from Julia Maunder, Headteacher of Thomas Keble School

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

- Poverty – too many students struggling to engage with school due to difficult family circumstances leading to underachievement
- Key skills: team work/ resilience/ initiative/ organisation

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group—who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

- We do not have many but we do care and educate a core group year on year who have very low cognitive function or medical SEND. Level 3 pathways are not appropriate and for some, workplace apprenticeships etc. are not an option either due to their significant impairments.
- We have 0% NEET but try instead to support our less able and SEND youngsters into the voluntary sector or onto suitable L1 / L2 progression and training within vocational options. Eg. NOCN Horticulture has been hugely successful for us over the last 2 years in engaging those at risk of isolation and disengagement.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

- I think the support has deteriorated. This is at future risk with policy announcements like compulsory EBacc which is just not suitable in equipping the very weak to prepare for post 16
- There needs to be thought given to those who have vocational skills but low cognitive function. This is not about students with poor literacy which can be targeted via intervention. This is about students who do not have the mental capacity to improve. They have much to give in terms of personality, enthusiasm and interest but the curriculum offered must harness this and use it, not condemn them to a school life that is unfit for purpose.
- Similarly we have students for whom a traditional academic pathway is just not engaging. The key to success is engagement. For some, open ended, project based learning is the way to achieve this. This is regardless of academic ability.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- I would love to see COPE recognised as a level 2 programme in the performance tables. I believe the level 3 is being accepted as an accredited subject so why not at level 2? COPE would make a significant difference to the skills of students at KS3.
- In addition. COPE, ASDAN etc. give students a real life opportunity to access work based learning via working alongside voluntary organisations to complete projects etc. Our school's recent work with the Cotswold Canal Trust has been inspirational and has led to very positive outcomes for students. For example, a boy who had previously school refused became so engaged in the canal project and our NOCN horticulture course he offered to work through his summer holidays to help keep the gardens looking smart. He also achieved an E grade in GCSE science after studying for the entry level qualification for most of KS4. I believe this was in part to his renewed interest after learning about soil sampling and plant growth cycles in horticulture.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- Everyone has a part to play but constant national policy that drives schools towards offering only academic pathways risk disengaging and disaffecting a significant number of hard to reach children. Yes we can offer vocational programmes but once EBacc and progress 8 are factored in, it does leave very much wriggle room to inspire and engage those hard to reach young people.

14 September 2015

Aspire Group – Written evidence (SMO0007)

1. Overview

- 1.1. The Aspire Group is pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the committee's call for evidence regarding these issues. We are one of twelve employers selected nationally as social mobility champions, in recognition our work particularly focused at supporting young people to progress into employment

2. About the Aspire Group

- 2.1. The Aspire Group is a social regeneration business that provides housing, training and neighbourhood services.
- 2.2. The Group was founded in 2000 as Aspire Housing, a housing association created from a stock transfer of homes from Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council and it now owns and manages around 9,000 affordable homes in the Staffordshire and South Cheshire areas.
- 2.3. Due to the issues of social deprivation which are widespread in our area of operation, we acquired PM training an award winning training and skills business. PM Training is now the largest provider of apprenticeships in Staffordshire with a particular expertise in successfully working with young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. The company holds contracts with both the Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency and operates as a Social Enterprise and provides around 2200 training opportunities annually.
- 2.4. PM Training has increased its apprenticeship provision for 16-18 year olds by over 200% since 2008 through strategic supply chain management and has increased its network of committed businesses who provide apprenticeship opportunities from 69 companies in August 2008 to just over 1,100 companies as at the end of July 2014; a 1,500% increase and key to overall success.
- 2.5. In addition Furniture Mine collects unwanted furniture and white goods and recycles them to people in the community who are on benefits or low incomes, thus reducing landfill and providing an effective local service.
- 2.6. The Aspire Group's corporate charity is the Realise Foundation. This Charity's work is focused on three themes of environmental improvements, lifelong learning and employability and has invested some £1.5M in regeneration projects since its creation in 2008.

- 2.7. We remain strongly committed to our social purpose, but achieving this through innovative and enterprising activity that delivers sustainable social value and impact within our communities.
3. **What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?**
- 3.1. As outlined in our introduction, through our training company PM Training we have significant experience in working with and successfully assisting and supporting young people into employment, though our highly regarded and successful work experience based study and traineeship programmes.
- 3.2. Over 60 per cent of our learners come from the 25 per cent most deprived communities. Aspirations and expectations are typically low in terms of their future opportunities. Despite this, we achieve high levels of positive progression into apprenticeships, where our success rates are above the national average.
- 3.3. Young people face a range of barriers and issues which impact on their ability to enter the workplace or progress onto further training:
- 3.3.1. Firstly educational attainment can be a major determinant in terms of their future pathway. We regularly work with young people who have not achieved level 2 and many have only achieved entry level grades in mathematics and English when they join us. This educational attainment can however mask a host of issues and barriers that need to be understood and addressed before the young person can positively progress.
- 3.3.2. Amongst these issues are undiagnosed additional learning needs, caring responsibilities, low household aspiration and support, disruptive and abusive relationships. Other groups that require specific support include care leavers, and young people displaced from the educational environment due to behavioural or other issues.
- 3.3.3. Many young people, even if they have achieved the necessary entry grades, do not have sufficient experience of work related behaviours or expectations. Our programmes concentrate on employability skills, emphasising the appropriate behaviours and conduct within a work environment.

- 3.4. We work closely with all young people through their induction and subsequently to understand and help learners overcome their barrier to progress effectively through a vocational learning programme.
4. **There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**
- 4.1. Many of these young people, if they do not receive effective information, advice and guidance actually risk becoming NEET. While there is a duty to participate to 18 through RPA, there is potential for an increase in NEETs at the 19 plus age group, if these young people do not receive timely appropriate guidance and support.
- 4.2. As outlined previously, these young people may not be suited to an exclusively academic approach, they may have faced barriers that have resulted in their school life not being a positive, motivating experience. They may face other pressures related to the need to earn, due to family circumstances and household incomes. Hence they need to find alternatives, to progress into employment.
- 4.3. In the past, these groups would have entered the workforce in traditional semi-skilled roles, but with increased competition, lack of employability skills and experience, their options are limited.
- 4.4. Hence, apprenticeships and vocational learning provide the pathway for these groups to progress towards a career with training and establishes relationships with employers so they can enter the workforce. Our experience is that levels of retention are high, if young people are supported effectively through their apprenticeship and that employers are generally highly committed to their apprentice's success and progression.
- 4.5. In some cases we have worked with cohorts of enterprising individuals to help them create business start-ups as an alternative to the employed route, helping them to access support and finance to launch a career.
5. **Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?**

- 5.1. We are pleased that the Government has prioritised the growth and development of vocational pathways through apprenticeships and the pledge to create 3 million apprenticeships in the current parliamentary period sets a real momentum to the growth of this approach. Further, the aim to raise the prestige of vocational pathways as a real and valued alternative to the academic route is very welcome.
- 5.2. However, we remain concerned about the effectiveness and independence of careers, advice and guidance in determining the choices made by young people leaving school. While the raising of participation age is a positive initiative in addressing skills of young people it has created an incentive along with often an inbuilt academic bias, for schools to retain more of their learners for longer, when they might be better directed towards a more vocational pathway.
- 5.3. Regrettably we see too many young people who have received poor advice and fail to achieve through continuing an academic pathway, when better advised they would have made better progress through other routes.
- 5.4. The reformed study programmes, provide the right environment for those not yet ready to progress onto an apprenticeship. Through PM Training, we provide a pathway for our learners that enable them to progress effectively according to their ability and aptitude, towards a career.
- 5.5. In this regard, we were pleased that the Government has protected level two apprenticeships as a means for learners with more modest academic achievement to progress into a career. To support social mobility, we need a range of flexible range of options and entry points, that allow learners to progress towards employment. We have seen many successes where young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and modest academic attainment, have gone on to very successful careers through this pathway.
6. **How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?**
- 6.1. As outlined, the reinstatement of high quality, independent information, advice and guidance is essential to assist young people to make effective choices regarding their future direction. Further ensuring schools provide equal access of providers to engage with young people would help address the current inbuilt academic bias.

6.2. Encouraging more effective work experience programmes would help young people get a better understanding of the work environment, aligned with more effective careers advice.

6.3. Employer partnerships can assist in breaking down barriers and creating opportunities. We work closely with local employers and through strategic supply chains in the public and private sector to encourage employers to engage with and take young apprentices. We hold regular events for employers to break down barriers usually with young apprentices speaking of their experience and progress through an apprenticeship.

7. **Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?**

7.1. We believe strong partnerships are the key to delivering effective pathways for young people to progress effectively, this needs to include schools, training providers, colleges and employers. Locally this work needs to align with local economic growth and employment priorities so the work must connect with the priorities of Local Enterprise Partnerships.

7.2. Nationally there needs to be effective joint working in leading this agenda between DFEE and BIS to ensure co-ordination of effort through the Education and Skills Funding agencies to ensure pathways are consistent for their learner's journeys.

6 August 2015

Baker Dearing Educational Trust – Written evidence (SMO0136)

Executive summary

- 1. Baker Dearing Educational Trust develops and promotes University Technical Colleges. Its focus is on supporting UTCs for the long term as part of the English education system.**
2. University Technical Colleges (UTCs) are government funded technical schools that offer 14-18 year olds a different route from traditional schools. They offer a broad curriculum that combines an academic education with technical and practical learning. On leaving UTCs at aged 18, students are very well placed to take higher apprenticeships, go to university or straight into work.
3. Each UTC works closely with a local university and a range of employers from the very beginning. The governing body of each UTC is controlled by local employers and a university and both have a strong influence over the teaching and learning that students receive.
4. UTCs teach one or more technical specialisms that meet the skills shortages in the region. These include: engineering; manufacturing; health sciences; product design; digital technologies; and the built environment.
5. 39 UTCs are open and there will be more than 55 open by 2017. When fully operational there will be places for more than 33,000 students. Each UTC can take up to 600 students.
6. More than 600 employers support UTCs including Rolls-Royce, Siemens, Network Rail and Microsoft, as well as scores of small and medium sized businesses. Together with nearly 50 universities they offer realistic educational projects, deep commitments to staff and students, as well as providing opportunities to experience the world of work.
7. UTCs are adult communities (the average age of students being around 17th birthday) with a long school day, business dress code and mature attitudes to work and study.

BDET response to Committee questions

- 8. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?**
9. The focus of UTCs is not specifically to address social mobility. However, we would argue that by integrating technical, practical and academic learning, UTCs create an environment where a wide range of students can thrive and develop the abilities that employers need – and therefore, support increased upward mobility. For example, UTCs dedicate at least 40 per cent of time to the technical specialism including design and building, working in teams and problem solving. This materially improves the motivation and preparedness of students of all types for rewarding careers.
10. By working with a university and local employers, UTC students benefit from access to the latest research, industry experts and specialist facilities; real-life employer projects

that stretch their technical skills and creative thinking; and teaching and mentoring from specialists who currently work in industry.

11. The result of this new approach to education is that the UTC programme has had virtually no NEETs. Young people leaving UTCs stay in full time study, start an apprenticeship, or get a job. Ensuring a good destination for each student remains a critical ambition for the UTC programme.
12. We can also look to overseas examples of how high quality technical education and training has a positive influence of employment rates and social mobility. As the Financial Times recently highlighted (Lack of vocational education stifles US mobility, FT, 15 April 2015) many neighbourhoods in the city of Chicago are today blighted by crime and unemployment as young people are not accessing the job opportunities available to them. Yet in the 1960s and 1970s, manufacturing was the natural career choice.
13. As the report describes, a local school, Austin Polytechnical Academy offers training in manufacturing skills such as computer-controlled cutting and design, in partnership with local employers. From here, students are able to access the 'longest uninterrupted hiring spree on record, opening up positions in a range of so-called "middle-skilled" jobs – from manufacturing to medical care and parts of IT – that could offer routes out of poverty.'
14. At Annex 1, we have identified cases of students who had transferred from previous schools to the Bristol Engineering Technical Academy in order to have a 'fresh start' in education. Some students arrived with poor behaviour records and a number of fixed term exclusions, others had poor attendance and had become disengaged from their previous schools. In addition we had a small group of children who arrived with special educational needs, including moderate learning difficulties and mental health problems.
15. **There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**
16. A distinction of the University Technical College programme developed and promoted by Baker Dearing Educational Trust is that it promotes traditional and other routes into employment with equal parity.
17. UTCs engage young people that have an interest in working with their hands and making things. The connection with employers is attractive and the chance to apply knowledge in real life contexts appeals to students. Their motivation improves because they understand the practical application of academic subjects they are learning at the UTC.
18. In a recent UTC student survey, just under 9 out of 10 students (87%) attending a University Technical College said they feel confident in their ability to succeed in work and 86% are confident of getting a job that suits their skills when they leave education.

19. Nearly three quarters (70%) of UTC students felt that their prospects were better than if they had stayed in a mainstream school. When comparing their UTC to their previous school, UTCs came out top in all aspects. The difference was most stark when comparing links to businesses (85% said they were better) and specialist equipment (86% said it was better).
20. Two thirds of UTC students (68%) already know the career they want to pursue when they leave education. 40% plan to go to University and around a quarter (26%) plan to do an apprenticeship.
21. Plans to attend University have increased on previous surveys (40 per cent in 2015 versus 28 per cent in 2014) – this is likely to be influenced by the greater number of life sciences students. 69 per cent of students specialising in life sciences plan to attend university whereas 40 per cent of students specialising in engineering and manufacturing plan to attend university.
22. Facilities and equipment are the most important factor (95%) for students when they are considering a UTC followed by hands on learning (92%), opportunities for work experience (90%) and the technical specialism (89%).
23. These findings are taken from a survey of 850 14-18 year old students from UTCs across England in June 2015.
24. Baker Dearing Educational Trust is collecting data on progression routes of both 16 year olds and 18 years old upon leaving UTCs, whether the move is into employment or further education and training. We expect this data to be available in the few weeks, beyond the closing date for written submissions in respect of this inquiry. However, we would happily share it with the committee if deemed to be of interest.
- 25. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?**
26. UTCs focus on giving students the qualifications and skills to progress, no matter which career path or study route they choose.
27. Each student leaves with skills and knowledge that are valuable in the modern economy. They are well prepared for their next step, whether they start working immediately, opt for an apprenticeship, or choose to study for a university degree.

UTC Progression routes

Age 14	Start at a UTC
Age 15 and	GCSEs and equivalent technical qualifications including English, maths two sciences
Age 16	Options are Stay at the UTC, start an Advanced Apprenticeship, Leave to attend sixth form or FE College

Age 17	A levels and equivalent technical qualifications
Age 18+	Start a Higher Apprenticeship, start a job, start a degree

28. How does this differ from the traditional school route?

29. The established norm is that those following a path of A levels and then university have 5 or more years to (1) evaluate career options and select a career and (2) develop skills for employment. This gives them a number of resources including time (for becoming informed, for growing in self-awareness), access to university careers services, access to university holiday work placements, opportunities to develop skills for employment.
30. Those not following this route do not have these resources. They need to do (1) and (2) while at school. The vast majority of schools are not well set up to do this.
31. Firstly, the school environment is entirely unlike a work environment. The hours are different (5 working hours vs. 8+); classroom layout and mode of interaction bears no relation to a workplace; the evaluation of performance (written exam) is not in line with how employers evaluate performance. This environment de facto infantilizes 14-18 year olds, and employers do not want to employ 16 or 18 year-old infants.
32. Secondly, skills and qualities many employers value are under-emphasized or absent in the typical academic curriculum. This include team-based working, project-based working, initiative-taking and presentational skills.
33. Thirdly, there is very limited actual engagement with employers - at best there might the odd talk or day of work experience. Employers are not systematically brought into the school day, with opportunities to work with employers progressively woven more fully into the fabric of the educational experience as the child matures from 14 to 18 years old.
34. A school system which:
- has little regard for preparing young people to work environments;
 - pays little attention to skills employers regard as essential;
 - offers students little meaningful contact with employers;
 - achieves the outcome you would expect - school leavers that are not well prepared for work.
35. Their upward social mobility is compromised at the outset. A proportion are at risk of becoming NEET. Those that do enter employment or training are starting from a low base and for many this permanently lowers the career trajectory they will follow.
36. If a major part of the problem lies in the current system of educational provision for 14-18 year-olds who are not excited by an academic pathway via A levels to university, then a major part of the solution lies in changing the system.

37. In England, the world of employment and the world of work are generally separate. This is not the case in many European countries that are our competitors such as Germany, Austria and The Netherlands.
- 38. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?**
39. Again, we are only able to comment from the experience of UTCs.
40. The latest UTC student survey identified that 90 per cent of responses said work experience is the most important factor (90 per cent) in helping to decide a career. However, the results are very similar with regards to – more careers information (87 per cent); guidance from outside experts (89 per cent); visits to FE Colleges and universities (83 per cent); visits and talks from employers (88 per cent)
41. In the same survey, 90 per cent of respondents said opportunities for work experience (90 per cent) was a most important factor when considering to transfer to a UTC.
42. We have discussed the role of employers with UTCS and clearly a key aspect of the relationship with their sponsored school (s) is to give students high-quality and relevant experience of work; and support and mentor students, guiding them on career routes and options. At UTCs, employers and universities control the governing body.
- 43. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?**
44. We support the introduction of an entitlement to impartial face-to-face information, advice and guidance for all young people.
45. Individual career guidance should be a part of a comprehensive career guidance framework, including a systematic career education programme to inform students about the world of work and career opportunities. This means that schools should encourage an understanding of the world of work from the earliest years, backed by visits to workplaces and workplace experience. Partnerships between schools and local firms allow both teachers and students to spend time in workplaces.
46. The changes needed are implicit in the description above of the three ways in which schools are currently not serving their non-A-level students: a more work-like setting; building skills and attitudes employers value; integrating learning with employers fully into the school curriculum. The UTC model provides a worked example of how this can look in practice.
47. The responsibility for bringing about these changes lies with school leaders and those in the government who set the framework that schools operate within. The governors, organised as already described, have a strong vested interest in ensuring high quality careers advice.
48. Funding is the other aspect that must be addressed, where the responsibility lies with Treasury ministers, Number 10 and with MPs more generally to advocate for properly

funding non-academic pathways for their constituents. The public subsidy provided to those pursuing career tracks via A levels and university to professions such as accountancy, law, medicine and government service is substantial.

49. Those that pursue a technical or dual academic and technical path to careers in manufacturing, health sciences, the built environment etc, need a different profile of funding for their path, recognising that the aim in many cases is to begin employment/apprenticeship at 18 as opposed to 21 or older.
50. In practice this means higher per student funding in upper secondary school to support a more intensive programme of activity and learning at school, offset by the fact that this pathway makes much lower demands on the public purse post-18. A more intensive period of schooling between 14 and 18 means young people on this path can acquire in parallel core academic qualifications in English, Maths and Science AND technical and practical workplace skills, skills which they need 3-4 years earlier than young people going to university.

Annex A - Examples of success for Pupil Premium/SEN students at Bristol Engineering Technical Academy

Student A

A male student who joined us in Year 10 for our opening year (2013), he spent the first five years of his life in Spain, he has a statement of SEN for moderate learning difficulties and he was working at L1 in English and Maths at the end of KS2. He made 5 levels of progress in English and Maths, achieving D grades in both subjects at GCSE. He achieved C grades in Science and Level 2 passes in Engineering. He has progressed to a reduced level 3 pathway for post 16 education and he has completed two very successful work experience placements with local engineering companies.

Student B

A male student who joined us in January 2014 in Y10. He had previously attended 3 different secondary schools and he had also been home educated for a 5 month period since the age of 11. He has SEBD and during his time with us became a Looked After Child. His attendance improved over Year 11, rising from 58% to 96% by term 4. He achieved 5 A – G passes at GCSE, including C grades in Engineering, and he is following a reduced Level 3 programme of study for post 16.

Student C

A female student who joined us in Y10 in 2013. She was identified as having a mental health issue (Acute anxiety and Psychosis) and she was supported by CAMHS and the early intervention team. She missed a significant amount of lesson time due to her mental health, however, she achieved 5 A – C grades including A in Maths, which is better than expected progress. She is attending Sixth Form, following A' Level courses.

Student D

A male student who joined us in Y10 2013, he has English as a second language and he is a Pupil Premium student. He achieved 5 A – G grades at GCSE including C grade in Maths and in Engineering which shows better than expected progress. He is following a level 3 pathway at sixth form.

Example of success for pupil premium student at Wigan UTC

Student “S” was unhappy at her previous school and was not being challenged in her learning. This was holding her back and stopping her reaching her potential. She started at Wigan UTC in November 2013 and has just finished her GCSEs. She had intended to stay at the UTC to do BTech Level 3 Engineering and A-levels. However, she has been taken on by Arup Manchester as an apprentice and will be working on the Qatar 2022 football stadium.

“The UTC has not just helped me progress in my academic studies but it has helped me figure out the pathway I want to take when I leave. I hope to become an electrical engineer in a large company such as Siemens, one of our partner companies, after I have completed my apprenticeship.”

Her GCSE results are:

Engineering (A), Design and Technology, Maths, English (B), Biology, Chemistry, Physics (C), Geography (D)

14 September 2015

Barnardo's – Written evidence (SMO0128)

Barnardo's submission to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

October 2015

Introduction

1. Last year Barnardo's worked directly with over 240,000 children, young people, parents and carers. We run over 960 vital projects across the UK, including counselling for children who have been abused, fostering and adoption services, vocational training and disability inclusion groups. Barnardo's purpose is to transform the lives of the most vulnerable children.
2. Barnardo's operates a number of services that work directly with young people who are making the transition to adult life. These include services that support care leavers (including supported accommodation services), disabled young people, and those with experience of the youth justice system. We also offer a number of employment and training services which provide vocational training and work-based learning opportunities to young people. As such we see first-hand many of the challenges that young people experience when making the transition from school into work, particularly those who do not want to pursue A Levels and higher education.
3. We believe that the Committee should recommend a number of changes to policy to facilitate social mobility by improving opportunities for young people who are not taking A Levels, and who are better suited to work-based learning or other vocational opportunities. In particular we would like to see:
 - **Better careers advice for these young people, including one to one advice outside of a school setting;**
 - **Better monitoring of apprenticeships to assess the extent to which these can be accessed by younger and more vulnerable applicants; ring-fencing of 20,000 of the new three million apprenticeships specifically for care leavers; and a fund for employers who take on vulnerable young apprentices, to help ensure they receive the support they need.**
 - **Better financial support for young people who need it in order to undertake further education or training.**

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

4. Barnardo's works with many young people who come from disadvantaged backgrounds. These include care leavers, young carers, young people who are disabled, and those who have struggled in mainstream education. Working with these young people on a day to day basis gives us a good understanding of their

views on which factors affect their social mobility, and particularly their ability to undertake options that are different from their parents or peers.

5. What we know is that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often have a more pessimistic outlook as to their options for the future. Barnardo's recently worked with Ipsos MORI to produce a report – "Generation selfie" - which sought to understand the expectations of young people in the UK today.¹⁴⁸ This report revealed that what young people thought they would be able to achieve in their lives is influenced by their background. Those from "better off" backgrounds often have much higher expectations that they will own their own home (69% compared with 34% of those who came from "worse off" backgrounds), or earn enough money to support their families (77% compared with 45% from "worse off" backgrounds).
6. At the centre of this research was a sense that young people from "better off" backgrounds felt that they had more options. Young people from "worse off" backgrounds tended to believe that they would struggle to get a good job even if they worked hard at school (64% of "worse off" young people thought this compared with 43% of "better off" young people), "worse off" young people were much less likely to feel that they had control over what happened in their lives (36% of "worse off" young people felt this compared with 58% of those from "better off" backgrounds). This suggests that many disadvantaged young people do not feel confident that they can change their position in society. In other words, they do not believe social mobility is a reality.
7. The sense that young people are sceptical about social mobility is supported by our research into careers advice.¹⁴⁹ Here we came across many young people who wanted to follow a vocational path but who often had very limited knowledge of the options available to them. Young people's plans for the future were often based on what their parents had done, or their preconceived ideas of options based on gender stereotypes. This meant that those from lower social economic backgrounds were unlikely to consider higher paid or professional careers as they did not know anyone who had taken that route, or thought it was not something for "people like them". As one young man reported to us:

¹⁴⁸ http://www.barnardos.org.uk/how_much_do_you_know_about_generation_selfie.pdf
The report defined disadvantage in two ways: i) on the basis of whether a respondent had qualified for Free School Meals in secondary school and ii) on the basis of how a respondent perceived their position on an imagined social "ladder". The latter is based on the MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status:
<http://www.macses.ucsf.edu/research/psychosocial/subjective.php>. Respondents who selected the top four rungs of the ladder were classified the 'best off', those who selected the fifth and sixth rungs were classified as 'medium' and those who selected the bottom four rungs of the ladder were classified as the 'worst off'.

¹⁴⁹ Evans J and Rallings J (2013) "Helping the inbetweeners: ensuring careers advice improves the options for all young people" available on line at
http://www.barnardos.org.uk/helping_the_in_betweeners.pdf

"[I did the course] Cos my dad did multiskills as well. I did it cos of my Dad. I told them I wanted to work with my dad"

Or as one young woman doing childcare explained how she had come to undertake this careers choice:

"all the girls here do childcare, and all the boys do sports"

8. From Barnardo's experience, another key factor affecting social mobility for young people is the reality of the job market they are faced with. It is well known that youth unemployment was rising before the 2008 recession and that during the economic downturn young people were most affected. Currently 14.1 % of economically active 18-24 year olds are unemployed, compared with 4.2% of economically active 25-49 year olds.¹⁵⁰ Many commentators talk about the development of an "hour glass economy". This is the idea that since the recession, the recovery has focused heavily on an increase in, on the one hand, professional jobs and on the other hand, elementary jobs, which tend to be unskilled and low-wage. As a result, options for young people to gain employment and "work their way up" are becoming more limited.
9. The Government has made some attempts to address this problem with the promise of three million apprenticeships. However it is far from certain that this will result in genuine opportunities for young people to enter the workplace, increase their skills, and move on from otherwise low waged, low skilled employment. Currently apprenticeship policy is of limited benefit for young people who are transitioning from school into the workplace, though it is often assumed this group would be the primary target. Statistics show 67% of apprenticeships at either level 2 or 3 are begun by those already in work. Data also shows that 37% of people starting apprenticeships are over the age of 24, despite the fact that this age group make up only 7% of apprenticeship applications¹⁵¹. It is unsurprising then that young people from our London service interviewed just before the 2015 election only knew one person who had managed to get on a good apprenticeship. A young man who had left school with two GCSEs explained that:

¹⁵⁰ Office for National Statistics, Labour Market Statistics, May-July 2015
<http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/labour-market-statistics/june-2015/statistical-bulletin.html>

¹⁵¹ Statistics taken from Raikes L (2015) "Learner drivers: local authorities and apprenticeships", IPPR available on line at
http://www.ippr.org/files/publications/pdf/learner-drivers-apprenticeships_June2015.pdf?noredirect=1

“we apply for apprenticeships all the time, but just don’t have the qualifications¹⁵²”.

There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

10. Barnardo’s offers a number of education and training services which provide vocational education opportunities for young people as an alternative to what is available in schools. As such we come into contact with a number of young people who are not NEET but are not following the A Level or higher education route either.
11. It is of course difficult to generalise about any group of young people. However, young people accessing Barnardo’s employment and training services often report poor experiences of school, which have left them with strong feelings of alienation, low self-confidence and few qualifications. When asked what would have been better, many say they prefer more practical, “hands-on” learning, with more direct relevance to their career aspirations. They often report finding school “boring”, having difficult relationships with teachers and peers, as well as a general feeling that school is “not for them”.

“the work had no relation to what we were doing. There were a lot of worksheets. I would have preferred more practical stuff. And more hands on creative stuff. There’s no point writing about stuff and not actually doing it” (young carer, aged 18 who moved to a Barnardo’s service)¹⁵³

12. Another common theme for these young people is difficult personal experiences in their lives which have prevented them from achieving in education in the past. When they feel that school has been unsupportive of their personal situation, whether that is bereavement, a chaotic home life or illness, these young people disengage from traditional education and need some form of alternative route. As one young person with ME described their experience of school:

¹⁵² <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2015/04/heres-one-group-you-wont-hear-tonights-debates>

¹⁵³ Quotes from Evans J, Meyer D, Pinney A and Robinson B "Second Chances: Re-engaging young people in education and training" (2009), Barnardo’s available on line at http://www.barnardos.org.uk/2nd_chances_report.pdf

“The school didn’t believe I was ill despite the opinion of two doctors. I eventually returned to school for an hour a day towards the end of year 11 but couldn’t take my GCSEs as I hadn’t any support or work sent home from school”¹⁵⁴

13. These young people often leave school with few or no qualifications and need alternative options outside of the school environment if they are to achieve their potential. Some need provision which allows them to catch up on what they have missed and Barnardo’s services offer a variety of Level 1 courses, such as E2E. These young people also often want the option of practical-based learning, that clearly links to a real job. Barnardo’s services offer a range of qualifications which focus on occupational skills. These include foundations awards (equivalent to 3 GCSEs), NVG levels 1-3 and pre-apprenticeship programmes. The young people we work with can undertake these qualifications in a range of work areas including floristry; painting and decorating; business; horticulture; hair and beauty; construction; and catering.
14. In addition, as an organisation providing support to this group we know that it is important that young people are also able to learn life skills while undertaking their course, including (if necessary) basic literacy and numeracy, social skills and employability skills. As one of our trainers explained:

“They’re the generic elements that allow you to succeed such as self-presentation, punctuality, personal hygiene, interview techniques, working out money. Things that employers tell us they want. They want honest, reliable, punctual, well presented”¹⁵⁵

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

15. Barnardo’s has a number of concerns relating to support for young people who do not wish to follow a traditional academic route. Firstly we are concerned that young people are increasingly unaware of which nonacademic options – particularly vocational courses not offered through schools - are available. Since many local authorities have had to make significant cut backs to their Connexions services, there is far less available independent one to one careers advice (except for the most vulnerable).
16. Since the changes introduced in the Education Act 2011, schools now have a duty to provide independent careers advice to students. In the years which followed this change many organisations, including our own, expressed concern that the move

¹⁵⁴ *ibid*

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*

(which was not accompanied by any extra funding) had resulted in the deterioration in careers advice. An Ofsted report¹⁵⁶ in 2013 found that of the 60 schools it looked at only 12 had ensured that all students received sufficient information to consider a wide breadth of career possibilities. The promotion of vocational training was particularly highlighted as an issue of concern with the report commenting:

“vocational training and apprenticeships were rarely promoted effectively especially in schools with sixth forms. The A Level route to universities remained the “gold standard” for young people, their parents and teachers”

17. Such findings are perhaps unsurprising given that schools have an incentive to encourage students to choose their own sixth form options –which carries additional funding. Since Ofsted’s report the Government has significantly strengthened the guidance given to school on how to administer careers advice, making it clear that the duty to promote a range of options including vocational ones is part of a legal duty¹⁵⁷. However the guidance does not make clear what action will be taken against schools who fail to comply. Since schools have not been given extra funding to provide careers advice, and there is still not duty to guarantee one to one advice for all students who request it, we are skeptical as to whether there have been any major improvements since the new guidance was published. Many of Barnardo’s services still feel that they are not receiving enough referrals from schools in their local areas, and that too often teachers and others equate “raising the participation age”, with “raising the school leaving age”. However, it was clear from the inception of that policy that this was not the intention.
18. Without good careers advice many of the young people we work with fall back on the limited experiences of family and friends when deciding what to do next. Barnardo’s believes that there needs to be a reform of careers guidance offered to young people to ensure that they are fully aware of the range of options available to them at 16, and to allow those who feel they are not enjoying traditional academic education to move into high quality vocational training. In particular, policy makers should explore how we can ensure a menu of careers guidance is readily available beyond the school gates, so that those who have become disengaged from school have access to information about the options available to them.
19. Another concern is whether there are sufficient options available for young people who prefer work-based learning, where they can increase their skills “on the job”. There have been a number of initiatives from the Government in this area, most

¹⁵⁶ OFSTED (2013) *Careers guidance in schools: going in the right direction?* Available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-in-schools-going-in-the-right-direction>

¹⁵⁷ Department for Education (2015) *Careers guidance and inspiration for young people in schools*, available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-in-schools-going-in-the-right-direction>

notably the commitment to create three million apprenticeships by the end of this Parliament, as well as the development of the new traineeships, which can act as a stepping stone for those unable to meet the high entry requirements for apprenticeships.

20. Barnardo's welcomes these initiatives as having the potential to increase options for young people. However we are concerned that without sufficient focus and monitoring, many of these policies will be of little benefit to the most vulnerable. Statistics show that many apprenticeships (currently over a third of them) are begun by people aged 25 and over, and only 27% of apprenticeship starts in 2013/14 were young people aged 16 to 18¹⁵⁸. Barnardo's believes that the high entry requirements and levels of competition for apprenticeships are making it very difficult for some vulnerable young people, such as care leavers, to be successful in securing them. This could cut off a valuable option for young people not suited to academic education to transition into the work place.
21. The Government developed the model of traineeships as a means of helping young people who do not meet the entry requirements for apprenticeships. The concept is to offer a pre-apprenticeship option of training and work experience which will help young people, who lack the skills or experience to gain an apprenticeship, to progress. Barnardo's welcomes these as a concept. However, they are still in the pilot stage, and we are not convinced the policy is making a significant impact on the ground. We are particularly concerned that as of June 2014, only 200 out of the 459 eligible training providers that said they would deliver traineeships had recorded any starts¹⁵⁹. This chimes with our experience, where Barnardo's services supporting young people report that traineeships are having very little impact locally.
22. Where young people do secure a traineeship, we believe that it will be important over time to ensure they are effective as a stepping stone to progression. Clearly there is no "one size fits all" solution for young people looking to undertake work-place learning. However, for many of the young people we work with, including many care leavers and other young people with chaotic home lives, the reason they do not have the qualifications needed to start apprenticeship is not lack of ability, but a deficit in their education. We would hope that a good quality traineeship could rectify this. The recent evaluation of the pilot suggests that only 22% of trainees were moving on from the traineeship into an apprenticeship¹⁶⁰ and we

¹⁵⁸ Statistics taken from Raikes L (2015) "*Learner drivers: local authorities and apprenticeships*", IPPR available on line at http://www.ippr.org/files/publications/pdf/learner-drivers-apprenticeships_June2015.pdf?noredirect=1

¹⁵⁹ NAO (2014) *16 to 18 year old participation in education and training* available on line at <http://www.nao.org.uk/report/16-to-18-year-old-participation-in-education-and-training/#>

¹⁶⁰ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2015) *BIS research paper number 222, Traineeships First year process evaluation*, available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/traineeships-evaluation>

would hope that this figure would be much higher. It is important that these figures are monitored and a full evaluation takes place to understand what traineeships are offering in terms of progression to young people who complete them.

23. The final concern we have in helping to support these young people is the level of financial support available to those who come from low income backgrounds to enable them to pursue vocational training courses. This is of course not unique to this group, since a lack of financial support may equivalently result in a young person struggling to undertake an academic route. However, as noted above, Barnardo's experience demonstrates that it is often young people who have had difficult or disruptive home lives that look to alternative vocational services as an option. This group is particularly prone to suffering from financial pressures since they can lack good family support.
24. The levels of funding available for financial support for 16 to 19 year olds was cut in 2011, from £560 million per year to £180 million per year with the ending of education maintenance allowance (EMA). Since then students who do not fall into the guaranteed element of the 16-19 Bursary Fund (the majority of students, given this is preserved for the most vulnerable, such as care leavers) have found it difficult to gain access to sufficient monies to support their studies. As this fund is administered through providers and there is significant discretion, young people can find that financial support is available from some providers but not others, limiting choice. In addition, the 16-19 Bursary Fund has not increased since it was first introduced, despite inflation, meaning funds for financial support are becoming even more stretched. Even the guaranteed bursary for vulnerable groups has remained at £1,200 since its introduction in 2011.
25. This can leave some vulnerable young people struggling to afford to maintain themselves on training courses that would allow them to progress into work. As one young man supported by Barnardo's explained, it could be very difficult to afford travel and lunch when attending a training course:

"I bike it and when I've got some money I have some lunch"¹⁶¹

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

26. As highlighted above, Barnardo's believes there are a number of problems for young people attempting to transition from school to work, rather than studying for A

¹⁶¹ Policy, Research and Media (2012) *Staying the Course*, Barnardo's, available online at http://www.barnardos.org.uk/resources/research_and_publications/staying-the-course/publication-view.jsp?pid=PUB-1800

Levels and moving onto higher education. We believe a range of measures could be introduced to address these problems.

27. First, we would like to see better careers advice available for this group. The current system for careers advice, which involves schools as the main vehicle for working with young people often does not meet the needs of those not seeking to do A Levels, since schools are often uninformed about the range of vocational and work-based learning that is available. Young people tell us that they need better advice, delivered in person on a one to one basis. While websites can be useful, many young people do not know what they want to do and find it difficult to search websites for information from this starting point. If the Government is serious about ensuring social mobility for young people then it is important that careers advice enables young people to consider options that are outside the experience of their own family and peers, including options that may be considered atypical for their gender.
28. The Committee should recommend a number of changes to the way careers advice is delivered to better support the needs of these young people for example:
- Careers advice should be available beyond schools. The Government could begin by clarifying the role of local authorities in delivering careers advice and look to share best practice examples of schools and local authorities working together.
 - Face-to-face careers guidance must be guaranteed for all young people who ask for it.
29. Second, the Government should consider what can be done to ensure that the three million apprenticeships which have been pledged genuinely serve to improve options for young people including the most vulnerable. Recent research has shown that a number of local authorities have undertaken some small scale work to help some of the more vulnerable apprenticeship candidates into employment. These have included ideas such as ring-fencing a number of the apprenticeships offered by councils for particularly vulnerable groups – Birmingham City Council for example ring fences 10 of the apprenticeships that it offers in any one year for care leavers¹⁶². Other councils have offered extra money to employers who agree to take on particularly vulnerable applicants. Barnardo's believes that much could be learnt from these small scale local initiatives in terms of what is offered in relation to the new three million apprenticeships, and how to ensure some go to the most vulnerable young people.

¹⁶² Statistics taken from Raikes L (2015) "*Learner drivers: local authorities and apprenticeships*", IPPR available on line at http://www.ippr.org/files/publications/pdf/learner-drivers-apprenticeships_June2015.pdf?noredirect=1

30. To ensure that the Government can fully track who benefits from the apprenticeship policy, Barnardo's believes that the reporting requirements under the new Welfare Reform and Work Bill should be extended. Rather than just reporting on the number of apprenticeships which have been created, we believe that the Government should also be under a duty to report on which individuals are undertaking them, which would include information on age, ethnicity, gender, level of qualification, and disability status.
31. To ensure that some of the three million new apprenticeships do go to vulnerable young people, Barnardo's would like to see a proportion (20,000) specifically reserved for care leavers. Care leavers are an easily identifiable vulnerable group who it is known frequently struggle to make the transition into work. The latest figures show that 38% of 19 year old care leavers in England are NEET, compared with 15.1% of all 19 year olds.¹⁶³ These 'care apprenticeships' should come with additional support, either from local authorities or third sector providers, to meet the needs of individuals. Selection for the scheme could be determined in consultation with teachers and social workers to identify young people who would benefit. To maintain standards, entry requirements for these apprenticeships (eg. five A*-C grades at GCSE), would be replaced with exit requirements. This would ensure that each care leaver undertaking an apprenticeship would be supported to gain the level of education or training they need to complete it successfully, but that care leavers would not be prevented from accessing apprenticeships due to low qualifications following a disrupted school education.
32. Another way to support disadvantaged groups would be to provide additional funding for employers who take on vulnerable young people as apprentices. To fund the announced three million new apprenticeships by 2020, the Government is proposing that large and medium businesses be charged an 'apprenticeship levy', which will be reimbursed once they take on an apprentice(s). In practice, businesses will be taxed according to the number of apprenticeships they can take and then reimbursed to cover the costs of taking on the apprentice. As such, the costs for both the Government and businesses are negligible. Barnardo's proposes setting the levy at a level that would create a surplus. This surplus could then be used to create a support fund, which would be allocated to employers who take on apprenticeships with additional needs, enabling them to fund the additional support these vulnerable young people may need.
33. Third, the committee should recommend looking at the system of financial support that is available to students following the ending of the Education Maintenance Allowance. We would like the committee to consider recommending changes to the

¹⁶³ Government statistics for looked after children in England <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption-2014-to-2015>; Government NEET statistics <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/neet-statistics-quarterly-brief-april-to-june-2015>

16-19 Bursary Fund for 16 to 18 year olds to better support students who would otherwise struggle to afford training courses:

- The amount of money allocated for the 16-19 Bursary Fund should be increased each year by a minimum of CPI inflation to ensure that its value is not lost in real terms.
- Longer term the Government should look to increase the 16-19 Bursary Fund to enable it to fund full bursaries to all students who would have been entitled to free school meals. This would bring extra money provided for vulnerable pupils in the 16 to 19 age group in line with the support offered in other parts of the statutory education system via the pupil premium.

2 October 2015

Barnardo's Focus Group – Written evidence (SMO0133)

9 young people aged between 16 – 21 with learning disabilities.

1. Do you believe there are lots of different options for school leavers which lead to a good job? Why/why not

Mimi *'It's easy if you have the right information. With no information you can't get anywhere. We have a resource centre at college that helps us. Although I've had help, I secured a job on my own. We have lots of help but it is difficult to find a job.'*

Lily – *'It was hard, because you've got no one helping. I've not really tried to look for a job. We can do work experience but not actually work. Haven't even done an application form'*

Leah - *'Just looking on the internet. If you feel more comfortable it's easier. It's a bit difficult to fill in the applications forms'*

2. Do you think there is a good level of support available to assist with making choice when leaving school and getting a job?

'Teachers aren't really supportive.'

Leah *'I haven't had help from school to get a job. I just look on the internet by myself'*

Lily *'No one asked if I wanted to get a job, or planned with me to get a job'*

Mimi *'We have a form tutor, mentor and employment specialist mentor at college. At school we had a careers advisor and a few recruitment days where employers like Sainsburys came over and talked to us.'*

3. Is it easy or difficult to get work experience? What are your thoughts about this? Do you think work experience helps with getting a job?

Lily *'I'm doing my work experience through my parents help, I'm not sure if school or college helped.'*

Leah *'I got work experience through school, you can choose where you want to go'*

James *'I didn't have work experience through school but I did through college called employability. I do other work experience but that is not through college'*

Colin *'school helped me find work experience'*

Lily *'I did work experience all over the place, I actually did it at school'*

Mimi *'I did work experience at college not at school, I loved it. I think that when you go to work experience they give you the jobs you would have in a real job. You learn about what happens in a real job. It should not be taken off.'*

'It's a good thing because sometimes with work experience they offer you a job at the end.'

4. Are there many good jobs available in local area?

Mimi *'No – a lot of jobs these days are asking for you to be 17 or 18, you can't get a job at 16. Not really paid work. A lot of places are looking for 4-5 GCSEs grade A-C. A lot of care homes you can't get a job if you haven't got a car.'*

5. Think about the barriers and obstacles you will need to overcome as you move from school to the world of work over the next few years.

Jack *'Sitting in front of the TV'*

Mimi *'I found employment quite easily but I had some help. A lot of people ask for CVs and some people don't know what to put on a CV.'*

'If I wanted to work in the corner shop, they would say no because of my difficulties.'

'You can ask for help in a job centre, job agencies, teachers'

Barnardo's Focus Group – Supplementary written evidence (SMO0138)

Barnardo's submission to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

27 November 2015

This submission is further to the written evidence submitted to the Committee by Barnardo's on 20 October 2015

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/social-mobility-committee/social-mobility/written/22232.html>

In October and November this year, Barnardo's held five focus groups in England with young people aged 14 to 21, who access our services. Some of the young people have learning difficulties and some of them are pregnant or have small children. They were asked questions about their options when leaving school, their work experience, the support they received, and the obstacles they faced.

This submission contains evidence from these five focus groups. Each has been recorded slightly differently, but all reflect the voices of the young people involved.

Group 1

27 October 2015.

The group consisted of nine young people between 16-21 years old from the Surrey area. They have learning difficulties and attend the Barnardo's "Moving Forward" project - a disability advocacy service that helps engage and include those with disability in community activities and decisions about themselves.

Below is a collection of quotes from the young people:

Question 1 (Interviewer): Do you believe there are lots of different options for school leavers which lead to a good job? Why/why not?

Mimi: 'It's easy if you have the right information. With no information you can't get anywhere. We have a resource centre at college that helps us. Although I've had help, I secured a job on my own. We have lots of help but it is difficult to find a job.'

Lily: 'It was hard, because you've got no one helping. I've not really tried to look for a job. We can do work experience but not actually work. Haven't even done an application form'

Leah: 'Just looking on the internet. If you feel more comfortable it's easier. It's a bit difficult to fill in the application forms'

Question 2 (Interviewer): Do you think there is a good level of support available to assist with making choice when leaving school and getting a job?

'Teachers aren't really supportive.'

Leah: 'I haven't had help from school to get a job. I just look on the internet by myself'

Lily: 'No one asked if I wanted to get a job, or planned with me to get a job'

Mimi: 'We have a form tutor, mentor and employment specialist mentor at college. At school we had a careers advisor and a few recruitment days where employers like Sainsbury's came over and talked to us.'

Question 3 (Interviewer): Is it easy or difficult to get work experience? What are your thoughts about this? Do you think work experience helps with getting a job?

Lily: 'I'm doing my work experience through my parents help, I'm not sure if school or college helped.'

Leah: 'I got work experience through school, you can choose where you want to go'

James: 'I didn't have work experience through school but I did through college called employability. I do other work experience but that is not through college'

Colin: 'School helped me find work experience'

Lily: 'I did work experience all over the place, I actually did it at school'

Mimi: 'I did work experience at college not at school, I loved it. I think that when you go to work experience they give you the jobs you would have in a real job. You learn about what happens in a real job. It should not be taken off.'

'It's a good thing because sometimes with work experience they offer you a job at the end.'

Question 4 (Interviewer): Are there many good jobs available in your local area?

Mimi: 'No – a lot of jobs these days are asking for you to be 17 or 18, you can't get a job at 16. Not really paid work. A lot of places are looking for 4-5 GCSEs grade A-C. A lot of care homes you can't get a job if you haven't got a car.'

Question 5 (Interviewer): Think about the barriers and obstacles you will need to overcome as you move from school to the world of work over the next few years.

Jack: 'Sitting in front of the TV'

Mimi: 'I found employment quite easily but I had some help. A lot of people ask for CVs and some people don't know what to put on a CV.'

'If I wanted to work in the corner shop, they would say no because of my difficulties.'

'You can ask for help in a job centre, job agencies, teachers'

Group 2

7 November 2015

The group consisted of five young people between 17 and 21 years old who had attended Barnardo's Phase 2 service in Andover. The Phase 2 service provides advice and advocacy on the skills needed to support sustained employment. The service in Andover was closed earlier this year (before the focus group took place).

Below is a full transcript of the focus group interview.

Question 1 (Interviewer 1): Do you believe there are lots of different options for school leavers which lead to a good job? If not, why? If yes, why?

Male 1: 'I don't believe that there's a lot of different options. You've only got a couple of options when you leave school – go to a job or go to college. Those are your only two choices. There's not anything else.'

Interviewer 1: 'There's a couple of others but I know what you mean.'

Male 2: 'I believe when I left school that I didn't have a lot of help.'

Male 3: 'It's a lot harder as well to find something to do.'

Female 1: 'Also you've got to now stay in education until you're 18 and if you haven't got a GCSE (A-C) in English and Maths you have to keep doing that until you get it.'

All: 'Really?'

Interviewer 1: Well that's what they're trying to implement.

Male 4: 'You can still get away with it.'

Female 1: 'Yeah there's no comeback.'

Interviewer 1: But that does put pressure on young people.

Male 4: 'If you have got people struggling with it as well and they literally can't do it, they've got to keep retaking it.'

Interviewer 1: What help did you guys receive?

Male 2: 'Nothing.'

Male 1: 'Until Barnardo's... that's the only thing I've received through my lifetime.'

Interviewer 2: Did you have any connections like people coming into your school giving you career advice and stuff like that?

Male 1: 'Not really.'

Female 1: 'I didn't have career advice, I just had counselling.'

Interviewer 2: The government paused the connexion, which give career advice. Did you not get given anything else then? Nobody came into your schools or anything to support you with application forms for college or anything?

All: 'No.'

Interviewer 1: When you were not in education, employment or training (NEET) was there any other service that approached you to help you apart from Phase 2?

Male 1 & Male 2: 'Youth offending. Well they just piled us onto you.'

Interviewer 1: Any other organisations help you?

All: 'No.'

Interviewer 2: Did you have a careers library at secondary school?

All: 'No.'

Male 4: 'I wasn't really in secondary school. I was getting arrested pretty much every day.'

Question 2 (Interviewer 1): Do you think that there is a good level of support available to assist with making choices when leaving school and getting a job? If not, why? If yes, why?

Male 4: 'No because Phase 2 is getting closed down now, so there's less and less support for people.'

Male 2: 'Yeah Phase 2 is used to attract a younger crowd who's got issues to get them into employment. There's nothing else that does that.'

Female 1: 'There's a job thing in school but they don't support you getting a job. They just let you use the computers.'

Interviewer 1: Andover's a bit of a hole now, isn't it?

Interviewer 2: They've only got 'Catch-22' but that's only for care leavers.

Male 3: 'All the other services aren't for this certain thing, all the others are for like people in care, people with disabilities...'

Male 4: 'You've got 'The Junction' but that's not very helpful...

Female 1: 'You literally just go and use the computers and people end up just going for the pool table.'

Interviewer 1: 'Andover's got a bit of an issue now but you guys are alright because you've had the service but for new 16 year old school leavers, it's a bit of a problem.'

Interviewer 2: 'Male 4 has just dropped out of college but nobody's actually reported him, so now he's NEET again.'

Interviewer 1: 'Hampshire County Council do have some capacity to deal with that.'

Interviewer 2: 'There's 'Catch-22' but it's for care leavers only. There's nothing. Hampshire Futures is not delivering now.'

Female 1: 'Sometimes when you are in college, there are people to help you there - but as soon as you're out, that's it.'

Interviewer 2: 'It's how good the tutors are to make those referrals to the student services. We used to get a lot of referrals didn't we from student services?'

Male 3: 'That's the only reason I went to college because that was pretty much the only thing for me to go to.'

Interviewer 1: 'Did you guys kind of feel like you were almost made to do that?'

Male 1 and Male 2: 'Mmhmm.'

Female 1: 'No, I wanted to go.'

Male 2: 'In Year 10, you take your courses of what you want to do. So whatever you do in your courses is whatever you going to go to college with. So, I did engineering in Year 10 so then I went to college and did that, then now that's not the right thing for me. At that age, you don't really know what you're going to do until it happens. I don't think you're supported enough with that. You just kind of get something drilled into you.'

Female 1: 'A lot of people do end up going to college and university and don't actually end up getting a job at the end of it.'

Interviewer 1: 'When I graduated, I had to work in Aldi. It's even harder for young people now.'

Interviewer 2: 'Just because you've got good qualifications, it's about your work experience to be able to get you into that job and that confidence to go in front of employers. Would you all agree with that?'

Male 3: 'Yeah I mean I got terrible GCSEs and still managed to get jobs.'

Female 1: 'I got really good GCSEs and got a really good college qualification but I'm still a cleaner.'

Interviewer 2: 'But I think you should be proud of that. You're self-employed, you're young.'

Female 1: 'But still do you know what I mean? I went to college to do something with animals. I was almost guaranteed to do something with animals out of that because I got a Distinction and still didn't get anything.'

Interviewer 2: 'You didn't get any help to look? Did you have work experience?'

Female 1: 'No.'

Interviewer 2: 'Do you think a lot of colleges should bring work experience into every single course that they deliver?'

Female 1: 'Sorry there was work experience but 100 applicants applied and 2 got in. That was every year.'

Interviewer 1: 'So they should have guaranteed work experience?'

Female 1: 'Yes they should have guaranteed work experience but they didn't.'

Interviewer 2: 'Do you think that it should be that for every course, even if it's like mechanics and IT, at least that you're going into a working environment, even if it's for 2 weeks?'

Male 3: 'Yeah if you're going in with people who have experience then they literally understand...'

Male 4: 'You only learn when you're actually doing something.'

Female 1: 'That's the only thing I did like about college is that every Friday you did get a whole practical day, which is the only time I really learnt a lot.'

Question 3 (Interviewer 1): Do school leavers know what skills they need to get a job? If not, why? If yes, why? Do they have these skills? If not, what are the best ways of getting them?

Interviewer: 'So when you leave school do you think that school leavers are actually fully prepared for work. Do they know what is required?'

Male 1: 'I think there's some people who know what they want to do but barely any people know what they want to do.'

Interviewer 1: 'Do you think they understand what's required?'

Male 2: 'I don't think you're prepared enough. It's alright writing CVs and going through fake interviews but you need to be chucked in the deep end to expect what it is.'

Interviewer 1: 'From my experience, a lot of young people will come in and do sessions with me. They'll get an interview and I'll ask "What are you going to wear?" and they'll say "Well, what I've got on" and it's a tracksuit. From my experience, actually no, young people don't know. A good 50% have no idea they need to act a bit more professional.'

Male 4: 'I've got to be completely different than from how I am now!'

Male 2: 'I'm not one to wear a suit and tie!'

Interviewer 1: 'Did you know that when you were 16 do you think?'

Male 3: 'Yeah I knew that you had to be smart in an interview.'

Interviewer 2: 'Do you also think though that going for your first job that you're not prepared to actually give employers examples of how you're prepared to do that job? A lot of people I've worked with, when I do interview questions with them, they'll just give me 'Yes' or 'No'. They're not going to give me justification, how they have got those skills or anything they've done in their hobbies. It's just because they want to do it.'

Male 4: 'In interviews, with the questions you just make up stuff as you go along. You say stuff that's not true. You say "I'm the best, I can do this" when actually you've got not a clue what you're doing.'

Interviewer 2: 'Well actually that's an interesting point as I hope it's not like that.'

Male 4: 'Well that's how I winged my interview!'

Interviewer 2: 'Have you got anything else to add about what are the best ways of getting the skills?'

Female 1: 'I think actually the best way of getting skills is literally being thrown into a job anyway. People giving you the opportunity in the first place... To do a typical sound job you need customer service skills and you can only get that from doing that job in the first place.'

Interviewer 2: 'And how can you get those skills? What do you think would be the best way? Most employers want you to already have done the job.'

Male 3: 'Even though that doesn't make sense. They want you to have a year's experience but if you haven't done it anyway then how are you going to get that year's experience?'

Male 4: 'Asda take on people with no experience whatsoever and they can mould you exactly how they want you.'

Female 1: 'Some places accept you not having anything and they can mould you to what they want you to be.'

Question 4 (Interviewer 1): Is it easy or difficult to get work experience? What are your thoughts about this? Do you think work experience helps with getting a job?

Male 3: 'I think work experience is easier to get than a job because you can just go in and do voluntary work.'

Male 1: 'I never had work experience.'

Female 1: 'The only work experience I had was through a Health and Social Care course working in an old people's home. That was really hard to do as well because I wasn't allowed to do a lot of stuff. I was allowed there but I was only allowed literally to sit and talk with the people and take their meal orders. I wasn't actually allowed to get hands on like I wanted to.'

Interviewer 1: 'What do you guys think about work experience? Do you think it's helpful?'

Male 2: 'Yeah I had work experience working with my mate's dad for the day.'

Interviewer 1: 'Is it easy to get work experience do you think?'

Female 1: 'No.'

Interviewer 1: 'Not specific? I mean you can volunteer in a charity shop – that's not too hard but actually to get work experience.'

Female 1: 'Doing a specific thing, no it's hard.'

Male 1: 'I was lucky enough to get work experience at a skate shop, just managed to push that through (ed.: while he was at the Pupil Referral Unit). My secondary school wouldn't have done that. They would have stuck me with some rubbish cleaning job.'

Question 5 (Interviewer 1): Do you think there are many good jobs available for school leavers in your local area? If no, why? If yes, why?

Interviewer: 'What do we think – are there good opportunities here because you're all from Andover (Andover, Hampshire)?'

Female 1: 'No. The main people who have jobs is literally at fast food places.'

Interviewer 1: 'You mean you're in an area which is pretty bad for getting work for young people?'

Male 1: 'It's just retail.'

Interviewer 1: 'Yeah retail and even that is limited.'

Interviewer 2: 'Yeah supermarket retail.'

Female 1: 'Once a lot of people like TK Maxx have got their people, they keep them. Whereas Tesco, Asda, McDonald's and KFC, they have a really big staff turnover so there are the only places you can pretty much go to.'

'Tesco have a lot of zero-hour contracts. They treat you really really badly. Me and X worked there while I was pregnant.'

Interviewer 1: 'Here where you guys are, Basingstoke you can get to for work.'

Male 3: 'You can but you need the job first to be able to get the money to get there.'

Interviewer 1: 'That's still quite limited isn't it?'

Interviewer 2: 'I think in the area, there's actually a lot of jobs round here that are high paid. So you've either got your supermarket or your quite high paid jobs.'

Female 1: 'There's a lot of telesales things and accountancy and you've got to have at least one year's experience. They won't take you otherwise.'

Interviewer 2: 'When I was younger, there used to be a lot of warehouses and now that's all gone. There seem to be very limited qualifications. All you seem to have is your supermarkets.'

Female 1: 'There is still warehouse work but it's always temporary. It's never full time.'

Question 6 (Interviewer 1): Think about the barriers and obstacles you will need to overcome as you move from school into the world of work.

Male 2: 'When you leave school, if you haven't got the qualifications, you have to be willing to do anything – you can't be picky.'

Interviewer 2: 'Also, what you were saying before you didn't have the support like careers advice, help with doing application forms, some schools do college visits? I don't know if any of you had those set up?'

Female 1: 'All the colleges came in at one point.'

Group 3

14 November 2015.

The group consisted of four young people between 14 and 21 years old from the Surrey area. They all have learning difficulties and are members of Barnardo's "Voice Forum", a project that brings together young people from different services to discuss issues affecting them, plan events and participate in Barnardo's on a regional level.

Below is a full transcript of the focus group interview.

Question 1 (Interviewer): Do you think that there are lots of different options for school leavers that lead to a good job? Are you given lots of choices?

Male 1: 'The college that I wanted to go to – but my dad said no because it was too far – is Brooklands College. I wanted to go so I could stay with my old school mates and some of my school teachers as well.'

Interviewer: 'Is it a good place to go to in order to get a job afterwards?'

Male 1: 'Yes. But the college that I'm at right now has got quite of a choice. The one that I'm doing is a car one, mechanics one, there are two lots of mechanics you can do. You can do building or fixing car. So the college gave me a choice of what to do so I choose the fixing one. They asked what course it'd like to do and I said that I like to fix cars but they said that I'd have to do a special needs course first so I did that for the first year. They said that I did well on that, I was behaving really well and was able to move up to the higher level and do the course I'm doing now.'

Interviewer: 'What school are you at?'

Male 1: 'I'm at the park school in Woking.'

Interviewer: 'And they said: what do you want to do?'

Male 1: 'Yeah. I said mechanics or sports. But when they talked to me about sports, it

sounded very boring – even though I’m sporty – but the cars is very interesting and I love my cars.’

Interviewer: ‘It sounded like you had quite a lot of support.’

Male 1: ‘Yeah.’

Interviewer: ‘Did you have that level of support?’

Male 2: ‘I’m trying to think back. When I said that I wanted to do plumbing and one of my friends or my teachers said that there’s potential with plumbing there. I remember my teacher saying go and see Nes Cot (ed.: a college) and I was like ok. I went to Nes Cot where I did my evaluation to check on my levels and I didn’t get on the course because of my levels. So I stayed in the special needs department until I got kicked out basically.’

Interviewer: ‘Can you explain just for the recording what’s happened at college for you, just briefly.’

Male 2: ‘I got kicked out of college because I was barely in because of my arthritis. Basically it progressed over the holidays and they said they’d done everything they could to accommodate me.’

Interviewer: ‘And what did they do? Did they do a lot to help you? Did they offer alternatives?’

Male 2: ‘No.’

Interviewer: ‘What are you doing now?’

Male 2: ‘Nothing.’

Interviewer: ‘Just waiting for the next opportunity to come along?’

Male 2: ‘Yes. Barnardo’s is the next opportunity that I’ve got. I can’t work because of my hand or knees.’

Interviewer: ‘So what they said to you – you were doing a land-based course that required you stand a lot?’

Male 2: ‘I was doing a work placement course at Coop but they could have easily changed my work placement.’

Interviewer: ‘They could have done it as a sit-down somewhere?’

Male 3: ‘Or like work on tills or something.’

Interviewer: 'You weren't given a choice to change your placement or anything?'

Male 2: 'No they didn't offer anything for me when I went for a meeting.'

Interviewer: 'So how do you feel now – do you feel that you've got choices?'

Male 2: 'Not much. My reading, my writing, my maths are still bad.'

Interviewer: 'Are you in contact with the job centre?'

Male 2: 'No, I'm on ESA.'

Interviewer: 'Did they talk to you about that? Finding something that is suitable for you and your needs?'

Male 2: 'My doctor says that I can't work.'

Interviewer: 'But you want to do something?'

Male 2: 'Yeah. I want to earn money.'

Interviewer: 'So you want to work?'

Male 3: 'So you basically can't work at all?'

Interviewer: 'You feel that you could, couldn't you?'

Male 2: 'I feel like I could but then it has to be something that I can cope with.'

Interviewer: 'So you need more support to look at your options?'

Male 2: 'Yeah. But then again I want to do something with media now. I'm tired of sitting down.'

Male 3: 'You could do computers, couldn't you?'

Male 2: 'Yeah like editing and that. Videos.'

Interviewer: 'Do you feel that you know how to explore that?'

Male 2: 'If I get the right help, yeah.'

Interviewer: 'Who do you think is going to help?'

Male 2: 'Don't know yet. But it would be nice if there was some more help for me because of my disability.'

Interviewer: 'So you just feel like people are telling you that you can't work and that's it?'

Male 2: 'Yeah. That's it.'

Interviewer: 'That's quite sad.'

Male 2: 'I feel like this is my only opportunity. It's nice because they just give like more options but then again I can see everybody else's point of view after doing my time at Coop.'

Interviewer: 'You found it difficult?'

Male 2: 'Yeah and then at the end of the day I was home tired, drained.'

Interviewer: 'James, what about you when you left school and went on to college? Did you get lots of choices? It sounds like went to college with lots of your friends?'

Male 4: 'Yeah.'

Interviewer: 'Did you think that you could do an apprenticeship?'

Male 4: 'No.'

Interviewer: 'Or get a job?'

Male 4: 'I already had three jobs while I was in college.'

Question 2 (Interviewer): Do you think that there is a good level of support available when you leave school?

Male 1: 'Yeah. But what my teacher said getting a job as a mechanic is going to be hard because loads of people are applying to do that.'

Interviewer: 'Did the fact that your teacher said that it is going to be really hard to get a job, did that put you off?'

Male 1: 'Yeah. But I think I could work quite well in a garage.'

Interviewer: 'Did you have careers advice or anything at school?'

Male 3: 'I think maybe but I'm not too sure. I did miss about three years of school.'

Interviewer: 'So you weren't at school when they were doing the careers advice days? Did anyone else support you?'

Male 3: 'I remember thinking at 16 that I wanted to be a plumber or be in the navy.'

Interviewer: 'Did anyone talk to you about that? Did you have any careers advice?'

Male 3: 'No.'

Male 1: 'Actually I'm glad that you're talking about the navy because I was thinking of joining the marines. I am putting off to the marines course. It'd be very hard work but you'll be going to different countries and protecting your own teammates and all I want to do is just be strong and confident in myself and meet new people and go to new places.'

Interviewer: 'When did you think that?'

Male: 'I think it was a film I was watching. This man who was in the marines and what he said about it was life changing because you are out there, you are fighting for your country and you come back with a badge or a medal and you come to see your family. It's just the sort thing that I want to do.'

Interviewer: 'Have you looked for that opportunity? Do you know where you'd look? Who you'd ask?'

Male 1: 'I mostly look on the computer at college about jobs in the army. None of the teachers know anything about jobs in the army or in the marines but I know a lot about it. It's just something I want to do. I want to have 1 to 1 army combat.'

Interviewer: 'At Barnardo's?! This is like the opposite of what we do.'

Male 1: 'My mate at college he had 1 to 1 armed combat with a marine and he had training for it and he is a very strong lad and he said to me – because he get bullied a lot – that he had training in weapons, and quite a few 1 to 1's he can beat up anyone, he can knock out a 6 foot giant. He is so strong.'

Male 3: 'I remember that I wanted to join as well because you get your qualification out of it as well. But now it's unrealistic. I remember my mum told me that because of my autism I couldn't join the police force or army or none of that. That's when my dreams died.'

Male 1: 'To join the police force you need A-levels.'

Male 3: 'I could have taken advice out of college but I decided not to because I didn't know what to do.'

Interviewer: 'You didn't know what you wanted to do?'

Male 3: 'I was getting confused about what I wanted to do. So I didn't go to them and I think that was a big mistake.'

Interviewer: 'You think you should have been encouraged more to go to them?'

Male 3: 'They did but I never went. I regret that.'

Question 3 (Interviewer): Do school leavers know what skills are needed to get a job?

All: 'No.'

Interviewer: 'Did school help you?'

Male: 'No.'

Male 3: 'No because you will need more qualifications than just school.'

Interviewer: 'How do you think they could get these skills?'

Male 3: 'Going to college.'

Interviewer: 'Is that the best way to get them?'

Male 2: 'Yeah. But it's not always guaranteed though to get into college or to get the qualifications that you need. Maybe the companies should a side course training. Let's say there are some that know a lot about it but don't have the qualifications. Why not have like a shadow-thing for them to see what the job looks like and what they need for the job? There should be more of that.'

Interviewer: 'Did you do work experience?'

Male 2: 'I did it at a nursery. I learned how to deal with little kids.'

Male 1: 'School leavers get experience at college mainly and apprenticeships.'

Interviewer: 'So they have to go to college then?'

All: 'Yes'.

Male 4: 'Or community work. At the moment I am going to a day care centre where I hand out milk to old people. If I am ever going to work in a restaurant giving out meals, then you have to be sure that it is the right meals.'

Male 3: 'This is what the opportunities they gave were when we were at school. Either Apprenticeship or college, or work at a fast food restaurant.'

Male 2: 'College, B-tech. It is the sort of level that you are working at and that's the sort of job you can get. At college that level you are doing you can take and you can do that for a job but you can't do anything higher until you've done that level at college. At college if you do something like working in a shop and the things you do you can put on your CV.'

Interviewer: 'Do you think it'd be good if they had that in schools? Because it seems like from what you're saying that you get more skills from college than you do from school?'

Male 3: 'Yeah you get put in a workplace in college and at my school you get to go to work experience.'

Interviewer: 'Did you do your work experience at school?'

Male 1: 'Yes. But if you are naughty at work experience you get a warning and if you do it again you get kicked out. And someone will send a teacher to pick you up and you will then have to do work or join another class until your class are back from work experience.'

Male 3: 'One of my friends got sacked from work experience on his second day and had to go back.'

Interviewer: 'Do you think he missed out then?'

Male 3: 'He missed on a big chance.'

Question 4 (Interviewer): Is it easy or difficult to get work experience?

Male 2: 'Difficult. The teachers have to say what level you're at and that level is what work experience you can do. If you want to work in a shop your teacher would take you to the place to have an interview. And they'll ask you what level you're at. If you're at level 1 you can only do basic stuff like putting things on the shelves. You are not going to be able to work behind the tills. That's why work experience is hard and people get kicked out.'

Interviewer: 'So if you do well at school then you get the good work experience?'

Male 1: 'I got really good grades, probably the best grades in the whole school. I got a C in maths, I got a C in arts, in my functional skills I got Entry 3 (ed.: functionality skills award) which is as high as you can go. So I just put all of that on my CV. So I can go into a place and say look at my qualifications, can I work? It's going to be that simple really.'

Male 2: 'But I think it is much harder when you don't have lots of qualifications. Then you have a disadvantage. You will need a hand. I'm probably going to be in that – I'm going to need that help. Society ain't going to give me that much opportunity. I'm going to go and find that opportunity myself. They're not going to hand me the opportunities on a plate. Better qualifications, better job, better pay. Bad qualifications, less chance of a job, bad pay – what am I going to do?'

Interviewer: 'Who do you think can help you find out what your opportunities are?'

Male 2: 'Job advice. Job centres can help but then again they might tell me that I should go back to college because of my qualifications, because of my levels. I say to them: I will

probably get kicked out of college because I've got this issue. They didn't offer me any support for my condition. I think work experience is hard to get because when people have conditions like this they have barriers in front of them and they do not get as much support with those barriers as they need.'

Interviewer: 'You haven't been directed to a specialist work experience?'

Male 2: 'I got the worst arthritis so it would be nice if they gave me the support that I'd need.'

Interviewer: 'Do you think work experience helps finding a job?'

Male 3: 'Yes and no. You get the experience but you might not get the job. You get people coming out of university with their qualifications and they are not guaranteed a job.'

Interviewer: 'What do you think is better qualifications or work experience?'

At the same time: 'Qualifications. Work experience.'

Male 3: 'A year 11 used to go to my school when I was in year 7. He did work experience as a paramedic. They wanted him back because he was really good at it so he got his job like that.'

Male 2: 'A qualification is just a piece of paper that says "look how smart I am". What's more important a piece of paper or experience? Basically it's not that piece of paper. It's experience that gets you a job. But then again it might not. But still, experience is more valuable than a piece of paper.'

Interviewer: 'What about you James? What do you think? Do you think that work experience help get a job?'

Male 4: 'Yeah. I did work experience at Fulham. It helped me go to a different place.'

Question 5 (Interviewer): Do you think there are many good jobs for school leavers in your local area?

All: 'No.'

Interviewer: 'Why not?'

Male 3: 'I haven't seen any opportunities. I have looked at signs that pop up at around Christmas and summer. But you want a permanent job.'

Male 2: 'The best places to start are charity shops. It always says volunteers needed. You have to be 16 or over and you don't need any qualifications, you just go in and show them your CV.'

Interviewer: 'Is that not work experience?'

Male 2: 'You start of low first in a charity shop and when you've done that and you are more confident you can maybe start to find another job.'

Interviewer: 'So you're saying that when you leave school you are actually not quite ready to start a real job?'

Male 2: 'You're not good enough yet.'

Male 1: 'You need to build up your personal profile.'

Interviewer: 'So for a good job you will need to start at the bottom and work your way up? You need to start at a bad job and work towards a good job?'

Male 3: 'Even if you don't like what you're doing at that job you get money for it.'

Male 2: 'Let's say they went to school and their reading and writing are still bad or they had a disability. There is not enough support for that.'

Interviewer: 'What do you think James?'

Male 4: 'It depends what jobs you choose.'

Question 6 (Interviewer): Think about the barriers and obstacles you will need to overcome as you move from school to the world of work over the next few years?

Male 3: 'For me it would my reading and my writing and my maths. And maybe my eyesight'.

Male 2: 'Yeah learning and physical disabilities.'

Male 3: 'You need to keep faith in yourself and stay motivated.'

Interviewer: 'Can other people help you overcome them?'

Male 3: 'Friends and family. They can help you.'

Male 2: 'Because I am looking towards stuff in media and stuff I am more hopeful.'

Interviewer: 'So what are the barriers to do media?'

Male 2: 'To have the equipment and software. It doesn't matter about the grades as long as you know what the programmes are.'

Interviewer: 'What stops you from getting a job?'

Male 1: 'People saying that I won't be able to do it and that I wouldn't be well enough. At school and college – the teacher went round and asked what they wanted to do for a job – I

said I wanted to do something with cars and everyone said to me you won't be able to fix a single car from scratch. But then when I went to Brooklands to do my class, some of the people saw me actually fix a car from scratch.'

Group 4

13 November 2015.

The group consisted of four young people between 16 and 21 years old. Two of the females had two children under the age of three and another young female was pregnant with her first child. It took place at Portsmouth Family Intervention Project (FIP).

The following represents a summary of the discussion as recorded on flip charts during the session and direct quotes from the young people present.

Question 1: What choices did you feel you had when you left school at 16?

Two of the females present did not believe they had any choices because they had been pregnant or with a baby when leaving school

One of the young females described her school's reaction to her pregnancy in the following way:

"Once they found out that I was pregnant they did not have any information. Everyone was shocked that I was pregnant; it's a shock with young people get pregnant. They didn't give me any choices."

The group mentions either go to college or get a job as options for school leavers.

"My parents said "get a job, move out"

Question 2: What resources and support do you feel was available to you in understanding or making these choices?

One young person was aware of a careers adviser but that they hadn't been offered any choices by them. A teacher was cited by one as being supportive.

A parent was reported as signposting them for support with benefits, for example to the job centre.

The group generally showed limited awareness of the value of digital resources in looking for a course, apprenticeship or employment. Two young people who had done work had accessed this by word of mouth or via relatives.

None of the young people had accessed careers or similar service since leaving education and showed limited awareness of where they might find this prior to working with Barnardo's FIP.

The Barnardo's keyworker support currently in place was reported as improving access to discussions around choices and opportunities relating to employment, education and training. They also discussed the importance of "self-support" and reported feeling of having to get on with it on their own.

Question 3: What did you see as the barriers and obstacles preventing you from understanding or accessing opportunities?

The young people reported that they did not feel able to "win" – a feeling that nothing would make a difference for their situation and not being able to see how anything could change.

They also reported messages from parents about barriers to getting a job relating to other groups of people.

"Foreign people get the jobs first. They are willing to work for less than what we work for."

"My dad's a builder and work with Polish people."

The importance of taking responsibility for your own life was also discussed. They reported a feeling of not having taken enough responsibility for themselves. For example one female mentioned that if you do not go to school, you cannot receive the support available there:

"I personally think that if you're not good in school or if you are being kicked out then why should they have to go out their way to help you."

They reported that their peers used drugs and alcohol and that they felt this might make it difficult for them to find a job or go to college.

The timing of support was also mentioned as a barrier. Support was only offered at certain times and would not always be followed up on.

Fear was also mentioned as a barrier:

"I definitely think for me that the fear of it that not knowing what it's going to be like when going back to work is going to be difficult."

One of the young people reported low levels of numeracy and literacy as a barrier.

Two females reported being pregnant and having a child as a barrier. They said it felt like no one knew what to do with them.

One of the young people referred to bullying as a barrier. He stated that he had had a negative experience of school and that this impacted on his confidence in finding a job.

The group also reported that they felt unsure about what they wanted to do or what they would be good at doing.

Question 4: What do you feel might have made a difference to you?

The availability of a role model (a parent, adult or peer) who is working or studying was mentioned

Persistence from their school was reported, also after they left school. They also mentioned that it would be good if the school followed-up with them if they had not received support for one reason or another.

Help to navigate the support available was reported, for instance having a keyworker or someone to make sense of what they might be able to do and where help is available:

“With careers advice, I’ve always felt like, at school we had a careers library and we sat and talked about careers but nobody knew us as individuals and people kind of you need someone who knows you really well, your mum or dad or someone at Barnardo’s.”

They also reported that “taster sessions” of different areas of work or training after school would have helped improve their confidence and supported better decision making. One young person talks about work experience at school:

“I went there but really they should do a bit more than just a couple of days, perhaps like a week or two to feel what other people are doing. Then you know what their stress is. Just to know how it feels and how they cope.”

Help to understand how they can work or study with health issues or disabilities was also mentioned, particularly a greater understanding of options around the number of hours they could study or different ways of learning.

Group 5

14 November 2015

The group consisted of three young people between 16 and 18 years old. The young people attend or have attended Barnardo's Phase 2 service, which provides advice and advocacy on the skills needed to support sustained employment, and Barnardo's "R U Safe" service, which works with young people affected by child sexual exploitation to promote safety, healthy relationships, reduce risky behavior and increase self-worth and self-esteem.

The following represents a summary of the discussion as recorded on flip charts during the session.

Question 1: What choices did you feel you had when you left school at 16?

- Only if you get the right grades
- Depends on the school you're in – some are better than others
- Support outside of school not very good

Question 2: What resources and support do you feel was available to you in understanding or making these choices?

- No none at all
- Once you leave school there is no support
- It's all about the school looking good
- Schools only push you if they want to do well and look good
- For young people who "go off the rails" they're not encouraged to do well. They are given up on
- Once you get a "bad label" in school you can't get rid of it
- Not enough focus on bringing out the best in us
- They can focus on the negatives rather than the positives
- Teachers say you need to "prove them wrong", but it shouldn't be like that.
- Connexions are not any good

Question 3: What did you see as the barriers and obstacles preventing you from understanding or accessing opportunities?

- You don't learn anything about tax, mortgages and other things like that
- It's all about being taught how to pass exams rather than learning useful life skills
- You learn skills that are not appropriate to you
- Need to learn more life skills
- Not enough understanding about what we may be facing in our personal lives and how to deal with it
- We should have more say in the skills we want to learn

Question 4: Is it easy or difficult to get work experience?

- It does happen in most schools but you can't put it on your CV because employers don't recognize it as actual work – it's only a week and it's just educational
- Have to find your own work placement and no support offered to find one
- Some schools just send you to any placement and it's not what you want to do or relevant to you for the future
- I have never used my work experience
- I did not find it useful at all. It was really boring
- Placement was not appropriate for me at all

Question 5: Are there many good jobs for school leavers in your area?

- None at all
- Companies are paying less than the minimum wage
- No support in how to get a job
- Need interview skills to be taught
- No teaching about apprenticeships
- Connexions used to be good but they're not any more

Question 6: What are the barriers and obstacles you will need to overcome as you move from school to the world of work over the next few years?

- Worry or fear about job cuts
- Not enough job opportunities
- Don't know where to start
- Don't know anything about going for an interview
- There are just no jobs
- You go for a job and lots of other people go for it also
- Employers want you to have experience, but you get a job to get experience
- If you have struggled in school then how are you going to get a job?
- No support for helping us to look for work – especially if you don't know what you want to do

1 December 2015

Barnado's Participation Service – Written evidence (SMO0112)

House of Lords – Social Mobility Committee Call for Evidence

- 1) What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

There is a lack of understanding about how to best support young people to achieve their aspirations. There is a lack of opportunities for people with disabilities to get into employment.

- 2) There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

These people could have disabilities, be homeless, be care leavers, have criminal records, live in poverty, be immigrants.

- 3) Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

People in society have negatives attitudes about people with disabilities. 'People don't understand that we can do things or we will be able to with the right support and training.'

Young people might struggle getting into work because they aren't able to get there. Many young people can't drive, and need assistance to use public transport. Apprenticeships pay very little which might not cover transport costs.

Employers need to be giving their staff the right training to be able to support a person with a disability who comes to work for the company.

Young people struggle to get the qualifications they need to do certain jobs. This is due to poor support in further education settings, and colleges not letting young people do the courses they want to do. Young people with disabilities are often only allowed to do 'life skills' courses, when they feel they can achieve much more.

Young people have noticed that the level of educational support they receive has been reduced since cuts to funding have been made.

- 4) How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Employers need to get more involved in helping young people into work. Companies should hold open days to recruit people with disabilities, as the usual application process can be a barrier for people with disabilities. Young people need to be helped to get proper work experience. They should be supported with careers advice to get them into employment. Employers should have taster days for people with disabilities to help them decide what career route they want to go down.

There could be a quality mark given to employers to give them a score of how well they are employing people with disabilities and how well they are supporting them, promoting them etc.

- 5) Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

Young people should take responsibility for looking for jobs, with support from others. Professionals who work with young people should be helping them to get the right information and advice.

Companies and charities should be helping young people.

MP's and the government should be forcing employers to employ a certain % of disabled people.

Advocates and Solicitors should be fighting for the rights of young people with disabilities when those rights haven't been met.

17 September 2015

The Big Academy – Written evidence (SMO0116)

The House of Lords select committee on social mobility.

Following is a response to a call for evidence from Adrian Oldfield of ZootAlore! Group which operates The Big Academy. The Big Academy was created by ZootAlore! to bring together key stakeholders that can help to improve the life chances of young people by removing barriers to employment. In partnership with Virtual College we offer schools, training providers and youth organisations a range of free careers support to improve decisions around the transition from education to employment.

VOOCs = Vocational Online Open Courses are careers e-learning courses available free to schools, colleges and youth organisations from The Big Academy and Virtual College

Evidence - Contribution

Q1) There is no shortage of employment opportunities and most employers will consider employing young people. The problem is supply, there simply isn't enough young people that are regarded by employers as “work ready”. A big contributor here is the removal of mandatory work experience and the removal of the Connexions service. Work experience is the single biggest contributor to the employability of young people, what was needed was a more robust regime rather than its removal.

One of the biggest problems is lack of “workplace awareness” what’s acceptable behaviour at work. There is a huge gap between what’s acceptable behaviour at school and what’s acceptable at work. Mobile phone etiquette is not taught at school and it’s one of the hardest things to convey to young people who have been able to text or update social media as often as they like while at school. Employers find this hard to manage, as do the young people dealing with a new environment. There should be more done to ensure that young people understand what’s expected in the workplace.

Q2) This group will probably be very happy with the fact they are working, getting into a routine and being paid at least national minimum wage, as opposed to the lower apprenticeship rate.

It has to be said that a better introduction into the workplace would allow these young people to start work with the benefit of a recognised qualification running alongside their induction from the employer. The low pay grade for apprenticeships and the failure of schools to engage with employers makes it easy for these young workers to be overlooked for skills and training opportunities.

There are work based learning programmes available to this group but unless they are in a sector with a training culture they may be overlooked for accredited vocational training. This group will be hard to engage with as the training opportunities that were once in place (Train to Gain etc), are no longer available and this is employer led, with many employers not recognising the value of the vocational qualifications on offer.

Ironically many young people in work and not on an apprenticeship programme will have to be paid the national minimum wage so will benefit with incremental pay rises as they age, it’s later down the line when they need to demonstrate skills gained at work as they look to progress that they may be left behind both in terms of promotion and pay scale.

Q3) The focus of secondary schools is almost totally biased to academia. If you're a young person likely to get good GCSE results, stay on at 6th form or thinking of FE or HE, you are going to be ok. If, however you are not suitable for that route the transitional support available is very poor.

Schools have a very disjointed approach to careers advice and there is almost no work experience provided now as its no longer mandatory. There are so many opportunities for young people to dis-engage and then its hard to re-engage them.

The labour market is very rich at the moment both in terms of opportunities and people seeking employment. For indigenous young people the transition process is in need of structure. Structure from an earlier age. Young people identified as non academic have nothing to fear from entering the workplace on an apprenticeship or even straight into employment, work is the reward but we need to do more to remove the stigma attached to non graduates (this stigma wasn't here pre 1997).

Young people are often choosing to go into HE for the wrong reasons and until changes to the apprenticeship framework are made this will continue. There should be no targets on HE attendance as it has contributed to an over supply of graduates whose expectations are then impossible to manage.

The narrative around routes young people can take after school is often very confusing. Young people get mixed messages about the value of a degree. They are also often given poor advice by careers about how they will be received by employers once they have a degree, they often have much higher wage expectations. I always tell young people to be realistic about the value of a degree. If you're not going into one of the professions and the sector doesn't require a degree, you may still benefit from the experience and become more employable but be realistic. Graduates being subjected to long term unemployment can suffer in many other ways including low self esteem and anger.

The career VOOCs available from the Big Academy and Virtual College lay out sector entry requirements and help young people consider their route with some degree of market intelligence, unfortunately to encourage 50% of young people to take up a university place the Government and institutions have over sold the value of the qualification and earning potential to young people. This leaves many feeling that they have wasted time and racked up "tuition debt" when they maybe needn't. We believe having a clear written plan to follow, laying out all the "realisms" has to be a better way.

All careers advice should be part of a structured career plan starting at year 10, we always seem to have a reactionary approach to skills in the UK. We need a more proactive approach. The Big Academy offers psychometric testing at the begging of our careers journey and then start working at the options around work aspiration and the routes open to the young person, its odd to me that every child isn't offered the same support.

Q4) Up and down the country there are various employability programmes all with varying levels of effectiveness. There is nothing linking employment trends geographically and which consider emerging employment markets, which is why we have shortfalls in tech and in the care sector for example. There is almost no cooperation between schools and training providers and employers to ensure a smooth transition. More should be done with sector skills councils to ensure skills gaps are filled over time not with a reactive jolt.

The extended school leaving age should be there to ensure no child will leave education and struggle with the transition. More should be done to ensure the young person is in the best setting, for those who may be more suited to work then a structured pathway should be

agreed. Unfortunately schools seem unwilling to lose the income unless the child is very disruptive. Just because a child can leave school at 18, doesn't mean its the best time. Lord Digby Jones once suggested that some young people may be better leaving school at 14, I tend to agree!

Year 10 was always the point where young people received the most activity around careers, there should be more done at this key stage in a young persons life to consider which route they may take after school. But it should start in year 10, not be completed.

The young people not suited to FE/HE will be known to the school at year 10 so the final two years of school should be a mix of basic maths, english and a focus on employment skills resulting in vocational qualifications.

Traineeships are a great way for young people to gain valuable employment skills and a great way for an employer to "sample" the work of a trainee before offering them an apprenticeship. Young people have to leave full time education before they can take one, this should be changed to allow the young person the opportunity to return to education should they realise that route is not right for them. Currently if this happens the young person may become NEET, again the transition period could be used to more affect.

There is no doubt in my mind that SME's would do more to support young people gaining experience. The young person may need some prep work (such as the VOOCs we offer), and some coaching prior to the start of a programme/traineeship but not much more than should be available at a careers meeting. What employers have become immune to are low level schemes with no structure.

Getting employers to see more value in vocational qualifications is key here. Many training providers are simply too focused on the qualification framework and evidence gathering to claim funding via guided learning hours, they often treat the employer like a secondary element. More can and should be done here. The Government has confused the issue here for employers by offering work based qualifications under the apprenticeship scheme. The brand of the apprenticeship will be weakened as a result.

Q5) The Government needs to change the rules around traineeships to allow a young person the opportunity to take a traineeship prior to leaving full time education (maybe 6 months). This would provide the young person with the opportunity to take a break from study and gain accredited work experience, but not sever the link with the school. They may decide to return and alter career path if possible. Maybe the school could continue claiming funding for the child during this transition and remove many of the blocks in place by reluctant schools losing revenue.

There should be a nationwide strategy to control how young people make the transition from education to employment, remove the regional variances that weaken the position of some young people. Every child should undergo a psychometric test that will accompany a more rigour-us careers agreement/plan. The Big Academy provides schools with this free platform now and it also allows schools to continue to monitor the students progress and follow alumni.

Government also needs to give apprenticeships the same programme status as a college course, this will allow young people from poorer families to enrol on an apprenticeship without losing child benefit.

There is currently an apprenticeship pay grade that allows employers to pay apprenticeships below national minimum wage, currently £2.73 per hour, this should be removed and employers who wish to recruit young people should pay national minimum wage. This allows

young people to feel at least equal to employed staff and it ensures that employers are recruiting for the right reasons.

The private training sector has many great initiatives like the Big Academy. They have looked carefully at ways to improve the employability of young people but its quite difficult for smaller companies to get access to public sector contracts. Government and local authorities should be encouraged to look for new initiatives rather than work with the same few suppliers, peddling the same old courses.

There should be a nationwide strategy to control how young people make the transition from education to employment, remove the regional variances that weaken the position of some young people. Every child should undergo a psychometric test that will accompany a more rigour-us careers agreement/plan. The Big Academy and Virtual College can provide schools with this free platform now, and it also allows schools to follow alumni.

Many of the answers to the problems around youth employment can be solved with joined up thinking. More should be done to embrace digital advances to engage the young person.

Young people manage their lives on their smart phones and yet the training providers and schools are still focusing on paper based employability solutions.

There is no doubt that work is the key to social mobility, we can do more to prepare young people for the world of work. Mould their ambitions and create a desire to work and contribute to communities and society.

I have yet to meet a young person who cannot take a place somewhere in the world of work and over time with the right support and encouragement can set goals around the quality of the life they lead. I struggle to find the right people making policy though!

Adrian Oldfield

21 September 2015

British Youth Council – Written evidence (SMO0142)

Introduction

The British Youth Council (BYC) is the National Youth Council of the UK. As a youth-led charity, we empower young people aged 25 and under to influence and inform the decisions that affect their lives. We support young people to get involved in their communities and democracy locally, nationally and internationally, making a difference as volunteers, campaigners, decision-makers and leaders.

BYC runs a number of youth-led networks and programmes - including the [UK Youth Parliament](#), [Young Mayor Network](#), [Local Youth Council Network](#), [National Scrutiny Group](#) and [Youth Select Committee](#) - which encourage young people to get involved in democracy and campaign to bring about change.

On behalf of Social Mobility Select Committee, BYC has undertaken a focus group consultation with young people aged between 11 and 23 from East of England, London, North East, South East and Yorkshire and Humberside regions. This report will focus on young people's views on the transition from school to work for young people

Getting good A Levels leads to a getting a good job; there are no other options for getting a good job. Do you agree, why? Do you disagree, why?

The responses from the discussion have been in have been summarised

According to those who agreed, great emphasis is placed on achieving good A Levels because society creates that expectation - in order to succeed employment wise, society necessitates good A Levels. They also believed that at that stage of life, academic achievements are the main way a young person's capabilities can be proven. They added that in a highly competitive job market, good A Levels allow you to stand out above the average as they can be used as a measure of intelligence and how a person informed is.

Those who disagreed put forward that the concept of good jobs was problematic; they believed that a person's aspirations should determine what constituted to a good job.

Participants discussed the fact that being a doctor or lawyer carried equal weight to being an actor or artist – it just depends on the person. Participants suggested that judging a person's intelligence or skill by A Levels only gave a narrow view and excluded people who are skilled or intelligent in different ways. Further to this, they believed that A Levels do not carry more weight than other qualifications such as BTEC diplomas or even community based achievements. They acknowledged the reality that schools are assessed and rated based on how well their students perform at GCSE and A Levels, so schools will drive the message of A Levels as the main, if not only, route to future success.

Participants spoke about the importance of experience in securing a good job; they believe that experience matters more, to employers than qualifications. To this end, in this current climate apprenticeships can lead to a good job. They also discussed the idea that qualifications do not determine how good an employee will be.

Another avenue to good work was through family - participants suggested that young people are able to inherit jobs from their family. These kinds of jobs do not require qualifications.

There is a good level of support available to assist with making choices when leaving school and getting a job. Do you agree, why? Do you disagree, why?

The responses from the discussion have been in have been summarised

Generally, those who agreed with this statement believed that not only is there a good level of support available to assist young people but that advice is easily accessible. Participants agreed that where careers advisers in school do not exist, there is no excuse for the students to say they have not got the information to make good choices as there is a plethora of websites which offer support. They concluded that young people needed to be more proactive and not expect the work to be done for them.

Those who disagreed believed that although services are available they are either not promoted enough or offer the right support. They identified the quality of services as a major issue in ensuring young people received the right support.

Participants found that, careers advice is often biased as it can be linked to pushing students to the personal goals of the school; it is a tokenistic exercise carried out by the school; or advisers are not qualified to deliver a good service.

Participants put forward that options are not explained properly; they discussed the idea of schools inviting local businesses in to deliver talks/session using real life examples of what they need to do.

Participants highlighted the lack of consistency in careers advice services in school – they believed that it varied from area to area. For them this meant that *all* young people are not able to make good choices about next steps after school. They further believed that, the picture of support in schools worsened when it came to SEN Schools.

Employers say that some young people do not have the right skills for work. Do you believe school leavers know what skills they need to get a job? If not, why? If yes, why?

The responses from the discussion have been in have been summarised

Participants who answered yes noted that lessons which focused on study skills, aimed to equip young people with the knowledge of what they needed to get a job. If they do not have such lessons in school, participants believed that there are courses made available which can fill in the gaps. Further to this, they believed that at the point of leaving school young people should have the initiative to find out what they need and not expect to be spoon fed, and concluded that the internet was a great source.

Participants, who answered no, put forward that those lessons in school did not effectively address skills needed to get into work such as CV writing or interview techniques; they focused more on academic attainment than on life after school. They discussed the idea of schools promoting voluntary opportunities much more, so that young people are able to

develop necessary skills in a range of places. Participants also believed that although websites do exist, they are not always youth friendly or easy to navigate.

Is it easy to get work experience at school? What are your thoughts about this? Do you agree, why? Do you disagree why?

The responses from the discussion have been in have been summarised

All participants disagreed with this question. Although they recognised that some schools go above and beyond to ensure their students are able to undertake work experience, participants believed that young people are not empowered enough to go out and request work experience. They went on to agree that even if they were to be successful, there are limitations on where they can be placed for work experience meaning there are fewer options. Participants concluded that not knowing where to look or how to look were the biggest barriers in accessing work experience at school.

Work experience helps with getting a job. Do you agree, why? Do you disagree, why?

The responses from the discussion have been in have been summarised

Most of the participants agreed that work experience helped with getting a job. They believed that work experience equipped young people with transferable skills that they could apply in all future work they would undertake. For them, practical skills such as interpersonal skills and time management were important to employers and work experience is the best environment to acquire these skills.

Participants believed that experience makes people more employable because it means less money would be needed to train them. They also believed that employers take people more seriously when they have experience because it demonstrates a person's commitment to their future.

Do you think there are many good jobs available for school leavers in your local area? If no, why? If yes, why?

The responses from the discussion have been in have been summarised

Participants answered yes to this question, they believed that getting good jobs in their local area was more about who they knew and not the skills or information they had. They discussed the fact that there were more young people than the jobs available so there would never be enough good jobs. Although this was the main point, they did agree that if people were determined enough eventually they could secure a job, just maybe not one of their first choice jobs.

Participants briefly mentioned barriers that prevented school leavers from being able to access good jobs; these were the lack of transport, the cost of transport and age discrimination.

11 January 2016

The Brokerage Citylink – Written evidence (SMO0035)

<p style="text-align: center;">HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY CALL FOR EVIDENCE from THE BROKERAGE CITYLINK 11 SEPTEMBER 2015</p>
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1. **Who we are**

The Brokerage Citylink is a registered charity working across London to address social mobility issues by providing the inspiration and skills to help young Londoners educated in state schools into careers in the City and Canary Wharf.

2. The City of London is one of the world's biggest and richest financial centres, yet inequality, poverty and deprivation are widespread across London's boroughs. Young people from London have some of the best and most exciting career opportunities available on their doorstep, but relatively few of them have the knowledge, guidance and support to help them access these roles.

3. **What we do**

We work exclusively with state school students in some of the most underprivileged boroughs in London, and enable many to access high quality employment opportunities in the City.

4. Each year we engage with more than 8,000 young people through our work with over 200 schools. We work in partnership with 100 corporates and hundreds of employee volunteers.
5. Through hundreds of workshops in City firms for both primary and secondary schools across the capital, we raise aspirations and provide information and insights into City careers. Annually, our recruitment team creates opportunities – over 100 paid internships and around 60 entry level jobs, the majority apprenticeships – enabling our young cohort to compete equally for the City jobs traditionally secured by their more advantaged peers.
6. Due to the way we are funded, the majority of the paid internship opportunities we deliver are for high achieving A level students from Year 13 who have a place to study at university. However, increasingly we are targeting ambitious BTEC students for apprenticeships and school leaver programmes advertised by the financial institutions we work closely with. Last year, about 8 per cent of those we placed in traineeships and jobs had studied BTECs.

7. **Why we do it**

Our programmes improve diversity in the workplace - 58% of our students are female, and 91% are from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds. Some of those who have completed our programmes are working in organisations including: the Bank of

England, UBS, State Street, Barclays, Commerzbank, Deutsche Bank, Société Générale, Hiscox, Lloyds of London, ING, Deloitte and PwC.

8. Very few of the students applying for internships have the contacts or support of their more advantaged peers. Our support ensures they have the necessary skills and confidence to compete on a level playing field. In recent years we have successfully placed 1,250 Brokerage candidates in paid internships and jobs across the sector.
9. Without the support we provide, these opportunities are often inaccessible, as highlighted in the recent Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission reports, *“Non-educational barriers to the elite professions evaluation”* (June 2015) and *“Downward mobility, opportunity hoarding and the ‘glass floor’”* (June 2015). Our work mirrors very closely the proposals around work experience for school age children in London made in the joint London Enterprise Panel and London Councils’ report *“London Ambitions: shaping a successful careers offer for all young Londoners”* (June 2015).
10. We want to reach more of London’s state schools and help nurture some of the untapped potential of young people in our city.
11. **Call for Evidence:**
We will respond to questions 1 and 5 of this inquiry, based on our knowledge of London’s state schools, and employment and training opportunities in the City of London.

Question 1:

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of the young people in the transition from school into the workplace?

12. Knowledge of what career opportunities are out there:
“It’s hard to aspire to something that you know very little or nothing about.”
Mohammed Marikar, Manager, Royal Bank of Canada and member of the Brokerage’s Alumni network
13. Our workshops highlight the range and breadth of careers that exist across the City, and the kinds of roles available, from traders, analysts, brokers, lawyers, programmers, accountants, HR and communications teams, to receptionists, administrators, facilities and catering staff who are needed to keep the business going. From a young age, (years 6-12) students can begin to imagine a world of work outside their own school, family and neighbourhood, and potentially a role for themselves in it.
14. Our research shows that the majority of participants in our primary and secondary school workshops significantly increase their knowledge about the City and the careers available. Notably, the workshops increase students’ confidence in getting a job in this sector, and how to demonstrate the skills needed in the workplace.
15. Opportunities outside the classroom - working in an ‘office’ environment:

Most of the children and young people we work with, despite living in the City's 'fringe' boroughs, will never have been into the City, and some have never been to central London, least of all visited a City firm or met professionals working here.

16. The workshops we deliver to over 6,000 school students take place in meeting or conference rooms in firms across the City and Canary Wharf. Seeing the inside of an 'office' for the first time can be very inspiring for some of the young people. Seeing the activity on a trading floor, observing professional meetings and speaking to economists, lawyers, accountants and HR managers can encourage and inspire young people to work in a business environment.

17. Making links between school-work and work:

"There is a pressing need to raise young people's awareness of the links between the educational experiences and the demands of the labour market." (London Ambitions, pg21)

Our workshops and our recruitment programmes make the link between schoolwork and entering the workforce. Our "Working in the City" and City Careers Open House workshops link the curriculum to jobs in the financial sector, including maths, computing and engineering. A high standard of English, knowledge of foreign languages or being bilingual are also highlighted as important skills for the workplace.

18. Teachers rate our programmes for their students very highly, with 77 per cent agreeing that the workshops complement the national curriculum and 89 per cent agreeing that the workshop had a positive impact on their school and students.

19. Matching ambition with opportunities – "getting that foot in the door":

All schools will teach highly capable and ambitious young people but some will not always know how to harness and target their potential to the full. London is a global leader in finance, insurance and law, and yet, how many teachers and careers advisors from state schools in some of the most underprivileged boroughs really know how to help their students to "get a foot in the door" – e.g. a paid internship – in this sector? Research from organisations like the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission and The Sutton Trust suggest that many teachers do not encourage students to work in sectors that they themselves know little about, but also where they are not represented.

20. Employability and work ready preparation:

Our schools workshops and recruitment programmes ensure that young people are aware of the skills needed in a professional workplace. Regardless of what profession the young people ultimately go into, we highlight professional skills including: punctuality, presentation, good communication skills, professional behaviour as well as other employability skills. We support our internship candidates – A level and BTEC – with CV advice and preparation, and skills for succeeding at interview and selection centres and attendance at sector specific networking events, e.g. law, insurance, accountancy, banking, to raise their confidence at making their own contacts.

Question 5:

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition onto work for school leavers?

21. We have not undertaken our own research into this policy area, however our experiences of working with young people and schools, and engaging with employers and staff is accurately reflected in research undertaken by many policy and research organisations including the Sutton Trust, the Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, the Gatsby Charitable Foundation, the IPPR, the Centre for Social Justice and others.
22. Schools: investment in high quality career guidance
Fundamentally, schools are responsible for supporting the transition into work for school leavers as they are best placed to know the young person's abilities, interests, and character. However, we hear from the teachers we work with that many schools lack the resources and expertise to provide sufficient and high quality career guidance, especially since responsibility for this was placed directly onto schools without the requisite financial support to deliver it.
23. We know that careers advice provision is currently very patchy and statutory guidance is very loosely framed with little in the way of quality or measurement. The quality of careers guidance depends on the particular school a child attends, leading to very many young people failing to reach their potential academically – through the subjects they study – and professionally – through the careers they pursue.
24. Schools – a dedicated member of staff responsible for career guidance and employment engagement.
Last year we worked with over 200 state schools across London. We have an enviable address book of contacts in schools. However, we do find it difficult to connect with some schools – those without a dedicated person, or without a strong focus on careers and employer engagement. If all schools had an outward facing person responsible for and committed to partnerships with organisations like ours and with employers, we would be able to work with many more schools and reach many more young people.
25. Central Government: funding for career guidance
We welcome the statutory guidance to deliver careers guidance in schools and work with local employers to provide insights to young people. However, we understand from teachers, careers advisors and other partners in the sector that funding to support schools to deliver this programme and pay for dedicated staff has not enabled this vision to become a reality.
26. Central Government: research and statistics

“The City will not just lead in financial markets, it will be the leading centre for insurance and reinsurance, for asset and wealth management, for shipping, and for a wide range of legal, accounting and other professional services.” The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mansion House speech, June 2015

27. Government departments monitor statistics on the qualifications and skills being gained and the jobs being created and filled nationally. This research needs to be more prominent, and emphasised to young people at an earlier age so that, together with good quality career guidance, this information will help young people to make subject and career decisions based on their future employability.
28. There is a skills mismatch between education and the labour market. In July 2015, the CBI claimed that half of all employers struggle to find highly skilled workers and that 77 per cent of firms in the CBI think that careers provision within schools is insufficient. Young people are often confused by the shape and nature of the labour market.
29. Employers:
“Thank you to all our interns for your energy and enthusiasm and for all that you’ve brought to Beazley.” Penny Malik, Head of Talent Management at Beazley, City Business Traineeship celebration event, 8/9/15
30. We have worked very hard to build our extensive network of City firms who work with us, provide internships, apprenticeships and school leaver jobs, as well as offering meeting rooms for workshops and additional funding for mentoring projects. The employers we work with already highly value the input the interns bring to their organisation, and most participate on our programmes year on year. Many interns are offered extensions to their contracts and invitations to apply for further summer internships.
31. Our challenge is mainly getting new employers engaged with the programmes, despite the positive feedback they hear through word of mouth from firms in the same sector. We believe this is due primarily to the relative lack of pressure from ‘above’ – central and local government – to encourage them to ‘do their bit’ for social mobility, opportunity and diversity. Many financial institutions also feel that other philanthropic activities, as part of their CSR policies, are sufficient.
32. Research from 2014, which is extensively quoted, indicates that a higher level of employer contacts for older students does, on average, given them advantages in relation to employment outcomes and earnings. However, a study by Impetus, the private equity foundation, in 2014 noted that young people rarely have contact with a representative range of employers.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Impetus, ‘Ready for Work’, 2014.

33. The government, through the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills and the Department for Education, needs to coordinate more employer involvement in education and careers provision in schools. The UK is also behind many other countries in Europe at delivering a training system and work place-based education with higher employer involvement.¹⁶⁵
34. Local Government:
Despite the changes made in 2011, we believe that local authorities have an important role to play to coordinate high quality provision of career guidance and dissemination of information about relevant programmes (like ours) across all schools in the borough - and to ensure delivery of best practice.
35. We welcome the recent London Enterprise Panel and London Councils' report London Ambitions¹⁶⁶, which sets out a distinct London careers offer for all young people in the capital. We look forward to working with the report's delivery partners and participating in the roll-out of 'Careers Clusters' in London.
36. Local authority economic development teams must also coordinate the employer and employee engagement across all schools. As well as highlighting and promoting professions and career opportunities locally, they must help schools to promote London's distinctive and globally renowned sectors, from business and finance, media, new-technologies, as well as fashion and art.
37. Government and employers:
The Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission in its report "*Bridging the Social Divide*"¹⁶⁷ notes that the system of unpaid internships remains an unfair one, as it gives unfair advantages to those with well-connected or more advantaged backgrounds. More needs to be done to encourage employers to make recruitment systems more open to take into account a wider pool of applicants.
38. Despite the work our charity has been doing for over 15 years, in partnership with the City of London Corporation's Business Traineeship Programme and the existence of other programmes, there is still a great deal more to do to level the playing field.
39. Conclusion:
With this submission, we aim to raise the profile of our charity, and highlight some of the work we do to improve social mobility across the capital. We are keenly aware that we cannot reach all the young people who could make a successful career in any one of the kinds of roles available in many of the financial, insurance or legal organisations we work with, and we regret that missed opportunity and loss of potential for that young person's future.

¹⁶⁵ IPPR, 'Remember the Young Ones', 2014.

¹⁶⁶ London Enterprise Panel and London Councils, London Ambitions: shaping a successful careers offer for all young Londoners, 2015

¹⁶⁷ The Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission, "Bridging the Social Divide", 2015¹⁶⁷

We are encouraged that your committee is taking up this matter, and the subject is gaining some momentum across parliament and government.

Peta Cubberley
Policy & Public Affairs Adviser

11 September 2015

Career Ready – Written evidence (SMO0074)

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY

Evidence from Career Ready (formerly Career Academies UK)

1. Factors affecting the ability to enter the job market and build a career:

- I. **Lack of understanding of the local jobs market:** students' understanding is limited to roles in their immediate family, peers and neighbourhood (this seems to apply equally to those living in Glasgow and London as in Bexhill-on-Sea or Southend); they (and their parents and teachers) have little or no awareness of opportunities in growth sectors struggling to recruit – technology, business services, engineering, logistics – leading to an unnecessarily pessimistic view of the labour market; 'there aren't any jobs'.
- II. **Low aspiration and low confidence:** it is rare for a student on our programme not to mention how much their confidence has been raised by contact with skilled/professional working people and work places. Well expressed by Diandra Shortte, a BTEC student from the College of Haringey, Enfield and North East London.

"I didn't know if I was able, qualified or good enough to be in a professional establishment. Confidence is the key, because once you unlock your inner confidence you can achieve anything." After a work placement at Accenture, gained through our programme, Diandra applied to Kings College, London, who don't normally take BTEC students. She is now reading Politics and Economics at Kings. **We would recommend Diandra as a witness to the inquiry.**
- III. **Lack of skills:** we have developed a comprehensive set of Skills for Career Success with our employer supporters to capture sets of skills (e.g. Managing Myself) and individual competencies within each set, in a way students understand: one example from **Managing Myself:**

'I am able to take responsibility for my own professional behaviour, including how I behave in more difficult situations.'

I do this by:

'Demonstrating appropriate behaviour for the work place which includes dressing appropriately and turning up on time.'
- IV. **Studying the wrong subjects:** we work with students aged 16-19. By the age of 16 too many are studying derivative subjects such as psychology and drama rather than core subjects necessary for career progression. They are not aware of the value scale applied to different subjects by employers and universities. Recent curriculum changes at GCSE may improve this, but there is still scope for clearer data and messaging at post 16 level.

- V. **Wasted potential:** I have only been in this role for two years. The biggest thing I've learned is that we have so many young people with the potential to be much more successful.

2. The 14-24 year old cohort:

- VI. **We work with middle-achieving students predominantly from poorer backgrounds who have the potential to succeed in the workplace.** All have some GCSE/National 4 qualifications but few at high grades or in high numbers. Just over 50% of our students outside Scotland study BTECs. Nearly 50% of our English students are in FE or sixth-form colleges, including 74% of BTEC students. We have a high proportion of BME students in areas of high immigration (e.g. 73% in London and the South East) What all our students lack are the role models, networks, confidence and aspiration of their wealthier peers. Our programme aims to fill that gap. Students are selected by their schools and colleges. Some are quietly going nowhere; others are noisily going somewhere bad. The latter often win our student awards.

'Without Career Ready I would have dropped out of school last year. I was going through a tough time and lacked motivation. Career Ready kept motivating me to be the best I can be. Now I plan to study social sciences at university and start my own charity.' Morven Petrie, Hillhead High School, Glasgow, Scotland Student of the Year 2015. **We would recommend Morven as a witness for the inquiry**

3. Transition into employment

- VII. When we were founded in 2002 by Sir Win Bischoff and a group of leading employers, the ambition was **to encourage our students to go to university**. This reflected the ambition of our big US sister organisation, the National Academy Foundation (NAF), that students should go to college. It also reflected the belief in the UK at the time that 50% of students should go to university. **By 2009, 81% of our students were going to university and 9% into work.**
- VIII. Every school/college/teacher/student understands the route to university through **UCAS**. **Teachers** at our schools regularly cite the proportion of their students going to university as the ultimate evidence of their success. **Parents** attending internship presentations and graduations express the same view. Schools and parents actively discourage young people from taking non-university routes, believing that they are inferior. (As a result of a letter published in The Times on Monday 17th August one young man wrote asking for help to persuade his parents to let him take up a higher level apprenticeship.) This attitude is reinforced by a lack of awareness of new 18+

programmes and the difficulty of accessing them. **There is no work/apprenticeship equivalent of UCAS.**

- IX. Despite these difficulties, our students are increasingly recognising the **risks of going to university for students like them and the advantages of new 18+ routes to careers**. Many of our students tick the boxes for those statistically most likely to drop out of university: 71% are from families where they would be first generation to university (exceptions are often new to the UK); they tend to go to local universities and live at home; 52% study BTECs. When we ask students why they are unsure about university, the most common answer is fear of graduate unemployment – not fees. We fear our students are likely to be over-represented in the 59.8% of graduates in non-graduate jobs identified in the CIPD survey (August 19 2015). **In 2014 66% of our students went to university or FE college and 25% into work/apprenticeships.**
- X. One reason our students may be taking alternative routes is because our programme increases their levels of awareness. Our programme is delivered through employer volunteers. It includes a series of masterclasses delivered by employers in schools, mapped to our Skills for Career Success. This gives employers an opportunity to describe their personal career journeys, deliver key skills, but also mention opportunities on their firm's school leaver and apprenticeship programmes. **Employers used to work with us purely for CSR reasons; now it is a mix of CSR and recruitment.**
- XI. High-quality school leaver and apprenticeship programmes balance skills and academic/professional development. As accountancy firms and banks increase their higher level apprenticeship schemes we believe damaging notions of equating 'apprentice' with 'trade' may be eroded.
- XII. **International comparisons:** we would refer you to the Gatsby Report by Sir John Holman published April 2014

4. Possible Improvements

- XIII. Include school leaver programmes and higher level apprenticeships in school/college destination data on a par with university: they need to be seen as positive outcomes and their status raised. Academic high achievers would also benefit from such a change as they are currently forced down the university route irrespective of their preferences. If they take alternative 18+ routes, that will further increase their status.
- XIV. Encourage the development of a UCAS equivalent for high-level non university career routes.
- XV. Publish more variegated data on comparative outcomes for graduates according to subject studied and university attended. (We are hoping to undertake relevant research ourselves.)

- XVI.** Companies struggle to recruit good school leavers because they lack a mechanism for accessing schools – hence their partnerships with charities like us. Graduate recruiters are now arriving in this market to service their clients’ needs, but they are also looking to us to access schools. Those graduate recruiters bring the potential for solutions that will scale e.g. Group GTi, who are creating a Target Careers platform like their Target Jobs platform for undergraduates. Events which copy the Skills Show formula for higher-level 18+ routes might provide part of the answer.
- XVII.** Attempts to cajole employers into engagement in schools e.g. Social Mobility Business Compact, emphasised the benefits to society of this type of activity. Recruitment is a more powerful tool and normally comes with a higher budget attached. We recommend encouraging leading employers of 18+ students to explain the benefits of recruiting school leavers rather than graduates or other employers. Reasons they tell us are:
 - More capable, valuable employees by age 21
 - Better retention rates, particularly for companies outside major cities e.g. Pirelli in Carlisle
 - More diverse workforce, better reflecting customer base

5. Responsibility for Improvement

- XVIII. Local Enterprise Partnerships** – the new Careers & Enterprise Company is creating a framework which links schools to the local jobs market through LEPs. Charities and other delivery partners will be working with them. In Scotland we partner with local authorities and employers to deliver our programme, giving it a solid, local base, reach to all local schools, a link to regional growth strategies and the capacity to scale activities and operate clusters. We believe the LEPs are well placed to mirror that success. However, some LEPs place a higher priority on this work than others.
- XIX. Government** – changes to the Ofsted inspection framework and statutory obligations are forcing schools, colleges – and universities – to take transition to work more seriously. At the same time there is an alignment of the stars around the benefits of employer engagement in schools, giving cause for optimism. But with budgets under pressure, this is an easy target for cuts. Already this term we have had some schools pull out of our programme citing budget cuts, while others have doubled the number of students on the programme. £200m spent on the Connexions service has disappeared from the careers sector. A little of that going to schools for two transition years might have a big impact.
- XX. Schools** – headteachers need evidence that investment in careers is not at the expense of investment in good academic grades. There is a false view that the

choice is binary. We have strong anecdotal evidence that students work harder at school once they see where it is taking them. Research to prove that would help head teachers to invest. Teacher capability in this area needs to be raised for improvements in transition to work to become embedded and sustainable. The Employability Leadership programme being pioneered by Teach First is a good step.

XXI. Employers – there is widespread enthusiasm for engaging with schools, but no easy mechanism for doing it.

16 September 2015

Carers Trust – Written evidence (SMO0033)

Carers Trust submission to the Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility 10th September 2015

Carers Trust is a major charity for, with and about carers. We work to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend who is ill, frail, disabled or has mental health or addiction problems.

Young adult carers are aged 14-25. Carers Trust Network Partners support over 4200 young adult carers across the UK.

Research has shown that young adult carers are struggling in education and employment because of their caring role. Carers Trust works alongside our network of local, independent charities to address these issues to ensure young adult carers reach their potential.

Young adult carers are often at a disadvantage throughout their time in education, training and employment because of their caring role.

The restrictions placed on them because of the demands of being a carer mean that they are unable to take up opportunities or commit fully to training programmes that are designed to give them new skills and opportunities.

Carers Trust, in partnership with the University of Nottingham, conducted the largest survey of young adult carers in the UK. Questions focussed on their experiences of education (school, further and higher), routes to employment, physical health, mental health and their caring role.

The following response is based on:

- findings from this survey
- feedback and experiences that Carers Trust has encountered when consulting with young adult carers, support workers and the people who work with them at a local level
- additional research from outside organisations.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

- 1.1. Young adult carers are placed at a disadvantage throughout education and into the workplace because of their caring role.
- 1.2. Health and social care systems across the UK are failing to address the needs of disabled people, people with an illness and/or long term condition, so they are not getting the care

and support that they need. This means that young adult carers are relied upon to provide ongoing support to fill the gaps in support and care provision. In many cases, caring is unpredictable as conditions fluctuate.

- 1.3. If young adult carers secure a job, a new package of support for the person they care needs to be arranged quickly to respond to the change in circumstance. The current health and social care system is inflexible and does not respond to changes in circumstance, resulting in a reliance on young adult carers to fill the gaps in support; thus, restricting the options available to them when embarking on a career.
- 1.4. In order to ensure young adult carers are able to successfully transition from education to employment, governments must give health and social care the funding that it needs to deliver an adequate, flexible service to young adult carers and the people they care for.
- 1.5. The change in government policy to restrict students in England from re-sitting exams is a concern for Carers Trust. Due to the unpredictable nature of caring, young adult carers are penalised if the person they care for has a difficult time during the exam period. Young adult carers are more likely to grow up in poverty than their peers so paying for an additional privately sat exam is not always a viable option. If young adult carers are unable to fully commit to or even attend their exams they risk being unable to show future employers, education or training providers their true ability. Young adult carers are therefore at greater risk than their peers of being excluded from further education or work in low skilled jobs.
- 1.6. Whilst at school, young adult carers report that they face additional challenges. They miss or cut short an average of 48 school days a year because of their caring role¹⁶⁸. Young adult carers are at risk of finishing school with the belief that no one understands what they are going through and will not be sympathetic if they disclose their caring role. Research shows that, on average, young adult carers in England achieve nine grades lower than their peers at GCSE¹⁶⁹ and 26% reported being bullied because of their caring role¹⁷⁰. It is unsurprising that many young adult carers finish their compulsory education with low confidence and sense of self-worth. In turn, this puts young adult carers at a disadvantage when applying for jobs. They are less likely to believe that they are the ideal candidate to fill a role and the application process favours outgoing, confident candidates.
- 1.7. Research shows that young carers are more likely than their peers to have grown up in poverty¹⁷¹. This affects the quality of work experience (if any) available to them, for example if a parent is in employment they may be able to arrange for work experience to

¹⁶⁸ Alexander C (2014) Time to be Heard – a call for recognition and support for young adult carers, London, Carers Trust

¹⁶⁹ Hounsell D (2013) Hidden from view: The experiences of young carers, London, The Children's Society

¹⁷⁰ Sempik, J and Becker, S (2013) Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education, London, Carers Trust.

¹⁷¹ Hounsell D (2013) Hidden from view: The experiences of young carers London, The Children's Society

take place informally. This places them at a disadvantage in comparison with their peers even before they finish school.

- 1.8. The current UK government has acknowledged that the current provision of careers advice for young people needs to be improved¹⁷². Carers Trust is concerned about the lack of specialist careers advice for young adult carers which takes their caring role into account.
 - 1.9. Carers Trust has concerns about the proposed changes to Job Seeker's Allowance for young people. From April 2017, all 18-21 year olds who are claiming Job Seeker's Allowance will be placed on the Intensive Activity Programme where they will be taught skills such as how to write a CV and interview techniques. Although Carers Trust welcomes opportunities for young adult carers to gain additional skills that could help them transition to the workplace, the use of sanctions should young adult carers have a caring emergency and be unable to attend the full course poses a risk to the social mobility of young adult carers.
 - 1.10. When starting out in the work place, all young people face considerable challenges. These include minimal experience to put on their CV, a lack of experience to fall back on should they need to apply for new jobs, limited opportunities to undertake quality work experience placements and not understanding the expectations of working life. For young adult carers, these challenges are exacerbated because of their caring role as they are unsure how to discuss how the impact that their caring role has on their lives with their employers.
- 2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**
- 2.1. Young adult carers are a hidden group so there is not enough known about them as a whole, let alone when they are NEET. They may be the only person in their household who is able to earn an income, particularly if the person/people they care for has a serious physical or mental health issue.
 - 2.2. The Carers Trust survey of young adult carers showed that young adult carers are more likely to be female than male¹⁷³, have higher than average levels of mental ill health¹⁷⁴ and describe their own physical health as 'Poor' or 'Just OK'¹⁷⁵. The impact of caring on physical mental health holds back carers in their education and in their careers. 29% of

¹⁷² OFSTED (20103) Going in the right direction? Careers guidance in schools from September 2012, Manchester, OFSTED

¹⁷³ Sempik, J and Becker, S (2013) Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education, London, Carers Trust

¹⁷⁴ Alexander C (2014) Time to be Heard – a call for recognition and support for young adult carers, London, Carers Trust

¹⁷⁵ Alexander C (2014) Time to be Heard – a call for recognition and support for young adult carers, London, Carers Trust

the young adult carers we surveyed told us they had to drop out of college or university because of their caring role.¹⁷⁶

- 2.3. Instead of describing themselves as 'unemployed' or 'NEET', young adult carers often describe themselves as being a 'full time carer'. Those who describe themselves as a full time carer are unlikely to be in employment or education. Instead, they dedicate their time to caring for a family member, friend or partner. This role is unpaid. They do this because they are unable or unwilling (for example if the person they care for has a stigmatised condition) to access NHS or Local Authority support and/or the support needed to reduce their caring role is not made available to them.
 - 2.4. Once young adult carers reach 16-18 years old their support starts to alter and decrease. This is because compulsory education finishes and young carers services ends. Coupled with this is the transition to adult services mean that some young adult carers become ineligible for support as adult carers, a situation exacerbated by the decrease in social care funding. Consequently young adult carers can find themselves at a loss as to where to find help in accessing and securing steady employment, whilst being a carer.
 - 2.5. Young adult carers possess a large number of additional skills that they have picked up from their caring role such as time management, dealing with crisis situations, financial management and empathy. When looking for employment, these 'soft skills' encourage young adult carers to enter 'caring professions' such as paid care work. Often these roles are low paid, low skilled, insecure jobs with little career progression or development opportunities. The longstanding decrease in Local Authority funding for social care providers only increases these issues. This also means that young adult carers are caring for others whilst at work and at home, leaving them with no opportunity to develop new skills away from their caring roles.
 - 2.6. More needs to be done to develop the skills of this group. Currently, some Carers Trust Network Partners offer support to young adult carers aged 14-25 to prepare them for employment and to help them realise and develop the skills they possess. However, this work is often funded via grants to individual organisations which, while providing a welcome stop-gap for the lack of support available for young adult carers at a local level, does not address the core issues faced by all young adult carers when accessing the workplace.
- 3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?**

¹⁷⁶ Sempik, J and Becker, S (2014) Young Adult Carers and Employment, London, Carers Trust

- 3.1. As outlined earlier, young adult carers are more likely than their peers to finish school with lower grades and struggle to enter the job market. Low grades at school can make some young people feel ashamed and affect their confidence in applying for opportunities.
- 3.2. Carers Trust is supportive of additional options to enter the workplace such as apprenticeships and traineeships. However, we have concerns about their suitability.
- 3.3. The current government apprenticeship model is unsuitable for young adult carers. The requirement to commit to set hours per week in order to qualify means that young adult carers are unable to complete programmes due to the unpredictable nature of their caring role. The minimum number of hours worked per week as part of apprenticeship brings young adult carers over the set number of hours they have in order to qualify for Carers Allowance. Carers Allowance is a particularly important benefit for young adult carers because legitimises their status as a carer and it can be used as a passport benefit for other services. Apprentices receive a very low wage of £2.73 per hour (increasing to £3.30 per hour from 1st October 2015) for participants aged 16 to 18 and those aged 19 or over who are in their first year. This further disincentivises young adult carers from participating in the programme.
- 3.4. Carers Trust has a number of Network Partners across the UK. We are aware of instances where young adult carers are encouraged to enter apprenticeships which do not reflect their skills or interests.
- 3.5. Carers Trust is also aware of young adult carers being placed in apprenticeships which, once completed, do not reflect the demands of the local labour market. This leaves young adult carers with skills that they cannot use and means they have to retrain in another industry.
- 3.6. Of course, Carers Trust believes that young people should be encouraged to explore potential new careers and develop new skills. However, if apprenticeships are being used inappropriately as outlined in the examples above, young adult carers can start to become disengaged in the apprenticeships process, decreasing their chance of a successful placement at a later date. It makes them feel that the opportunities offered within the apprenticeship schemes are being used to decrease the number of NEET young people rather than a true learning experience.
- 3.7. In terms of traineeships, young adult carers in England do not necessarily qualify for the 16-19 bursary. This acts as a disincentive for young adult carers who are looking for routes into work. Carers Trust is so concerned about this that we are launching a campaign entitled 'Better Bursary' that will launch in autumn 2015.
- 3.8. Due to the unpredictable nature of caring, young adult carers can have gaps in their employment history or experience a series of short term jobs. Young people do not have a full employment history to fall back on (unlike many older carers), so they find themselves at a disadvantage when looking for work. Young adult carers need to be

shown how to explain their caring role to their employers and how best to balance caring with employment.

- 3.9. As young adult carers are likely to live in poverty and they do not always have access to computers or smartphones with internet access¹⁷⁷. Due to the fact that recruitment processes are increasingly online only, young adult carers are placed at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers because they cannot always leave the person they care for to spend time applying for jobs in a place with internet access.
- 3.10. Although young adult carers can struggle to be part of an inflexible workforce, they are very well suited to starting up their own business. From being a carer, it is likely that they will have excellent time management, budgeting and crisis management skills – all of which are essential in running a successful business. It is important that tailored resources are made available to them to support this aim.
- 3.11. In England, it is here where the newly introduced Transition Assessments under the Care Act 2014 could make a real difference to the social mobility of young adult carers. The assessment must consider: whether the young adult carer is willing and able to continue caring when they reach 18, what they want to achieve in day-to-day life, with a particular focus on education, training and recreation, and what support could help to achieve those goals. Local Authorities have to produce a person-centred transition plan for young carers after the assessment. Local Authorities can work with colleges and universities to find a suitable place for young adult carers and agree a plan with that college or university to help them to study.
- 3.12. Local Authorities have the power (but not a duty) to meet young adult carers' need for support. If fully implemented Transition Assessments would ensure that young adult carers have the same access to education, training and employment as other young people, with care and support services provided to the person they care for.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- 4.1. Young adult carers are keen to enter the workplace despite the challenges they face. It is important to understand the factors that prevent them from taking up this opportunity. These are known as pull factors.
- 4.2. Some young adult carers report feeling guilty when they leave the person they care for and they worry about the person's safety and comfort. Without responsive health and social care being available for the person with care needs whilst young adult carers are at

¹⁷⁷ Armstrong M, Ruiz del Arbol M (2015) Unconnected and out of work: the vicious circle of having no internet, London, The Guardian

work, young adult carers will continue to feel they cannot fully commit to the work place. Research shows that they miss work an average of 17 days per year, with a further 79 days affected because of their caring responsibilities¹⁷⁸.

- 4.3. Pull factors also influence what career young adult carers choose. They are likely to see if the roles offered are geographically close to the person they care for and if the role offers flexible working hours¹⁷⁹. The reason for this is so young adult carers can return to the person they care for if there is an emergency. These restrictions on the roles available to them mean that young adult carers can struggle to initially enter the workplace or choose low paid and low skilled jobs.
- 4.4. Initially, young adult carers can find 'zero hours' contracts attractive because they offer the flexibility to choose hours worked. However, Carers Trust is aware of instances where this has been abused, leaving young adult carers having to choose between caring emergencies and income. We are also aware of instances where employers who are aware of their employees caring situation refuse to hire them during busy periods because the chance of them being unable to attend is 'too high'. This means that young adult carers are unable to progress in the workplace and can be forced to leave.
- 4.5. There needs to be an increased awareness of young adult carers. Employers need to be made aware of the unique skills that young adult carers possess such as empathy, financial management and time management. As employees, young adult carers can be hardworking and conscientious. Employment policies should be changed to reflect this, for example the government should provide flexible working for carers, carers leave and template carers' policies to reflect the make-up of the organisation.
- 4.6. More schemes should be supported that target specific groups of young people such as the Scottish Government's Employer Recruitment Incentives (ERI), which young and young adult carers are listed as a targeted group, which is designed to encourage businesses to recruit young people by offering cash incentives to offset wages in the early stages.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

5.1. Governments

- Increase investment in health and social care services which will enable young adult carers to take up employment opportunities
- Reform the apprenticeship programme to increase the flexibility of schemes for young adult carers

¹⁷⁸ Alexander C (2014) Time to be Heard – a call for recognition and support for young adult carers, London, Carers Trust

¹⁷⁹ Sempik, J and Becker, S (2014) Young Adult Carers and Employment, London, Carers Trust

- Reform the Intensive Activity programme to increase flexibility for young adult carers
- Ensure that Local Authorities in England carry out their duties under the Care Act 2014

5.2. Local Authorities

- Health and social care provision needs to be responsive in order for young adult carers to access opportunities
- Local Authorities in England need to consider going beyond their duties when implicating the Care Act 2014

5.3. Schools

- Every school should have a lead for young carers and young adult carers for both staff and pupils to raise awareness and advocate for young carers and young adult carers
- Improve careers guidance given to young adult carers when preparing for employment that corresponds with their skills and interests

5.4. Employers

- Increase carer awareness throughout the workforce
- Adopt employment policies that recognise the needs of young adult carers

5.5. Job Centre Plus

- Carers' leads should be well publicised across each Job Centre Plus

11 September 2015

Centrepoint - Written evidence (SMO0051)

Centrepoint submission to the Select Committee on Social Mobility

Summary

- Young people with the most complex needs are more likely to be furthest from the labour market and need alternative routes into employment.
- Centrepoint is concerned that current alternative routes – particularly apprenticeships – often do not offer the higher level of support and flexibility needed by this group, demonstrated by the fact that the number of disadvantaged young people accessing apprenticeships remains low.
- Centrepoint research shows that homeless young people are far more likely to obtain a GNVQ/NVQ or BTEC than A levels, but that those whose highest qualification is a BTEC are more than twice as likely to be NEET as their peers who take A Levels.
- Employers must be incentivised to offer the most vulnerable young people apprenticeship places and other opportunities which offer the right level of support and flexibility.
- Additional resources should be put into information, advice and guidance programmes, including the provision of transition mentors to support young people and employers.

Introduction

1. Centrepoint is the leading national charity working with homeless young people aged 16 to 25. We are a registered social housing provider, a charity enterprise and a company limited by guarantee. Established 40 years ago, we provide accommodation and support to help homeless young people get their lives back on track.
2. This submission is based on Centrepoint's experience of supporting young people into education and employment, as well as the results of a survey of 260 homeless young people aged 16 – 25, undertaken in July-August 2015.

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

3. Given the many complex challenges that homeless young people face, the young people that we support are disproportionately more likely to face unemployment and find it a challenge to enter employment, education and training. Due to this, they are less likely to follow traditional academic A Level routes into employment and need a pathway into work that provides additional flexibility to account for the multiple challenges they face in their lives.

4. Like many young people on the edge of the labour market, homeless young people face significant challenges which make the transition from school to employment particularly challenging, including:
 - Chaotic personal lives – because of both the causes and consequences of homelessness
 - Poor basic education - many leave school with less than five A* to C GCSEs
 - Mental health problems
 - The financial pressures of living independently
 - Pending or prior criminal convictions
 - A lack of any work experience, or lack of relevant work experience when at Secondary School
 - Material deprivation and low income
 - Family background characteristics – a lack of motivation, poor relationships with adults
 - Poor financial literacy and a belief that they would be worse off in employment than on benefits
5. These negative factors are often complex and deeply embedded by the time young people make the transition to work. Therefore a holistic approach is essential to tackling the cumulative effect of these factors. Essentially, those furthest from the employment market need help to address a range of different problems, as well as support to prepare for work itself.

There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who they are, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

6. The young people that Centrepont supports who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route are some of the most vulnerable learners, such as care leavers, teenage parents, young offenders and young people with learning difficulties. For some, the challenges and trauma they have experienced early in life have made it difficult to excel academically.
7. It is important to recognise that many who do not follow the A-Level route also experience a period of time where they are NEET. Due to poor attainment, many of these young people are unable to plan effectively for life after secondary school and so become NEET when they leave school. Between August 2014 and August 2015, 57% of young people arriving at Centrepont were NEET.¹⁸⁰
8. However, this certainly does not mean that these young people are not doing anything to prepare for education and employment. All new Centrepont residents receive a learning assessment with our in-house, specialist learning team in order to plan their

¹⁸⁰ Actual numbers were 594 young people who were NEET and 4444 young people who were in education, training or employment.

route into employment or further education. Crucially, this happens alongside support to address their other needs, many of which must be addressed before they can be ready to start work.

9. Our recent survey shows that of those Centrepont young people who do pursue further education, only 4% state that A Levels are their highest qualification and only 1% have obtained a degree. In comparison, 13% report that their highest qualification is a GNVQ/NVQ and for 19% their highest qualification is a BTEC. This suggests that many young people who do not do have A levels are still in some kind of further education or training.
10. Worryingly however, 54% of those who have obtained a BTEC are now NEET compared to 25% of those who have A Levels. When asked what makes it hard to get a job, 45% of our NEET young people say it is because they do not have the right qualifications, suggesting that alternative qualifications are still not as valued by employers as traditional academic ones.

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

11. In light of the challenges that disadvantaged young people face, as outlined in question one, they need a pathway into employment that offers a higher level of support and flexibility. The Centrepont young people who do not follow the A-Level route tend to access a number of different pathways, outlined in the appendix.
12. Whilst we strongly welcome the Government's commitment to expand the number of apprenticeships available, many of the young people Centrepont supports are not able to undertake apprenticeships at present as they lack both the entry requirements and the understanding of expectations in the workplace needed to immediately enter employment.
13. However, this does not mean that they would not be able to access these opportunities if they received the right support or were given the opportunity to prove their abilities. Our research shows that only 2% of our residents are undertaking an apprenticeship, yet 22% say they would consider doing one in the future, demonstrating a desire among this group to succeed in such placements. However, Government data show that the majority of the new apprenticeships created over the last parliament went to those aged over 25,¹⁸¹ and there is little information available about the other demographics and characteristics of apprentices. Centrepont is

¹⁸¹ House of Commons library (2015) Apprenticeship statistics: England. Briefing paper. Available online: <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06113#fullreport>

commissioning further research to better understand how far apprenticeships are accessible to disadvantaged young people.

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

14. There is much that could be done to improve the transition from school to work and employers do, alongside other key stakeholders, have a key role in this. Employers should build stronger links with young people in their local communities by holding sessions in schools and also holding open days for young people to help them find out more about the workplace. However, incentives must be put in place to encourage employers to offer placements to those young people who would require more support and training than other candidates.
15. Centrepoint works with a number of companies to offer placements to young people with higher support needs. A tailored package of support allows young people to engage positively and to complete the programme. We believe lessons can be learnt from this practice and there is scope for such partnerships to be extended. Where practical, intermediate labour market schemes should be broadened to allow young people to build their knowledge and experience positive environment, developing skills alongside time-served practitioners who can offer a first-hand insight into how to build a successful career.

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

16. Whilst employers and services working directly with young people have a key role to place, the government must co-ordinate the response to this need for an improved system. The government should open up Level 1 pathways to encourage more young people to actively engage in work-based learning that is appropriate to their needs. This could include the ability for young people to undertake more than one Level 1 qualification before they are expected to progress, allowing them the crucial space to trial different activities and look into different sectors to develop the confidence, resilience and competence to move into sustainable employment.
17. Since the abolition of the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA), fewer young people are eligible for the financial support necessary to make the transition from school to higher education. This raises concerns as to whether further education routes which are not A-Levels, such as BTECs, are financially viable for some young people.

18. In addition, some are discouraged from alternative routes into employment due to benefit rules and being told by their Jobcentre advisor that they cannot take part in other learning programmes, including many offered by voluntary sector providers, or they risk lose their benefits. The government should examine how the current system is being implemented on the ground to ensure that young people’s benefits are not affected if they undertake training programmes and volunteering opportunities that they identify themselves if they can show these will improve their long-term job prospects.
19. Many young people cite a lack of or poor information, advice and guidance as having hampered their ability to forge a meaningful and sustainable career. Despite the formation of the National Careers Service, the reduction in frontline careers advisers means that it is harder than ever to access good quality, tailored support to help navigate the complex learning, training and employment routes available to young people – a situation exacerbated by homelessness.
20. To enhance the service offered to young people, additional resources should be put into information, advice and guidance programmes. This should include transition mentors to support young people and employers and to increase the chances of vulnerable job entrants sustaining training and employment. An enhanced system should also include a focused peer information service, where young people who have progressed into sustainable employment and independent living from vulnerable or disadvantaged backgrounds become role models, adding practical advice to careers education to inspire and motivate those in most need of direction.
21. Centrepoin would be pleased to support the committee’s inquiry as it progresses through further written or oral submissions.

For further information please contact;
Abigail Gill, Policy and Research Officer

14 September 2015

ⁱ <http://www.the-lep.com/LEP/media/New/Research%20and%20publications/LCR-Skills-Plan-2013-15.pdf>

ⁱⁱ <http://www.the-lep.com/LEP/media/New/Research%20and%20publications/LEP-City-Deal-Apprenticeship-Programme.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <http://www.utcleeds.com/>

Pathway	Advantages	Disadvantages	Leads to
<p>An Advanced Apprenticeship is a period of training undertaken whilst working for an employer where they are also paid a salary. Generally, apprentices must have at least five GCSEs (grades A*-C) or equivalent; although there are some exceptions. If the young person has not got these grades, they may be eligible for an Intermediate Apprenticeship. The advanced apprenticeship pathway can lead to a Higher Apprenticeship or further study</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain qualifications and develop skills through on-the-job training, whilst also undertaking off-the-job training with a learning provider • There are many Advanced Apprenticeships available • Many companies retain apprentices after their apprenticeship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeships are not available for all career paths, and completing A-levels and attending university might be a more direct route for certain jobs • Highly competitive so hardly any homeless young people are successful in gaining a place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • A higher apprenticeship • Further study
<p>NVQ (National Vocational Qualification) is commonly referred to as a 'competence-based' qualification. An NVQ assessor measures an individual's performance when undertaking a particular process or task. Young people can do an NVQ as part of an apprenticeship, alongside a part-time job or at college whilst doing a part-time work placement. NVQs start out at Level 1 and go right up to Level 5. Level 3 is equivalent to A-levels and so offers an alternative pathway for those wishing to go on to higher education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combines achieving a qualification with work experience. Assessed on the job • It is a national qualification so tends to be recognised by most employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not suitable for those who want the most direct route to university or those looking for a more academic qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • An apprenticeship • Further education • Higher education

<p>BTECs are work-related qualifications. There are three main types: BTEC Firsts (a Level 2 qualification), BTEC Nationals (a Level 3 qualification) and BTEC Higher Nationals (a Level 5 qualification). BTEC Nationals are equivalent to A-levels, recommended for those who have achieved at least four A*-C grades at GCSE. Unlike A-levels, BTEC Nationals are assessed through coursework rather than exams and focus on skills that are relevant to the workplace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives you workplace relevant education and knowledge • There are over 250 qualifications to choose from covering a range of industries, meaning that there is a good range of choice for young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all universities accept BTECs so it is not ideal for those who want a more academic focus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment • An apprenticeship • School leaver programme • Further or higher education subject to level completed • HNC or HND
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Capp – Written evidence (SMO0069)

Response to: House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

[1] Our response to this question covers two elements. First, the nature of recruitment processes as the critical gateway through which young people must pass for entry into the workplace. Second, our observations on the impact of continual change in government policy and practice, together with how this impacts on young people's transition into work.

[2] One of the most obvious factors that influences the transition of young people from school to work is the nature of organisational recruitment processes. By definition and by design, these are the critical gateways that are designed to 'keep out' the people employers don't want to hire, and to 'bring through' the people employers do want to hire. As such, these recruitment processes are central to a young person's experience of transition from school to work, and specifically to which roles, with which organisations, they transition into.

[3] Capp has long argued that arbitrary screening criteria based on academic grades (such as a candidate being required to have 300 UCAS points or a 2.1 degree classification) are a zero cost (to the employer) but very ineffective way of screening candidates for roles. Further, these practices entrench barriers to social mobility, since candidates from less privileged backgrounds are less likely to have achieved these criteria, but nonetheless may be able to demonstrate the commitment, motivation and aptitude for which the employer is trying to recruit.

[4] We are delighted that this practice is now changing, with Nestlé removing academic screening criteria from their early careers recruitment process in October 2014 (see Appendix 1) and EY following suit in August 2015 (see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-33759238>). Both of these changes were made possible through Capp's work to use psychometric, behavioural, and aptitude testing, in place of arbitrary screening on the basis of academic criteria.

[5] The results of this change in process are also making a significant difference. As shown in Appendix 1, 21% of Nestlé's hires from the 2014-15 early careers recruitment process would not have met the previous academic screening criteria – and yet were still deemed to be the best-fit candidates for Nestlé, once they had been given the opportunity to progress through the recruitment process. As a result of this work, Nestlé won three of the seven available 2015 Association of Graduate Recruiters Awards for (1) Best School Leaver Strategy, (2) Best Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and (3) The Best of the Best Award, providing industry recognition for these achievements.

[6] Specifically cited within these AGR award commendations was Nestlé's adoption of Decline to Jobmi (see www.capp.co/decline-to-jobmi), an initiative of Capp whereby we are

inviting all employers to recommend their declined candidates to Jobmi, the job matching place (see www.jobmi.com).

[7] Candidates who are declined to Jobmi (or any other people who wish to sign up to Jobmi – free of charge) are able to complete online assessments to learn more about themselves and the jobs that would suit them, to take practice assessments to improve their performance in recruitment processes, and to take online assessments that allow them to be matched to specific jobs and vacancies with other employers.

[8] In this way, employers using Decline to Jobmi are providing their declined candidates with access to other opportunities to find their best job match, to learn more about and develop themselves, and to improve their job opportunities as a result. This is all at no cost to the declining employer, and no cost to the candidate, with both parties achieving significant value through enabling second chances and promoting social mobility as a result.

[9] Further, we note that both EY and Nestlé have, like many other large employers, moved to using strengths-based recruitment as a way of ensuring that they attract the best people who are a fit to their role and culture, while at the same time enabling greater social mobility.

[10] Strengths-based recruitment enables greater social mobility through its inherent design. Strengths-based recruitment is focused on the strengths a person has (what they do well and love to do), as distinct from more traditional competency-based recruitment, which is more focused on a person's ability to give examples of what they have done previously. By definition, young people with greater social capital have had wider previous experiences from which they can draw, whereas people from less privileged backgrounds have fewer of this richer, extra-curricular experiences from which they can draw to answer competency-based interview questions.

[11] The unwitting effect of competency-based interviewing in this context is to create barriers to social mobility, by virtue of expecting candidates to have had prior experience of the topics that are being discussed. In contrast, strengths-based interviews overcome this limitation and so have been shown to increase social mobility and fairness of selection processes. This was recognised in the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission Report, 'Downward Mobility, Opportunity Hoarding and the 'Glass Floor'' (see https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447575/Downward_mobility_opportunity_hoarding_and_the_glass_floor.pdf), which recommended the adoption of strengths-based interviewing to overcome these inherent barriers to social mobility.

[12] Even in making these changes, we can only be confident that they are having an effect if we become much better at our measurement of social mobility. To this end, Capp has developed a Social Mobility Distance Travelled algorithm, designed to measure 'how you have done in your life, relative to where you started from'. This measurement is currently being used in 2015-16 recruitment campaigns by EY and Nestlé amongst other clients. The social mobility data collection here comprises c. 22 questions which cover a person's family, social and educational background. Taken together, these data points, together with data

which is integrated from other publicly available sources (e.g., OFSTED, DfE, POLAR) allows us to develop a rich picture of a person's social mobility, with minimal input from the individual – the questions take c. 3-4 minutes to complete, and we have very high completion rates from current campaigns (98%+), which evidences that candidates are willing to share this data for the right reasons.

[13] Current measurement of social mobility in recruitment in most instances includes measurement of type of school attended, first to go to university, and receipt of free school meals or income support. Many employers, however, don't even collect this data. If government can offer more 'carrots' for the effective measurement and monitoring of social mobility (e.g., participation in public sector projects, awards, etc.), this will help to catalyse a step change in measuring social mobility, which then allows more targeted interventions to enhance social mobility, once the nature of the problem is better understood.

[14] We submit that by addressing the critical gateway of the recruitment process through (a) the removal of arbitrary academic screening criteria, and the use of psychometric, behavioural and aptitude testing, (b) the use of Decline to Jobmi for all declined candidates, (c) the use of recruitment methodologies, such as strengths-based recruitment, that enhance, rather than reduce social mobility by virtue of their inherent design, and (d) the more effective measurement of social mobility in recruitment, together serve to enhance significantly the opportunities for, and social mobility of, young people by levelling the playing field as they transition from school into the work place.

[15] In relation to government policy, we submit that previous government and current government policy does not encourage school leavers and employers to enjoy or experience a well thought-through, joined-up transition when they leave education and enter the world of work.

[16] Year after year the constant meddling and undermining of qualifications leaves employers lacking the confidence in what qualifications mean to them and the relevance to their business. Research report after research report keeps highlighting the gaps that employers still see in young people entering the work place, these mainly being soft skills, problem solving and reliance. How ever much you try to bring the employer and the school leaver together there are so many obstacles in the way that the chances of success do seem to favour only a proportion of those school leavers.

[17] With the constant change in education and the undermining of qualifications, employers do not really trust what a qualification tells them about the young person that they want to employ. As a result, too many young people go to job market confident that their 'bag of tools' equips them perfectly for the jobs they want to go in to, only to find that their tool bag is not filled with what employers are looking for.

[18] Parents put all of their trust in to the schools and education system that supports their children and think that what they are doing is relevant to support them in to the transition of employment and finding a job. Sadly, this is not the case.

[19] Expectations of employers are significantly out of sync with what education is producing. This is perhaps only to be expected, given the different paces of change at which each operates. Employers – especially in the private sector – have to operate at the pace of the market in which they operate if they are not to go out of business. This leads to rapidly changing requirements as the employer responds to the needs of customers and the markets in which it is operating. In contrast, the pace of change in education is glacially slow by comparison.

[20] Having worked creating a Higher Apprenticeship role that took in nearly 400 people over the last 3.5 years in my previous role, I (Rebecca Plant) was in a business that had to go round the same hamster wheel year after year. Try and engage with education, try to understand what qualifications mean, try to fit the young people in to employment and in to the roles you have, which when you write it down in black and white, should be easy.

[21] Instead you found yourself building your own bridge from education to employment. In practice, this meant starting all over again with a business education that would stand a young person in good stead with transferable skills to set them up for their working careers. It is for these reasons that Capp has developed the Rapid Skills Academy, an 8-week residential training and development programme that is designed to get young people ‘work ready’ and able to transition quickly and effectively into the work place.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A- Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

[22] At Capp we can only speak of experience within this group of young people and so our evidence is based on observations and real life delivery when engaging with this group of people.

[23] The group of young people who fall in to this category is increasing. They typically have done ‘OK’ within the education system, but not good enough to go on to higher skill level apprenticeships or would not even know about what the value of apprenticeships are. Typically level 3 apprenticeships in this space can be low paid, offer very little growth and learning to move through the apprenticeship system and so can get stuck in a pattern. You only see young people break this cycle if they have certain qualities like grit, determination, resilience and a strong family support network that will support them as they break down the barriers that are in the way. They have to typically do this all by themselves and navigate the system. As there is not a strong vocational route with any value attached to the route they take in education we expect them all to go through a one size fits all system that we expect produces work ready young people.

[24] The problem that will now make the system even murkier is the introduction of the new Tech Levels. This group will yet again be disadvantaged as another qualification that is meant to be employer endorsed, but in reality will not be, will be launched to this group of young people as the key to bringing them closer to the world of work and work ready. In reality they will be the guinea pigs for another qualification and employers will not understand its worth.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

[25] How any young person from this group navigates their way in to work from education is a miracle. The options available to them are limited and they are almost written off and only become worth something if a college or an FE institute can put a monetary value on them doing an apprenticeship or vocational course at college. How this group decide at this age what route they should follow is down to potluck and it could be that employers are very hesitant to employ a straight out of school 16 year old, as they are not work ready. Education does create an environment of developing work ready skills and plugging the young people in to what is happening in the world of work and what employers want.

[26] Year after year employers moan about the growing skills gaps in the market place, but yet when you analyse apprentice starts data the top apprentice routes you get Business Administration and Health Care. Way down the list is engineering and IT for example. Both of these routes are at the heart of the skills gaps that our country is experiencing at the moment.

[27] Yet again we come back to clarity and the simplification of what is on offer to a young person in education. If there were solid foundations is the system a young person entering the world of work would be able to adapt and have transferable skills that would be the standard that employers would then be able to easily transfer the young person in to work.

Question 4

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

[28] The most significant improvement to the transition to work for young people would not be rushing to make yet more changes. We would need to really understand when it is important to make decisions about work and work choices and the tools that are available to do this. It would interesting to understand what technology could offer in this space to help guide and help a young person create a career strategy. If we can get young people thinking about the world of work and the attributes needed while in the education system, it would allow the coming together of employers and young people in a more productive, smoother way. Employers would then find it easier to be confident of the quality of and the pathway and transitions to work well understood.

[29] Work placements in the way we used to regard them have gone. Employers find it hard to take young people for weeks at a time, but now find it easier to run taster days and short work interventions. Creating closer links between education and employers is the ultimate outcome, but getting there again demands that we simplify the system and get education and employers to talk the same language.

[30] Creating ecosystems of large employers in communities supporting their ecosystems is of course what should be happening, but again how can you do this when no one is talking the same language.

[31] At Capp our experience is that of hearing the same conversations and sentiments on changing access routes and the challenge that employers have in engaging schools for the last 4 years shows that everything we have done to date has not worked and the ultimate starting place to make a change is review what we have, learn from what employers are doing and what the users of the system actually want. At the heart of making any changes is understanding what the user wants and so far we don't get to hear their voice all that often.

Question 5:

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition in to work for school leavers?

[32] If you look at today's fragmented, unclear and frankly messy approach to advice and transition, there are a few bodies that stand out that make a difference, but there is now a landscaped filled with too much information and so the young person and parent would not know where to start. When, as employer you try to reach out to young people it's pot luck. As an employer, for example, if you have a £250K attraction for schools engagement and marketing your roles to young people, you can pretty much be playing roulette with your money with little way of tracking success and ROI.

[33] The government should sit at the heart of the governance and improvement. It owns too many pieces of the jigsaw for it to hand it all over to someone else. Handing over of any part of the system should be carefully managed and governed. The government should be using the job centre more than they currently do and change its image. Surely a government body that has the presence and reach that the Job Centre has should be exploiting it. By doing this you also simply the number of agencies involved. Would it be impossible to suggest that the Job Centre takes on a more commercial role and acts as the meeting place of employers and young people? The Job Centre under DWP could act as the go-between to the LEPs and other local agencies to provide the regional cover and 'arms' to spread out across the country.

[34] Something has to be done to simplify. The complexity and red tape make it all too hard at the moment to create a robust, factual, careers advice network. We have to stop and take a step back and understand the landscape that has been created since careers advice was taken out of schools. It would be totally irresponsible to start yet another round of changes until we are able to clearly explain why previous changes haven't worked and explain why the new changes are going to work. We need:

1. Government acting as the governance and reporting body
2. Simplification of the education system and long term commitments to the qualifications taught
3. The value of qualifications to be clear and well set out to employers

4. The Job Centre becoming the conduit of careers advice and the link between education and work (as it is in Germany)
5. Deliver work ready skills outside of the classroom that every employer recognises and holds in high esteem.

Appendix 1: Article in press in *Strategic HR Review* (October 2015)

Best Practices for Finding Hidden Talent and Empowering Social Mobility

Dr. Alex Linley, CEO, Capp

Purpose: Early career recruiters are increasingly focused on finding hidden talent and empowering social mobility, while also managing the reality of large recruitment volumes. A new approach to early careers recruitment solved both of these conflicting challenges.

Approach: Using a combination of assessment insights, data analytics and strengths-based recruitment, the Nestlé early careers recruitment process was redesigned. Jobmi mindset assessments, the Capp Situational Strengths Test, and the Capp Numerical Reasoning Test were used as online assessments, followed by a strengths-based video interview and strengths-based assessment centres.

Findings: Nestlé identified and hired candidates of whom 21% would not have met the previous screening criteria, demonstrating how the new recruitment approach found hidden talent.

Practical implications: Making decisions from assessment insights and data analytics shows that it is possible for volume recruiters to manage, enhance and improve their recruitment processes without need for recourse to arbitrary screening criteria to manage volumes.

Social implications: Finding hidden talent and empowering social mobility widens opportunity for all people, particularly those from diverse backgrounds. It allows the identification and recruitment of people who demonstrate grit, resolve and tenacity, who might otherwise have been excluded by arbitrary recruitment barriers.

Originality/value: The article concludes with five best practice recommendations for finding hidden talent and promoting social mobility: (1) do not use arbitrary screening criteria; (2) make decisions from assessment insights and data analytics; (3) guard against adverse impact; (4) measure for future potential, not just past experience; and (5) give candidates second chances by being part of a job-matching marketplace.

Key words: Social mobility, strengths-based recruitment, hidden talent.

Finding hidden talent and empowering social mobility are hot topics for organisations – and rightly so. For far too long, archaic student recruitment processes have excluded people who didn't meet the organisation's arbitrary selection criteria, simply as a way of managing recruitment volumes. This isn't fair on candidates, it excludes talent from organisations, and

it suffocates social progress. These are three big reasons why we have to find a better way. This is what my colleagues and I at Capp and Jobmi have been working to do. Social mobility is where your background doesn't define your future opportunities - you do. Yet with almost every student recruitment process today, the background you come from has a powerful bearing on whether you will meet the arbitrary selection criteria that are put in place to manage the organisation's application volumes.

I say 'arbitrary' deliberately, since all too often, these criteria have no meaningful association or predictive validity with future performance – they're just used to exclude some people and include others. Of course, excluding some people and including others is the nature of any recruitment process. Even so, the recruitment process should only be doing so on the basis of what matters for performance in role – *not* on the basis of how your accident of birth and early life circumstances have played out for you.

Whether you have the requisite number of GCSEs or UCAS points, the required minimum of a 2:1 degree, or whether you went to the 'right' school or the 'right' university, has little or nothing to do with how you then go on to perform at work. Whether you include the right buzzwords in your application form, or whether you happen to be from one of the social groups (essentially, that you're a white male) that isn't subjected to adverse impact through outdated ability tests, again predicts little or nothing of how you will then go on to perform in the work you do.

Indeed, the tragedy is that these arbitrary screening criteria too often miss who you are and what you can bring to an organisation. As a result, organisations miss out on talent, and people miss out on opportunities. We all lose out as a result. This is one reason why government and business are now working together to deliver change.

The Social Mobility Business Compact was established under the auspices of the Deputy Prime Minister to engage businesses in widening access to opportunity, with a particular focus on changing recruitment practices. The Compact ensures social mobility is squarely on the business agenda through measurement and accountability, using the carrots of recognition and appreciation, rather than the sticks of intervention and quotas. Twelve Social Mobility Business Champions and more than 150 signatories (including Capp) demonstrate that momentum is building.

Businesses supporting social mobility typically do so for three reasons. First and foremost, because they see it as a clear and present opportunity to find hidden talent. As the war for talent intensifies again, and as businesses focus more on finding people with work ethic, resilience and tenacity, they are finding that their current approaches aren't enough.

Second, because they want to ensure that their employee make-up is representative of the make-up of their consumers. This ensures they are better at keeping their 'finger on the pulse' of what is happening with their consumers, being ready to adapt to changing consumer trends as they occur.

Third, because they see it, simply, as being 'the right thing to do'. Organisations have made huge progress in embracing and celebrating the sexual diversity of their workforces. Yet, not enough progress has yet been made in relation to embracing and celebrating the *social*

diversity of their workforces. Organisations should enable and empower their people to be proud to show how far they have travelled in the social distance of their lives, starting from less than auspicious backgrounds, yet going on to achieve great things.

This tells us much about what we need to know as to why promoting social mobility can help us in finding hidden talent. So many organisations want to recruit people who have drive, resilience and work ethic, yet these very people can be excluded at the first stage of any student recruitment process.

If I strived enormously and graduated with a 2:2, despite coming from a deeply challenging background, I have already achieved much, demonstrating my drive, resilience and work ethic along the way. Yet an organisational process can't, or won't, recognise this, since my 2:2 excludes me from further consideration. And so I never get the chance to show the organisation what I can do.

This is neatly borne out by Capp research. We ran a survey of over 700 working adults, exploring the strengths that were associated with social mobility and improving social progress through a person's life. The four strengths most strongly associated with social mobility were Catalyst (being able to motivate and inspire others to get things done), Change Agent (advocating for and implementing change), Drive (having the motivation to push oneself on to succeed), and Resilience (being able to recover quickly from setbacks and disappointments). This paints a clear picture of people who have grit, tenacity and resolve – just the characteristics for which many organisations are now looking to recruit.

Nestlé saw this opportunity – and delivered the results. Working with Capp and Jobmi, Nestlé redefined their assessment process to deliver wider access to opportunity and to find hidden talent. They removed the requirement for a certain number of UCAS points, and the need for a specific university degree or degree class, for all roles where the degree was not a critical prerequisite for professional entry.

Nestlé replaced their former screening criteria with assessments through Jobmi, designed to identify candidates with the right mindset, character and attitude to enable them to succeed in their role at Nestlé. Using Jobmi mindset assessments, the Capp Situational Strengths Test, and the Capp Numerical Reasoning Test, Nestlé were able to use assessment insights and data analytics to find hidden talent and recruit the best people, as distinct from depending on arbitrary screening to manage their candidate volumes.

The platform Nestlé used to do this, Jobmi (www.jobmi.com), is the online job-matching marketplace that connects candidates and employers. The job match is made on the basis of strengths and other behavioural and psychometric assessments, all delivered online and open access to the candidate. Jobmi helps candidates to improve their work readiness through completing development and practice assessments, and then to apply for roles directly through the online application system.

Jobmi has social mobility hard-coded into its DNA, by virtue of three things. First, the assessment insights and data analytics drive a model that is premised on a person's match to the role, rather than their previous background. Second, the job-matching marketplace provides candidates with multiple second opportunities, if they don't find quite the right

match the first time round. Third, social mobility is assessed as a core part of Jobmi's equal opportunities monitoring, using a unique proprietary algorithm that calculates a person's social mobility distance travelled.

Crucially for Nestlé, all of these assessments that they used in Jobmi are designed to measure a candidate's match to the organisation and future potential for performance in the role. The Jobmi mindset assessments measure the mindset and attitude of a candidate, relative to what is needed in the role.

The Situational Strengths Test measures the core strengths needed to succeed in the role. It also gives a realistic job preview, allowing candidate to feel for themselves their match to the organisation.

The Capp Numerical Reasoning Test (NRT) was specifically developed to overcome the limitations and adverse impact of other ability tests, with a focus on improving social mobility through finding hidden talent. The Capp NRT is time-measured, rather than time-limited, meaning that candidates can take as long as they need to complete the test, rather than performing against a ticking countdown clock. The test assesses numerical ability on the basis of accuracy (right answer) and efficiency (time taken), thereby providing a more realistic preview of how a candidate is likely to perform in the real world. Critically, the Capp NRT shows no adverse impact across gender, ethnicity or social mobility.

Following from these online assessments, candidates then progressed to a strengths-based interview (delivered using video interview technology), and then to a final stage assessment through a strengths-based assessment centre.

Strengths-based recruitment delivers a focus on the identification of future potential, rather than relying on past experience alone. It is focused on identifying the strengths that a person has in relation to the requirements of the role, and thereby judging them on their strengths match relative to that role.

Strengths are assessed in relation to both performance and energy, so that candidates are recruited not just for what they *can* do (performance), but also for what they *love* to do (energy and motivation). It is this combination of capability and motivation that delivers business results, as well as being hallmarks of future potential.

Of equal importance, strengths-based recruitment also enables and promotes social mobility at its core, since it is proven to have no adverse impact across gender, ethnicity or social mobility. More to the point, it also delivers significant increases in candidate pipelines and conversions against these criteria. For example, Barclays were awarded the 2014 Race for Opportunity Recruiting Diverse Talent Award for increasing the number of their BME interns by 100% using strengths-based recruitment. Microsoft were recognised with the FIRM Award for Best Candidate Experience 2014, in recognition of their achievement of gender parity at assessment centre through using strengths-based recruitment, notwithstanding significant gender imbalance at the application stage.

Nestlé used Jobmi.com and strengths-based recruitment to make these changes to their early careers recruitment process (for graduates, school leavers, and apprentices), discovering hidden talent as a result. They found that 21% of the people they hired would

not have passed screening under their old recruitment model and so would have been lost to them. From the perspective of social mobility, that's 21% of Nestlé's new hire population who now have opportunity in their life, rather than being locked out of opportunity through the arbitrary nature of student recruitment volume screening.

Further, through using Jobmi to find hidden talent and empower social mobility, Nestlé also enhanced their employer brand. Fully 94% of candidates thought that Nestlé sent a positive social message by using Jobmi, while 82% of candidates found it motivating that, if they weren't the right match for Nestlé, Jobmi gave them other opportunities through its job-matching marketplace. These results were recognised by the industry, with Nestlé winning The Recruiter Award for Best Early Career Strategy 2014.

Finding hidden talent and empowering social mobility are increasingly at the top of the agenda for every early career recruiter. The Nestlé experience shows what is possible through harnessing assessment insights, data analytics, and the power of an online job-matching marketplace.

This leads to five recommendations for best practice in finding hidden talent and empowering social mobility:

1. Do not use arbitrary screening criteria, such as university or school attended, number of GCSEs or UCAS points, or degree classification achieved – *unless* these are clearly shown to be predictive of future performance. Almost always, they are not.
2. Instead, make decisions from assessment insights and data analytics. With everything we can now do through technology and assessment innovation, it is not only entirely possible, but should be expected, that we know a lot more, a lot faster, and a lot more effectively, about any candidate being considered.
3. Guard against adverse impact in assessments, ensuring that whatever approaches you use are fair and balanced across gender, ethnicity and social background. Don't accept the shallow excuse that 'There's always adverse impact, it's just the nature of these assessments'. It isn't. There is a different and better way. You should be using it.
4. Measure for future potential, rather than relying on past experience alone. Strengths-based recruitment assesses performance and energy, finding people who not only *can* do the job, but who *love* to do the job. In this way, you're also identifying future potential through the measurement of capability and motivation.
5. Give candidates second chances by being part of a job-matching marketplace that matches them to other opportunities, if they're not a match for your organisation. Candidates will thank you for it, and your employer brand will be enhanced as a result.

14 September 2015

Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (Inclusion) and National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) - Written evidence (SMO0076)

[Submission to be found under National Institute of Adult Continuing Education \(NIACE\)](#)

The Challenge – Written evidence (SMO0098)

Submission of evidence to the Select Committee on Social Mobility

14 September 2015

Introduction

1. As the UK's leading charity for building a more integrated society we welcome the opportunity to make a submission to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility. We work on a local level to bring together people from all ages, ethnicities and walks of life – connecting communities and building trust.
2. We run programmes which explicitly aim to bring together young people from different backgrounds. The evidence in this submission is drawn from our experience of running Step Forward – a vocational education programme for school leavers. In order to design and evaluate Step Forward, The Challenge has conducted a number of research projects exploring young peoples' views on the options available to them upon leaving school, and it is in large part the resulting insights that inform this submission.
3. More information on the work of The Challenge and Step Forward, as well as our other programmes, are contained in the annex to this submission.
4. We would welcome the opportunity to give oral evidence to the Select Committee. We would also be delighted to facilitate a conversation between the Committee and past and present Step Forward Associates, who would be able to provide a first-hand account of the programme and of the challenges involved in the transition from school to work.

Question one: What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace?

5. With more than 4.9 million businesses in the UK and almost 9,000 secondary schools and colleges, it is extremely challenging for academic institutions and employers (the overwhelmingly majority of which are SMEs with little capacity to spare) to communicate effectively about the employment opportunities on offer to young people. In the absence of a UCAS-style direct channel linking schools and employers, and facilitating the takeup of traineeships and apprenticeships by young people, instances of miscommunication and information gaps are prevalent. This leaves schools with little choice but to guide pupils towards higher education, and produces a system which fails the considerable numbers of young people who could otherwise benefit from vocational education programmes.
6. This problem is compounded by a lack of investment in and creative thinking around careers advice, which results in teachers (many of whom have only ever worked as teachers) offering advice of limited use to young people attempting to navigate the modern jobs market. Government-funded solutions such as the National Apprenticeship Service, moreover, may make young people aware of the sheer number of vocational training schemes on offer, but fail to deliver the intensive,

relational approach which is required to successfully support school leavers into work on a sustainable basis.

Question two: There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

7. For decades, successive governments have been active in their promotion of university as the best path towards a prosperous career. In recent years, Ministers have begun to speak of achieving parity in prestige between academic and vocational learning, but the message doesn't seem to be reaching young people. Only one in twenty¹⁸² young people join apprenticeship schemes upon leaving school, whilst focus group research carried out by The Challenge¹⁸³ indicates that these programmes continue to conjure up images of low-skilled manufacturing jobs which hold little appeal for school leavers in the twenty-first century.
8. Indeed, our focus group research indicates that apprenticeship and vocational training schemes suffer from a branding problem, and are viewed by young people as old-fashioned and non-aspirational (it should be noted that this is not the case when it comes to schemes delivered by large, well-established employers with strong brands, such as Rolls Royce; but 99 percent of businesses in the UK are SMEs¹⁸⁴.)
9. In an online survey of 699 young people aged 16-18 carried out by The Challenge in 2013, only four percent identified completing an apprenticeship as their first choice for what to do next. Meanwhile, apprenticeships are popular with parents – just not for their own children! A Demos study¹⁸⁵ published last year found that 92 percent of parents believe that apprenticeships are a good option for school leavers in general, but that only 32 percent would recommend undertaking an apprenticeship to their own child.
10. Our focus group research additionally indicates that young people fear that participating in an apprenticeship or vocational training scheme will lead to their being pigeon-holed in specific industries or roles, and so limit their future career prospects. Whilst many of the school leavers who don't go onto Higher Education are eager to try new and different things, these programmes are perceived as narrowing rather than expanding young people's options. This problem is compounded by the fact that the average apprenticeship currently lasts longer than one year, which our research indicates can seem a daunting commitment to school leavers.

¹⁸² Demos (2014), 'The Commission on Apprenticeships', available at: <http://www.demos.co.uk/projects/apprenticeships>

¹⁸³ In 2013, The Challenge conducted 4 focus groups with young people aged 15-18 at the Sydney Russell Academy in Dagenham and City of London Academy in Southwark.

¹⁸⁴ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2012), 'Making Apprenticeships More Accessible to SMEs: A Review by Jason Holt', available at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34731/12-891-making-apprenticeships-more-accessible-to-smes-holt-review.pdf

¹⁸⁵ Demos (2014), 'The Commission on Apprenticeships', available at: <http://www.demos.co.uk/projects/apprenticeships>

11. Unlike in Germany, furthermore, where the *mittelstand* economic model promises secure futures for young employees within specific industries, research indicates that young people in the UK will move between several types of role and sectors in a highly fluid jobs market throughout the course of their career¹⁸⁶. The Challenge would therefore suggest that school leavers are right to worry that vocational training schemes will not supply them with the transferable skills required to succeed in the new economy.

Question three: Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not?

12. Over the last ten years, the number of total apprenticeships in the UK has grown by over 300 percent, but the number being taken up by school leavers has grown by only 6 percent¹⁸⁷. It's clear that the current transition system does not provide enough support to the young people in this category who could be filling these roles. Largely online solutions such as the National Apprenticeship Service rely too much on young people actively seeking out suitable employment opportunities; offering too little personalised support in navigating the often bewildering process of finding and applying for your first training scheme of full-time job.
13. It is imperative that training providers should seek to directly engage with young people before they leave compulsory education – whilst still in school, teenagers can be reached en masse and actively encouraged to plan for their futures. Unfortunately, the current 'payment-upon-placement' financial structure of vocational training – whereby providers are paid from the day on which the trainee begins their programme – incentivises training providers to recruit candidates who are in work or who have recently been made unemployed, and who can begin traineeships in the immediate term. They have no incentive to target young people still in education.

Question four: How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

14. As noted above, the communications gap between schools and employers requires urgent attention. Through our range of programmes for young people, The Challenge has successfully developed relationships with a strong network of schools – enjoying a working relationship with 90 percent of the schools in the areas in which we deliver. We would posit that our Step Forward model has succeeded in appealing to young people (in 2014, we received 400 applications for 48 places on the programme) as it functions not as a mere brokerage scheme but as a fully integrated

¹⁸⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/11236279/Young-workers-how-many-jobs-have-you-had.html>

¹⁸⁷ Demos (2014), 'The Commission on Apprenticeships', available at: <http://www.demos.co.uk/projects/apprenticeships>

school-to-work pathway – providing support and guidance to young people at each step in the process.

15. The model has, in addition, proved particularly effective in encouraging SMEs in London to employ school leavers – over 80 percent of employers of Step Forward Associates fall into this category. We find that the programme appeals to these businesses due to its relatively short length, lack of bureaucracy and limited demands on employers' time; as well as the benefits to employers which result from Associates participating in transferable skills and professional development training in addition to training in their chosen field.
16. A focus on encouraging employers to take on apprenticeships and trainees must, however, be coupled with strategies to make vocational education appeal to young people. Marketing is key in accomplishing this. In Step Forward, The Challenge has developed a unique and market-tested brand – in the online survey referred to above, 28 percent of young people said that a version of the programme would be their first choice for what to do upon leaving school if the option were available to them, compared to two percent who said they would opt to complete an apprenticeship. (Step Forward is purposefully not described as an apprenticeship, but rather as *'a one-year programme which enables young people to build networks by connecting them directly with employers and equips school leavers with the skills they need to make smart decisions.'*) Our focus group research indicates that the emphasis placed on instilling transferable professional skills in participants is also an important element of what makes the programme an attractive choice for school leavers.
17. Wherever possible, vocational education schemes should be structured so as to appeal to young people. Step Forward Associates complete the programme in university-style cohorts, and the programme is planned so as to align with the academic year – this eases the transition from school to employment by rendering the experience less alien to school leavers.

Question five: Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

18. The Challenge believes that Step Forward evidences that there is a valuable role for third sector organisations in facilitating and managing the transition from education to work. In comparison to private sector training providers, not-for-profit organisations are less likely to respond to the significant financial disincentives from directing their attention towards school leavers discussed in our response to question three.
19. We would point to the Service Year platform currently being developed by organisations including City Year and vInspired as an example of a third sector programme with the potential to radically improve many young people's experience of the school-to-work transition. Through completing a government-recognised year of meaningful full-time service with a charity or community partner, whilst receiving

mentoring and careers advice from businesses and personal and professional training from registered providers, school leavers could develop new skills, interests and insights which would enable a strong start to their working lives.

Annex

About The Challenge

20. The Challenge is a registered charity which works on a local level to bring together people from all ages, ethnicities and walks of life – fostering social integration, connecting communities and building trust. In aid of this mission, we deliver work readiness training and character development programmes to young people from different backgrounds across the UK. By focusing on gaps in the youth employment and training market, we aim to equip 15-19 year olds with the necessary skills to compete in the job market and contribute to their communities.
21. Programmes provided by The Challenge include the government-backed National Citizen Service, which we deliver in seven of eighteen regions; HeadStart, which rewards young people who complete a minimum number of volunteering hours in their local communities with interviews for part-time jobs with businesses including Starbucks, New Look and Lloyds Banking Group; and Step Forward – a vocational education programme which is the focus of this submission.

About Step Forward

22. Step Forward brings together new school leavers ('Associates') from diverse backgrounds, providing them with one year's professional work experience, classroom-based professional development training and the chance to build a professional and peer network across sectors including accounting, digital marketing and childcare. In addition to working towards a qualification in their chosen area of work, Step Forward associates are placed in purposefully mixed teams of 15-16 Associates from across all training pathways in order to study transferable professional skills such as project planning and public speaking. This additionally enables the young people to gain insights from one another about the industries they are working in – allowing them to make informed career decisions upon completion of the programme.
23. Step Forward Associates' annual salaries are approximately £3,000 higher than the national minimum wage for apprenticeships. These are paid for by their employers, whilst training and administration costs associated with the programme are funded through the government's apprenticeship funding programme (the amount received varies by course, but is on average £6,000 to 7,000,) and a modest employer fee of £3,000.
24. In 2015, 150 young people will take in the programme. At present, Step Forward is delivered in London only, but The Challenge aims to expand the programme to new

regions in the near future. We believe that our experience of designing and delivering this programme has provided us with a developed understanding of facilitating successful school-to-employment transitions.

14 September 2015

City Year UK – Written evidence (SMO0079)

City Year UK response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility - the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds

Introduction

1. City Year UK welcomes the House of Lords Select Committee's inquiry regarding social mobility in the transition from school to work. We would be delighted to provide further written and or oral evidence if required.
2. Social mobility is still a significant problem in British society. There are whole groups of people in Britain whose circumstances of birth and upbringing would condemn them to a worse standard of living than others, if nothing was done. City Year UK aims to change that.
3. City Year brings together young people aged 18-25 from all kinds of backgrounds to volunteer full-time during a 'year of service', to support children in some of our most disadvantaged communities. Our young people help children in the schools where we operate on a voluntary basis for a year, to develop academically and to build character and resilience by acting as tutors, mentors and role models.
4. City Year has been active in the UK since 2010 and over the past five years over 500 young people have provided 800,000 volunteer hours in schools across London, Birmingham and Greater Manchester. The results speak for themselves, with eight Ofsted reports praising the work that our young people do, educational attainment improving in the schools in which we work and Head Teachers choosing to spend some of their school budget on a team of City Year volunteers.
5. But we don't judge our success simply on the powerful impact that our team of volunteers have on children's achievement in school. We also judge ourselves on the impact that the 'year of service' has on our own volunteers. In addition to the time our young people spend acting as near-peer tutors, mentors and role models in schools, they also spend every Friday benefiting from a compelling training offer provided by our partnership with businesses, such as Credit Suisse and National Grid. This allows firms to support our young people through talks, structured sessions, networking events and work experience. As a result, 92% of our former volunteers go on to education, employment or training following their 'year of service'.
6. City Year UK sets out to tackle the lack of social mobility amongst children from disadvantaged backgrounds through the delivery of whole-school supports for academic behaviours, and school-mandated interventions for academic progress for targeted pupils. These interventions are delivered by young people uniquely well-placed to reach children with unhappy, uninterested or unconstructive behaviours by exhibiting in themselves positive characteristics of ambition, professionalism and social responsibility.

Executive summary

7. City Year UK provides answers to four of the five questions posed by the inquiry:
 - *Question 1:* We observe that social mobility is still a major issue in British society. We

believe a significant cause of social immobility and poor employment outcomes is attached to a lack of knowledge of potential career options and little real-life work experience. We call on the government to formally recognise a 'service year' as a means to improve social mobility and employability for young people.

- *Question 3:* The current system places an overwhelming emphasis on qualifications rather than experience and the acquisition of practical work skills. For these reasons we believe that the current system for transitioning young people from school to work is inadequate. We call on the government to formally recognise a service year in order to address the challenges young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace.
- *Question 4:* We question the current assumption that employers and young people both want an early start on a clearly identified and demarcated career path that comes with a qualification. We believe the emphasis on pushing young people into making decision on a career path too early has negative consequences for themselves and employers. We strongly believe that a service year can be beneficial for young people in shaping their views on their employment future and equipping them with the skills necessary to succeed and be passionate about their chosen path.
- *Question 5:* Responsibility for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers must be shared by everyone in society. We state how the government, third sector, school and universities, businesses and young people can become part of the solution.

Question 1: What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace?

8. Britain is one of the least socially mobile developed countries in the world. Here, more than almost anywhere else in the developed world, children do better or worse at school not because of how clever they are but because of how much money their parents earn or the area they live in. Young adults entering work are more likely to mimic their parents' careers and social status than strike out on their own path, fulfilling their own potential and achieving their own idea of success and happiness.

9. For those young people who are growing up in households where no one works, where the adults' levels of education are low, and where it is hard to pick up the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours that more fortunate children take for granted, poverty and underachievement become entrenched, from generation to generation.

10. For example:

- A report from The Sutton Trust, 'The Reading Gap', shows that high-achieving boys from the most advantaged backgrounds in England are roughly two-and-a-half years ahead of their counterparts in the least-advantaged households by the age of 15.
- Academic attainment by disadvantaged children is appallingly low. In 2012/13, only 38% of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieved five or more GCSEs at grade A* to C or equivalent, including English and mathematics, compared with 65% of those not eligible for free school meals.
- According to UCAS, young people who are on free school meals are only half as likely to apply for university as the rest of their cohort.

11. City Year UK believes that where there is demand for labour but work is not applied for by, or offered to, unemployed young people already living in the UK, there are two primary factors that outweigh even underlying causes like the lack of formal qualifications.

12. First, 16 year old school leavers rarely know what career path they wish to pursue, or even what options are open to them. This often leads to a lack of purpose and motivation for this cohort of school leavers regarding their attitude to the profession or qualification they choose. Without a sense of drive to pursue a specific path, it is likely these young people will lack the necessary motivation needed in order to succeed and go on to exhibit low levels of performance.

13. Second, even if motivation is there, the fact that much cognitive development still remains to be done at age 16 (indeed, right up to 25) means that the maturity and transferable workplace skills that employers really seek are hard to come by. All too often people aged between 14-25 have not experienced full-time work experience and are unfamiliar with its demands and realities.

14. We strongly believe that only by offering young people meaningful, empowering, challenging and broad coming-of-age experiences, pursued on their own terms, that are an analogue to A Levels and university, will we see an increase in the employability of young people as they transition from school to work.

15. For this reason City Year UK is passionate about promoting the concept of a 'service year' for all young people. City Year offers a full-time structured 'service year' opportunity for young people aged 18–25 to volunteer in schools in inner city areas in London, Birmingham and Greater Manchester.

16. We define a service year as a young person volunteering on a full-time social action project for year. While City Year UK works exclusively within the education sector, we believe that service years can benefit a number of different areas of society such as health, social care, arts and culture and homelessness. There is a growing body of evidence that demonstrates a service year can have positive effects on employability, skills, character, attainment and mental health.¹⁸⁸ A year of service and social action gives young people the opportunity to adjust to the demands of full-time work but also exposes them to, and gives them understanding of, new communities and the social issues that people from different backgrounds face.

17. There is compelling research on the relationship between employability and full-time 'service year' models of social action, particularly from the US, where the AmeriCorps programme has been running for over 20 years. A ten-year study by the US Corporation for National & Community Service found that volunteers in programmes like AmeriCorps had a 27% higher likelihood of finding a job than those who had not participated in the programme. Research on AmeriCorps' impact also shows that social action can lead to higher wages and increased job satisfaction.

¹⁸⁸ Demos: *Service Nation 2020: "The double benefit of youth social action could help to tackle some of our most pressing social problems..."*, 2015.

18. While full-time 'service year' programmes have not received anything near the same level of investment in the UK as in the US, evaluations of the programmes that do operate in the UK – such as programmes run by City Year UK, Volunteering Matters (formerly CSV) and vInspired – suggest they have similar positive outcomes on employability.

19. City Year UK strongly agrees with the recommendation of the Demos Service Nation 2020 report that the government should officially recognise a 'service year' and develop full-time social action service year placements as an alternative school-leaver pathway. We argue that a service year does not necessarily need to be subsumed under the formal status of 'apprenticeship', it could be articulated by government as a valuable form of training for the modern workplace that focuses on the development of transferable skills.

20. Until government does officially recognise and help develop service years as a genuine route for school leavers, it is unrealistic to expect a seismic shift in social mobility and employability of young people in the short or long-term.

Question 3: Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

21. The current system places an overwhelming emphasis on qualifications rather than experience and the acquisition of practical work skills. Even when provision is made for a pathway to a career based on work itself - the apprenticeship route - the model assumes that young people in search of work know what job they want to do and simply need a practical qualification in it. The reality is that a significant proportion of young people who do not take A Levels and go to Higher Education (and, incidentally, a significant proportion of those who do) do not know what they want to do; they may not even be aware of the full range of options out there, and even if they have come across them on paper, may have prejudices, incorrect views, or simply find it hard to imagine what they may be like.

22. As a result, any path can seem unattractive, and when motivation to pursue a path is low, so is associated performance. This lack of knowledge and/or desire to actually pursue a career path at the age of 16 should not surprise us, given what we know about the stages of cognitive development for people up to the age of 25. Meaning, adventure, respect and challenge are some of the values that excite and fire young people to do remarkable things (either for good or ill, if allowed to be channelled or expressed in the wrong way). Modern apprenticeships and targeted schemes aimed at instrumentally preparing people for real target jobs in entry-level roles often lack those elements. Rejected or resented by young people in this category, they run the very real risk of being consigned to failure from the beginning.

23. For these reasons we believe that the current system for transitioning young people from school to work is inadequate. As mentioned above, we call on the government to formally recognise and support a service year in order to address the challenges young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace.

24. A current corps member (full-time City Year UK volunteer), Joary De Oliveira, at City Year UK says:

"I had a friend who I grew up with in Hackney. He didn't like school, didn't do well. He couldn't wait to get out of there after his GCSEs. He hadn't thought about what he was going to do when he left, just what he was getting away from. Obviously he got loads of pressure from everyone - not just from his mum and dad, from everyone - to go do something. So he did the first year of an apprenticeship. His heart wasn't in it and he didn't like it one bit. Of course he dropped out before he finished it - he'd rather do nothing than do something that didn't inspire him, you know? But he wasn't inspired by anything in Hackney, that was his problem.

"So his mum (he was half Ghanaian and half Thai) said, 'Why don't you go Thailand for a bit, stay with your family there, grow up a bit and work out what you want?' I reckon she thought he's only be a few months, but he stayed there a year, did this and that, but always trying new stuff. He was such a different person when he came back! It was like he'd finally worked out why he was doing stuff - for himself - and what inspired him. He set up his own business and it's doing pretty well.

"I haven't got family in Thailand, but for me City Year UK is like travelling for a year, only without having to leave home. A year of service is a chance to do something that means something, and I'm going to see if I really want to do it [mentoring], and if I'm any good at it. And I'll meet people who are already doing stuff like it who can give me advice and tips."

Question 4: How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

25. The current assumption that employers and young people both want an early start on a clearly identified and demarcated career path that comes with a qualification, even if acquired on the job, is somewhat misguided. Young people tell City Year UK that they want to try out the world of work, and need to broaden their knowledge of what kinds of jobs are available, on their own terms, without necessarily committing to one path. They want to be able to continue the process of growing up and finding out what sort of person they are and what they are interested in and good at, which will involve practical but broad experiences like, for example, a year of full-time voluntary service, recognised and given decent status by government.

26. Employers want people with transferrable skills, focused on self-awareness, ability to work with others, and willingness to embrace change; not, we would argue, people narrowly qualified in one set of skills, which research from McKinsey's Education to Employment study¹⁸⁹ and others shows there is then a very good chance that they will decide they don't like within the first year anyway.

¹⁸⁹ McKinsey & Company: Education to employment: Designing a system that works, 2012: http://mckinseysociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/Education-to-Employment_FINAL.pdf

27. The problem is especially acute for those who do not wish to pursue Higher Education. In short, an expectation that those who leave full-time education at 16 are likely to be able to decide what they want to do with their lives - an essential ingredient for successful performance in then doing it - *faster* than those who stay on to take A Levels and degrees, is implausible. Allowing more time and broader scope for their transition, but in an engaging practical way such as service, if they are not inspired to continue in education, is the only way to allow for the natural process of maturation to take place that will allow them to succeed.

28. A service year provides an ideal way to help people make that journey towards full adulthood and motivation to work. It is affordable and accessible, unlike traditional gap years. It is useful and financially sustainable for society as a whole, because of the contribution of vital resource it makes to public services. It is meaningful and gives meaning to that group of young people who most desperately need it.

29. In an external evaluation of City Year UK's service year participants across five years of the programme in London, Birmingham and Greater Manchester:

- 80% agreed: "City Year has provided me with the experience to enter an occupation of interest"
- 70% agreed: "My City Year experience has helped to shape my career goals"
- 81% agreed: "My City Year experience has enabled me to develop skills that I can apply to any job"
- 70% agreed: "My City Year experience has prepared me well for the working world"

30. 33% of City Year alumni grew up in the 10% of most deprived post codes on the IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index), yet only 3% of our alumni are unemployed. The proportion of respondents to the external evaluators' survey reporting positive effects of a service year on their success and motivation in getting into work was largely the same regardless of background or level of education, despite the fact that national statistics show a gulf in those outcomes between young people of different backgrounds.

31. This prompted the independent evaluators to say:

"... there is encouraging evidence to suggest that the City Year experience is ambivalent to the background of the young people it supports. This means that it has incredible potential for supporting those young people who come from more deprived backgrounds to advance in their careers in ways that their backgrounds can sometimes be a hindrance for."

Question 5: Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

32. Responsibility for a social shift - such as allowing young people to continue with a breadth of experiences until they have achieved sufficient self-knowledge to commit to making a success of work - must be shared by everyone in society.

33. *Government*: must create and/or foster the structures - legal frameworks or financial incentives - that allow private and third sector providers to offer broad coming-of-age experiences after and outside formal education. We have demonstrated that Government

can significantly improve the prospects of young people through officially recognising and investing in service years.

34. City Year UK believes that Government attempts to improve the system to support the transition into work for school leavers would benefit from a clearer definition of which department is responsible for driving this forward. In the current policy environment, efforts to improve the system have relied on efforts from a number of departments, including the Departments for Education, Business Skills and Innovation and the Cabinet Office. For a more coherent and effective strategy to be implemented, we recommend that one of the above departments be given sole responsibility for the transition from school to work and for formally establishing a recognised service year.

35. *Third sector:* charities and other organisations such as City Year UK, vInspired, The Challenge and NCS must continue to offer exciting opportunities for young people to give service to their communities and country. Through these opportunities young people can develop work applicable skills and those touched by the volunteers can be inspired to serve their community in turn.

36. *Schools and universities:* need to recognise the value of young people gaining volunteering experience to broaden their horizons and develop an understanding of what career path they wish to pursue. Upon recognition of this, school and universities must then encourage and promote these opportunities, working in partnership with the third sector to do help ensure take up from pupils and students.

37. *Businesses and employers:* as the one of the two ultimate beneficiaries of a more work-ready, motivated cohort of young people, businesses and employers need to invest in these opportunities to make them financially sustainable.

39. *Young people:* Finally, young people themselves must throw themselves into these formative experiences, such a year of service. City Year's history in the USA, South Africa and the UK shows that given the right mix of challenge, adventure, meaning, respect, power, community, structure and opportunity, they will.

Conclusion

40. City Year UK welcomes the Lords Select Committee's inquiry regarding social mobility in the transition from school to work and is delighted to have the opportunity to input into the process.

41. We acknowledge and appreciate the great amount of work that has been done in parliament, and particularly the House of Lords, to champion the cause of youth employment and make our society a mobile one. However, despite these efforts Britain remains one of least socially mobile countries in the developed world.

42. This is not, as we note above, because this country and its policymakers have ignored or sidelined the issue - quite the opposite. For example, according to UCAS, young people who are on free school meals are only half as likely to apply for university as the rest of their

cohort. Therefore, we believe a bold new approach must be taken to ensure that our young people can transition from school to work in the most efficient and inspiring way.

43. City Year UK urges this inquiry and the Government, in the strongest possible terms, to work alongside our organisation, and many like us, to establish official recognition for a year of service as an alternative school-leaver pathway.

14 September 2015

Develop – Written evidence (SMO0003)

House of Lords select committee on social mobility – call for evidence

Catherine Hegarty – Course coordinator/IAG advisor for Develop training

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

One of the biggest issues for young people trying to gain employment after college is lack of work experience and exposure to the working world. Since the government scrapped mandatory work experience in schools, only around 50% of schools still give their students this opportunity.

Colleges are under more pressure to deliver an academic curriculum (GCSE English and maths for example) alongside the vocational programme, this leaves less time and resources available for work experience and career preparation. GCSE's are not a suitable option for many learners and the style of qualification is a barrier to success for students with various learning difficulties. Functional skills and similar qualifications are much more applicable to the working environment and young people can see the relevance of them. If a student has failed to gain a GCSE in 2 (or 3) years at high school, then a college will struggle to rectify this in one year: Particularly when all awarding body syllabuses are different and the student will probably be starting from scratch in year 12.

There is much research (not least that by Dr Anthony Mann at Education & Employers research) around how exposure to professionals and working environments impacts on a young person's chances of gaining employment. It has been demonstrated how vital work experience is, particularly to young people from deprived areas and with parents who may not be employed or in low skilled positions. Many young people need exposure to a range of employment opportunities outside of their social circle; only this will broaden their horizons and improve their chances of entering the work force in more skilled areas.

We clearly see a link between those young people who have had part-time employment and their future success in gaining apprenticeships or full-time employment. Young people should be encouraged to take up any form of part-time work whilst from the age of 14 (paper rounds, retail, hospitality etc) as this drastically improves their social skills and they are more prepared for a professional working environment. Equally, businesses should be incentivised to take on young people. Parents have a huge role to play as they will ultimately be the ones to support the young person into employment; children of unemployed parents can often be unmotivated to find work themselves. Parents need to be made aware of the benefits to part-time work and even volunteering, where employment is not possible. Schools should put more emphasis on working in the community and providing students with opportunities to volunteer for projects that will help raise their self-esteem and confidence, as these are highly desirable attributes to employers and all young people need to be resilient when they come to the finding work.

Yes employers want academic qualifications, but in our experience, the personality and attitude of the young person has much more influence on their success than their GCSE grades. Education needs to focus more on developing young people as a whole: their resilience to failure, their communication skills and their self-confidence are vital in ensuring they do not become disengaged.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

I represent a training company that provides BTEC qualifications to 16-18 year olds. This is an alternative route for young people who do not wish to study A levels. We deliver mainly IT qualifications and our demographic is mainly:

- Male
- White
- Low-middle income families
- Higher than average rates of Autism spectrum conditions

The students pick this route as they enjoy IT and they want to work in an IT related field. They either do not wish to study A levels (as too exam focussed) or did not get high enough grades for 6th form. Progression rates are high (90%+) and students will either go onto university after completing a level 3 extended diploma or into an apprenticeship. For the students going into apprenticeships, their careers will be around IT support, digital marketing and business admin. The progression opportunities in these careers are good and our past students have quickly progressed in various local companies. The young people who have been successful in gaining apprenticeships have some commonalities:

- Good communication skills
- Work experience
- Confidence

3. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

In our experience is it difficult to engage some employers in either work experience placements or apprenticeships as they have negative ideas of young people or they simply do not have the time to dedicate to training up a young person. More targeted advertising to employers about the benefits of young people to their business and the benefits that work experience can have on young people.

A task force that facilitates links between education providers and local businesses would be helpful: Schools and colleges often do not have the time or staffing capability to develop these links and they can prove highly valuable for young people. Professional mentoring networks is an idea that has worked well for some Norfolk schools but it takes a member of staff much time to implement and manage.

4. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

It needs to be a joined up approach between the government, local councils and education providers. At present schools are not held accountable enough for their students

progressions but equally they do not have the staffing levels to monitor and facilitate this. A system like the old Connexions one, could work, with each school having a careers advisor who could double up as a work experience and mentoring coordinator. They would develop links with local businesses and FE providers to ensure students had a broad range of opportunities highlighted to them. Regional chamber groups could support the roll-out of work experience opportunities and encourage local business people to become mentors to students.

30 July 2015

The Edge Foundation – Written evidence (SMO0024)

Submission by the Edge Foundation

- David Harbourne, Acting Chief Executive

Summary

1. We ask the Committee not to assume that graduates enjoy good employment prospects
2. We identify several challenges in the current system:
 - a. school education is heavily weighted towards passing exams in subjects which count in the league tables;
 - b. technical and vocational qualifications tend to be taken by young people with below average prior attainment;
 - c. employers lack confidence in the soft skills of school and college leavers and (if they can) employ older, better-prepared people instead;
 - d. there are too many technical and vocational qualifications and no clear line of sight from entry level to high-level professional qualifications;
 - e. the system of vocational training and qualifications is held in low regard;
 - f. some young people have difficulty finding work for the simple reason that there are few suitable vacancies where they live;
 - g. we point out that the introduction of the English Baccalaureate and the Wolf report on vocational education have led to a dramatic decline in the take-up of practical subjects (eg Design and technology) and technical/vocational qualifications in schools;
 - h. we draw attention to the limited body of evidence about the career and learning trajectories of technical and vocational learners;
 - i. we draw the Committee's attention to examples of good practice in Nashville (USA) and Switzerland.
3. We recommend:
 - a. that young people should be introduced to a variety of styles of learning and to the world of work, starting at an early age;
 - b. that young people should be able and supported to transfer between institutions at 14;
 - c. that all technical qualifications taught between the ages of 14 and 16 should be called Technical Certificates (Level 1-2) or Technical Levels (Level 3);
 - d. continuing to develop new apprenticeship standards based on "who people become" rather than "the qualifications they get";
 - e. that colleges whose main mission is to provide courses up to level 3 for young people and "fresh start" courses for adults (eg literacy and numeracy) in a defined local area should be called Foundation Colleges;

- f. that colleges which provide clear lines of sight from level 4 to level 7 professional and technical qualifications in defined economic sectors and sub-regions should be called Polytechnic Colleges.

About the Edge Foundation

4. The Edge Foundation is an independent charity dedicated to raising the status of technical, practical and professional education. Established in 2004, we have sponsored initiatives including VQ Day – an annual celebration of success; the Skills Show; academies in Nottingham, Milton Keynes and Telford; the Edge Hotel School at the University of Essex; University Technical Colleges, Studio Schools and Career Colleges; and research programmes and international study visits which shed light on best practice worldwide.

We mustn't overlook the problems facing many graduates

5. We understand that the Committee cannot look into every aspect of social mobility. We welcome the Committee's focus on people who do not follow the "golden route" from A levels to university, but who do not spend any significant time not in education, employment or training (NEET). The Committee clearly appreciates that there is more to social mobility than helping the children of routine manual workers to become surgeons and barristers: important as this is, we should be just as interested in people who move upwards into technical and supervisory occupations, become self-employed or run small businesses.
6. Having said that, we would like to sound a note of caution about the "golden route", which is less of a guarantee of social mobility than it used to be.
7. Historically, graduates have earned more than non-graduates. That is one of the two main reasons why successive Westminster governments have sought to increase participation in higher education (HE). The other argument is that the UK economy needs more graduates in order to compete in a global knowledge economy. We will take these points in turn.
8. First, the much-vaunted graduate premium does not benefit all graduates equally. In a report for the Sutton Trust, "[Earning by Degrees](#)", Robert de Vries drew attention to the differences in starting salaries achieved by graduates, based on the subject studied at university. Engineering and technology graduates earn on average £8,800 more than design and creative arts graduates.
Three and a half years after graduating, graduates from medical and STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) courses have substantially higher average incomes than graduates from the arts, humanities, and social sciences.
9. Furthermore, a report by the Warwick Institute for Employment Research, "[Futuretrack](#)", suggests that the graduate premium is shrinking. Futuretrack was a longitudinal study of people who enrolled on HE programmes in 2006. An earlier longitudinal study by the

same team followed the fortunes of people who graduated in 1999. Comparing results from the two studies, Futuretrack reveals that the annual earnings of recent graduates fell in real terms by 21.9% between 2003 and 2011. Earnings fell most among arts graduates (32.9%) and least among law graduates (9%).

10. Second, does the economy really need all the graduates it can get? Announcing the results of a national survey, “Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education 2013/14”, the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) [said](#) that nearly three quarters of 2014 graduates were working six months after graduating:

73% of 2013/14 UK domicile full-time first degree graduates said that working was their most important activity, up from 70% of 2011/12 leavers. Of those working, 69% were in professional occupations, compared to 65% two years ago.
11. If this is taken at face value, it would appear that the UK economy does indeed need more graduates. However, HESA’s definition of “professional occupations” includes a whole category of “associate professional and technical” occupations which – according to the Office for National Statistics ([ONS](#)) – can be done by people with vocational qualifications. Examples include police constables, fitness instructors and actors. When HESA’s employment figures are adjusted to include only those jobs described by ONS as managerial and professional, it emerges that only 37.3% of graduates who were working six months of leaving university had genuinely graduate-level jobs.
12. Furthermore, the problem persists. People who graduated in 2011 were surveyed three and a half years later. [HESA](#) reported that 82.4% of respondents were working at the time of the survey, which means 17.6% weren’t. Furthermore, only 47% of employed graduates were in managerial and professional occupations as defined by ONS. Unsurprisingly, doctors and dentists were the most likely to be in graduate-level occupations (98.9%); at the other end of the spectrum, only 25.3% of employed creative arts and design graduates were in graduate-level roles. After allowing for the significant number of graduates not working at the time of the survey, that means only one in five creative arts and design graduates were in graduate-level employment within three and a half years of graduating. This does not augur well for social mobility.
13. Next, it is important to point out that the expansion of HE has not levelled the playing field: socially advantaged people continue to take the lion’s share of higher education places.
14. The Independent Commission on Fees ([Sutton Trust](#)) found that in 2014, English school leavers from the least disadvantaged neighbourhoods were *2.5 times more likely* to enter higher education than school leavers from the most disadvantaged quintile.
15. In a similar vein, “Education at a Glance 2014” ([OECD](#)), asked “To what extent does parents' education influence participation in tertiary education?” The answer is “a lot” – in England, people whose parents participated in tertiary education are *6.3 times more*

likely to participate in it themselves than people whose parents with qualifications no higher than GCSE or equivalent.

16. In short, expanding higher education is not a panacea. It does not guarantee significant improvements in upward social mobility. Indeed, the evidence cited here suggests that some graduates – perhaps a growing number – will experience downward mobility over their working lifetimes.

Question 1: factors affecting social mobility

17. We now turn to the questions posed by the Committee. From this point forward, we will concentrate almost entirely on young people who do not take the “golden route” from A levels to HE, but who do not feature strongly in the NEET statistics.

18. The Committee has asked about factors that affect the ability of young people to enter the job market and build careers. There are five main challenges.

19. First, school education is heavily weighted towards passing exams in subjects which count in the league tables. The emphasis is on the qualifications young people get, not *who they become*. Untested attributes, values and behaviours are underdeveloped; yet employers say, and have always said, that “soft skills” matter at least as much as paper qualifications when they recruit young people.

20. Second, technical and vocational qualifications tend to be taken by young people with below average prior attainment (a point we return to later). These young people also tend to lack social capital. Their connections with the world of work are weak. A diminishing number of young people have part-time jobs while they are at school or college (see “[The Death of the Saturday Job](#)”, a report by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills).

21. The third issue leads from the first two. If employers lack confidence in the soft skills of school and college leavers, they will employ older, better-prepared people instead, including graduates. We commented earlier on the widespread under-employment of graduates: here, we find the corollary. If graduates are taking jobs that could be done by people with BTECs, what happens to the people who actually have BTECs?

22. Fourth, technical and vocational qualifications are not well understood by employers. GCSEs and A levels have changed over time, but their names have not. Meanwhile, the word most commonly used to describe vocational qualifications is “bewildering”. There are far too many of them, and they have many different names. As a result –

- Employers do not understand the vocational qualifications listed on young people’s CVs, so they discount all of them;
- There is no clear line of sight from entry level qualifications to high-level professional qualifications;
- The whole system of vocational training and qualifications is held in low regard.

23. Fifth, labour market demand is not evenly distributed across all neighbourhoods. Young people may have difficulty finding work for the simple reason that there are few suitable vacancies where they live. And where there is a preponderance of low-skilled or seasonal work, climbing the career ladder is equally challenging.

Question 2: the 14-24 year old cohort

i. The career trajectories of young people who do not take A Levels and do not become NEET, including their routes and progress through education and training, and their progression into employment

24. In Key Stage 4, students with above average prior attainment are steered towards GCSEs. Conversely, technical and vocational subjects are more likely to be taken by students with below average prior attainment. The gap widens further post-16: those deemed capable of taking A levels are encouraged to do so; indeed they are actively discouraged from taking technical and vocational qualifications.
25. This was an important finding of research commissioned by the Edge Foundation and carried out by Professor William Richardson and Dr Sue Sing ([University of Exeter](#)), which examined the impact of practical and vocational learning on academically-able young people aged 11–16. The research found that high ability students in Key Stages 3 and 4 who had the opportunity to take practical and vocational subjects placed them well above more analytical forms of learning for enjoyment. A very large majority considered that learning with practical elements was more (or just as) important as mandatory subjects such as English and maths. However, almost all the students in this study chose to take A levels in traditional “academic” subjects post-16. Most high-attaining students are steered away from practical and vocational learning.
26. It appears that many young people in the middle ground are also steered towards A Levels, whether or not this is the best option for them. In “[Middle attainers and 14-19 progression in England](#)”, Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours (Institute of Education) used a three-year local study of students in an established school/college consortium to illustrate the effects of policy and practice on middle attainers. In Year 11, two thirds of middle attainers were on mixed GCSE and applied/vocational programmes. At the end of Year 11, 87% of middle attainers remained in full-time education, half of whom started A level programmes of study.
27. However, Hodgson and Spours report that “middle attainers tended to struggle to gain sufficiently high grades in the first year of an A Level programme (AS) to continue successfully to the second year.” Drop-out rates were high. Some then enrol on technical and vocational programmes – which they might, perhaps, have been better off choosing in the first place.
28. Hodgson and Spours suggest that there should be more opportunities to combine general and applied/vocational forms of learning into a single post-16 programme of

study, aimed particularly towards middle attainers. They also say that better access to careers education, information, advice and guidance might reduce the number of people enrolling on A level courses only to drop out within a year.

ii. The impact of changes to the assessment framework for A-levels, GCSEs and vocational education

29. The introduction of the English Baccalaureate and the Wolf report on vocational education led to a rebalancing of the Key Stage 4 curriculum in favour of academic subjects. As a result, there has been a marked decline in entries for practical, technical and vocational qualifications.
30. In 2010, 289,000 young people took GCSEs in Design and Technology. Numbers have fallen every year since then, reaching just under 205,000 in 2015, a fall of nearly 30% in five years (source: Joint Council for Qualifications).
31. The fall in BTEC entries has been more recent, but also much sharper. Between 2013/14 and 2014/15, the total volume of BTEC Firsts fell by 43% (source: Pearson).
32. Some qualifications no longer count in KS4 or post-16 performance tables and have all but disappeared from the school curriculum. A prime example is the Certificate of Personal Effectiveness (CoPE). ASDAN, a leading provider of these qualifications, described their purpose in [these terms](#):

The purpose is to enable candidates to develop and demonstrate personal, key and employability skills, to broaden their experience and manage their learning in a variety of real life contexts. It aims to teach candidates to understand, take responsibility for and learn from appropriate activities, rather than simply to experience them. Candidates are required to provide, through a range of activities, evidence of understanding and skills development against a set of standards. This quantifies and formalises their preparedness to progress into further education, for study at level 3, for vocational training and apprenticeships, and for employment and life.
33. Personal effectiveness qualifications were vilified by ministers and sections of the media: the [Daily Mail](#), for example, claimed repeatedly that one such qualification “included material telling students how to ‘find out what benefits you are entitled to if you are unemployed’ or how to ‘obtain information’ by ‘using the telephone’.”
34. In reality, independent research by the [University of the West of England](#) showed that in schools where many students took ASDAN’s CoPE, there was “an estimated 10% increased likelihood of achieving GCSE English at A* to C and an estimated 5% increased likelihood of achieving five GCSEs at A* to C including English and Maths (excluding equivalents), compared to similar young people in schools not offering CoPE.”
35. Edge is gravely concerned by the trends highlighted in the last few paragraphs. Technical and vocational courses can engage (or re-engage) the interest of many young people.

CoPE had a demonstrable impact on the performance of young people, but was roundly condemned by Ministers and removed from performance tables.

36. Meanwhile, there are growing shortages of people with strong technical skills. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills recently [reported](#) that 43% of vacancies in science, technology, engineering and maths roles are hard to fill due to a shortage of applicants with the required skills – almost double the UK average of 24%. The UKCES Employer Skills Survey 2013 suggests that the most common types of skills shortages relate to shortfalls in technical, practical or job specific skills, which “tend to be concentrated in manufacturing, construction, wholesale and retail, and hotels/restaurants ... with close to 40 per cent of vacancies affected by shortages, a situation which could worsen as the recovery proceeds” (UKCES, [Careers of the Future Background Report](#)).
37. In short, we need to promote high-quality technical education at Key Stage 4 and beyond, and to focus on soft skills as well as exam results.

iii. What happens to people who choose technical and vocational options after they leave full-time education?

38. Unfortunately, there is little qualitative evidence available to shed light on this question. Learning from the Futuretrack study of HE learners, the Edge Foundation plans to commission a five-year study of people who enrol on a level 3 vocational course or apprenticeship between the ages of 16 and 20. We believe this will shed new light on the characteristics of people who choose a route other than A levels, and the paths they take once they have completed their qualifications. We hope it will capture some people who have previously dropped out of A level courses as well as some who have made a conscious decision to take technical and vocational courses instead of A levels.
39. In the meantime, quantitative research tells us something about progression from technical and vocational qualifications to higher education. A report by Hugh Joslin and Sharon Smith ([University of Greenwich](#)) examined progression to HE from further education colleges in London. The 2005-06 cohort was tracked for five years. In this time, 53% of students with BTEC qualifications progressed to HE, along with 24% of students with NVQs and 57% of students who followed other vocational full-time programmes at further education colleges.
40. A further report by [Joslin and Smith](#) tracked people who were apprentices in 2005-06. By 2011-12, 18.8% had progressed to higher education. The same study found that 52% of the 2009-10 advanced level apprentice cohort had previously been intermediate apprentices, demonstrating clear evidence of progression from one apprenticeship level to another.
41. Employment prospects for people who take the non-A level path appear to be good, though again there is a distinct lack of good qualitative and/or longitudinal research to back this up. Last year’s McKinsey report, “[Education to Employment: Getting Europe’s](#)

[Youth into Work](#)", found that 21% of young people who completed a vocational programme in the UK were not in paid work six months later, but contrasted this with the 27% of recent graduates not in work six months after graduating. Comparing the UK's situation with France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, the authors comment that "The United Kingdom is the only country surveyed where recent graduates of vocational courses are more likely to be employed than academic graduates".

42. There is also a growing body of evidence that technical and vocational qualifications enhance earnings prospects. For example, new research by Prof Peter Urwin – reported by the [Times Educational Supplement](#) but not yet published in full – suggests that "among the most disadvantaged third of learners, those who completed a level 2 course went on to earn 12 per cent more than their peers from a similar socio-economic background. The equivalent figure for level 2 apprenticeships was 10 per cent."
43. The latter figure is consistent with previous estimates. For example, the National Audit Office published a technical paper, "[Estimating economic benefits from apprenticeships](#)", which said –

In line with other studies, our estimates suggest that there are indeed significant positive wage premiums in 2004-2010 associated with apprenticeships: around 18 per cent to Advanced apprenticeship (Level 3) and 11 per cent to Intermediate apprenticeship (Level 2), compared with individuals whose highest qualification is at Level 2 or Level 1 or 2 respectively.
44. Longer term, there is evidence that the pay range of people who have completed apprenticeships overlaps with the pay range of graduates.
45. Frank Field MP asked the [Office for National Statistics](#) (ONS) to compare the earnings of graduates and former apprentices aged up to 64 (men) and 59 (women). ONS reported that in the period April-June 2013, graduates earned an average gross hourly rate of £15.18 per hour, while non-graduates who had completed an apprenticeship earned £11.10 per hour. On average, therefore, there was a graduate premium of £4.08 per hour. However, ONS also reported that 27% of working graduates earned less than £11.10.

Question 3: the current system

46. We will not go into detail about problems in the current system: we have said enough about them in our earlier comments. We would simply add that careers education has been inadequate for a very long time. Other countries put far more resource into careers advice and guidance than we do in England.
47. Secondly, we take issue with one of the Committee's lines of inquiry: "We would like to know why the group who do not complete A-Levels perform poorly". The Committee's focus is on people who do not take A levels but do not join the NEET group. We do not

accept that this group “performs poorly”. They gain qualifications and secure employment. Progression data (quoted earlier) demonstrate that very many people in this group progress from one apprenticeship level to the next and, in due course, many go on to higher education. This is not “poor performance”.

International comparisons

48. We would like to draw the Committee’s attention to two contrasting international examples, Nashville and Switzerland.

Nashville

49. [Nashville](#) has 12 comprehensive high schools with between 700 and 2,500 students. Ten years ago, educational performance was amongst the worst in the USA: attendance was very poor and only 58.2% of students graduated on time from high school. In 2013-14, attendance reached a record high and the high school graduation rate rose to 78.7%. Nashville is now seen as a national centre of excellence.

50. Faced with a long history of weak educational outcomes, employers and high schools in Nashville agreed to a fundamental reform of the high school curriculum, which has been in place for seven years. Today –

- a. All students go through a one year “Freshman Academy” programme of careers education, supported by employer visits/talks, a city-wide careers fair and taster sessions in a wide range of technical and vocational subjects.
- b. At the end of the freshman year, students choose a career academy for the remainder of their time at high school. There are over 40 academies across the 12 high schools, linked to five broad sectors of the economy, plus the arts and the International Baccalaureate. The sectors are
 - i. Arts, media and communications
 - ii. Business, marketing and information technology
 - iii. Engineering, manufacturing and industrial technology
 - iv. Health and public services
 - v. Hospitality and tourism
- c. All students take classes in their academy theme along with the core academic curriculum. Teachers of academic subjects relate their subjects to the chosen economic sector, showing how knowledge learned in the classroom is used in the world of work.
- d. Employers offer job shadowing, work experience and mentoring for students and short industry placements (“externships”) for groups of teachers.
- e. At the end of their externships, groups of teachers develop work-related projects which they deliver with the active involvement of their host employer.
- f. Each academy has a “coach” who co-ordinates links with employers.
- g. A city-wide education-business partnership, the Pencil Foundation, also helps connect schools and businesses.

- h. High schools are held to account by *both* the District Superintendent of High Schools *and* Nashville Chamber of Commerce, which publishes an annual report card on education.
51. As noted already, the “Academies of Nashville” programme has made a marked difference to educational outcomes. There have been strong social dividends, too: for example, the average age of Nashville’s gang members has gone up from 16 to 22, because teenagers are less likely to become disengaged from education.
52. President Obama visited McGavock High School in 2014. He [said](#):
- Students in the Academy of Business and Finance are operating their own credit union here at the school, and doing some work in a real one over the summer. If you choose Digital Design and Communication, you get to spend time in a TV studio ... If you choose the Aviation and Transportation Academy, you get to learn how to operate a 3D printer, and work on your very own airplane. That’s pretty cool.
- The idea is simple but powerful: young people are going to do better when they're excited about learning, and they're going to be more excited if they see a connection between what they're doing in the classroom and how it is applied. And [they’re] seeing people who may open up entire new career options.

[Switzerland](#)

53. At the end of 2012, only 6% of all 16-24 year olds in [Switzerland](#) were not in education, employment or training, compared with an OECD average of 12.6%.
54. A key factor in Switzerland's success is its investment in vocational education and training (VET) – particularly apprenticeships. As many as 70% of Swiss young people choose vocational options at 15+. VET is the norm, not the exception.
55. This state of affairs has not come about because of a short-term plan or political initiative. It is deeply engrained in Swiss culture. Young people, parents, employers and politicians are in no doubt that vocational pathways lead to economic security.
56. That said, the system has not stood still. In response to the globalisation of the economy, Switzerland has increased the proportion of people with degrees and higher level professional qualifications. However, this has not been done by encouraging more young people to go directly from school to university: instead, it has been made easier for people to progress from apprenticeships to high-level technical colleges known in French as Hautes Ecoles Spécialisées (HES).
57. There is also a strong emphasis on developing social capital, which makes it easier for people to move from job to job and sector to sector as the economy evolves. Apprenticeships do not focus narrowly on job-specific skills: they also develop wider skills of relevance to young people’s future careers, plus social and interpersonal skills – particularly effective relationships with clients and co-workers. By passing their end assessments, apprentices earn the right to call themselves “baker”, “electrician”,

“insurance broker” and so on. What matters is not the qualification they get, but the person they become.

58. This simplicity is one of the secrets of Switzerland’s success. No-one is “bewildered” by thousands of technical and vocational qualifications at levels 1 to 7. Young people choose a broad occupation and prepare for it through apprenticeships. There is a clear line of sight from apprenticeships to high-level professional qualifications (including degrees) via HESs. Apprenticeships are the norm, not the exception: in short, they are a middle class option, not something destined for “other people’s kids”.

Question 4: possible improvements

59. If young people are to make fully informed and effective choices at 14+, they need to know about different styles of learning, careers, and the routes to success in adult life.

60. We need to do three things:

- Introduce young people to a variety of styles of learning and to the world of work, starting at an early age
- Steadily and consistently improve teachers’ understanding of technical and professional routes
- Make technical and professional routes easier to understand and navigate.

61. Starting with careers education, primary and secondary schools need to open their doors to people from a wide variety of occupations. For younger children, this isn’t about choosing a career prematurely: it’s about realising there are far more jobs out there than they see in the high street or on television. They need to find out about jobs in offices and industrial units, and that there’s more to a hospital than doctors and nurses.

62. It’s also about keeping young minds open for longer. By the age of 10, most boys think nursing is for girls, while most girls think engineering is for boys. If they meet male nurses and female engineers, they might keep an open mind; they might even be inspired.

63. Subjects chosen at 14 can help or hinder career progression, so it is important for young people to have a broad understanding of the labour market by that time. However, links with employers should continue throughout upper secondary education. There is evidence that young adults who have many contacts with people from the world of work while they are at school earn more and are less likely to be NEET than those who had fewer contacts of this kind (source: [Education and Employers Taskforce](#)).

64. Turning to styles of learning, our ambition is that all young people will experience project-based learning in primary and secondary schools and in post-16 programmes of study, supported by employers. This will help young people see the connections between lessons learned in the classroom and the way it is used in the world of work.

We draw inspiration from Nashville's experience, and from early evidence of the impact of project-led learning in University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools.

65. We also hope that Design and Technology will be revived and reinvigorated, enabling all young people to apply creativity and imagination to the technological challenges of the modern world; and that a new generation of technical qualifications will gain traction and status in schools and colleges. However, this will require a continuing process of simplifying the landscape, as outlined below. We recommend that:
- a. Technical education should be available as an option to all 14-16 year olds, as part of a broad and balanced Key Stage 4 curriculum. In most schools, technical education will take up no more than 20% of the KS4 timetable.
 - b. Young people should have the option to transfer at 14 or 16 to specialist institutions which offer an enhanced technical curriculum, including University Technical Colleges, Studio Schools and Career Colleges. In these institutions, up to 40% of the KS4 timetable should be dedicated to technical education, with the remaining 60% reserved for the academic curriculum.
 - c. All qualifications achieved following a course of technical education in Key Stage 4 should be called Technical Certificates.
 - d. Post-16, young people should be free to focus mainly on academic education, mainly on technical education or combine both forms in a programme of study suited to their talents and ambitions.
 - e. Post-16 students following a course of technical education should be awarded either a Technical Certificate (level 1-2) or a Technical Level (level 3). All other names (eg Applied General Qualification) should be phased out.
 - f. The name of the qualification (ie Technical Certificate or Technical Level) should always be more prominent than brand names used by individual awarding organisations (eg BTEC, OCR National etc).
 - g. Rules for recognising technical qualifications should be tightened up to prevent a fresh proliferation of competing and overlapping qualifications:
 - i. Technical Certificates should be recognised only if they support progression to a related Technical Level or apprenticeship
 - ii. Technical Levels should be recognised only if they provide routes to both a related apprenticeship and higher education (either alone or in combination with A Levels).
66. Apprenticeships should continue to be an option for young people aged 16-18. However, take up is likely to remain low. Most 16-18 year olds will remain in full-time education at school or college.
67. The main recruitment effort should target young adults aged 18-24. Apprenticeships should be positioned – as the government intends – as the leading alternative to immediate entry to higher education. At the same time, young people, parents and teachers need to realise that apprenticeships support career progression in both the

short and long term, including opportunities to gain high level professional qualifications and degrees.

68. Second, the government has decided that apprenticeship standards should be of paramount importance, with qualifications – if used at all – playing a secondary role. This is closer to the Swiss model, which is much easier to explain to parents and teachers.
69. Further education colleges educate enormous numbers of 16-19 year olds (and a smaller number of 14-16s, though this number could grow significantly in the next few years). Many offer both “sixth form” provision (A Levels, International Baccalaureate etc) and full-time technical education. They typically also offer “fresh start” courses to adults, including adult literacy and numeracy programmes. Recent evidence (quoted earlier) shows that people with level 2 qualifications achieve wage returns compared with people who do not.
70. The Wolf reforms have already made a difference to technical education in colleges. As noted above, we believe the next step should be to focus full-time 16-19 provision on approved Technical Certificates and Technical Levels, combined (as appropriate) with Extended Project Qualifications, English and Maths GCSEs (and/or Functional Skills), and A Levels.
71. As the next step to a simpler landscape, we recommend that colleges whose main mission is to provide local students with programmes up to level 3 (including apprenticeships) should in future be called Foundation Colleges.
72. Above level 3, we recommend recognising a national network of sub-regional Polytechnic Colleges whose core mission is to provide clear lines of sight from level 4 to level 7 professional and technical qualifications including higher and degree apprenticeships. This would be akin to Switzerland’s network of HESs.
73. It is possible that some colleges will be both Foundation Colleges and Polytechnic Colleges. However, the brand identities should be distinctive.

Question 5: responsibility for improvement

74. The glib answer to this question is that everyone in the education and training system has a shared responsibility for improving paths from school to work. However, the overall shape of the curriculum is guided by government policy, and we must look to Ministers to lead change in the right direction.
75. Second, the teaching profession needs to have both the opportunity and the confidence to deliver high-quality careers education, personal development programmes and technical education from 14 upwards.
76. The profession also needs to be better informed about career paths followed by non-graduates. This is partly about literally informing teachers – and letting them go to see examples for themselves – and partly about serious academic research to provide clear,

qualitative and quantitative information about the paths taken by people who choose options other than A levels and direct entry to higher education.

8 September 2015

Eurofound – Written evidence (SMO0144)

Engaging the ‘missing middle’: Status quo, trends and good practice

Written evidence prepared by Eurofound
for the House of Lords – Social Mobility Committee
January 2016

Introduction

Across Europe, young people have been hit hard by the most recent economic crisis and their labour market perspectives have deteriorated sharply in the majority of EU Member States. While the UK has been recovering comparatively well after the crisis in terms of youth unemployment, at the European level more than 20% of young people aged 15–24 are currently unemployed. Moreover, currently, more than 40% of young people remain unemployed in some European countries and the rate of young people not in employment, education or training (NEET) remains high across the majority of countries.

While strong attention has been placed on the re-integration of the most vulnerable – those with lower educational levels or with additional vulnerabilities – some issues still persist including concerns over the ‘overlooked middle’ which refers to young middle attainers¹⁹⁰ who do not follow academic routes, in particular into higher education, and who may be confronted with a range of challenges when trying to find alternative ways into employment, further education or training. They fall into a group called the ‘missing middle’ as middle attainers often remain excluded from the policy discourse which tends to remain focused on those with lower educational levels and on those with higher educational levels who fail to enter the labour market.¹⁹¹ However, there is a great heterogeneity among the EU Member States when it comes to both middle attainers and non-academic pathways for young people, and countries may profit substantially from good practice exchange in this area in their pursuit to improve the labour market situation for all young people.

The aim of this paper is to provide written evidence for the Social Mobility Committee of the House of Lords on the ‘missing middle’ by explaining the issue in detail before describing policy trends and good practices in response to this challenge from across the EU Member States. For this purpose, the introductory section will highlight the current state of play on middle attainers from a comparative perspective, revealing interesting trends across the EU and in the UK. In a next step, the concept of youth transitions is used to depict some of the key challenges young people are facing in today’s labour market. The following section looks into recent policy trends of effectively engaging middle attainers illustrated with policy initiatives from different EU countries. Finally, a concluding section sums up the findings and looks to the challenges ahead.

¹⁹⁰ ISCED 3–4.

¹⁹¹ Roberts, S. and MacDonald, R. (2013), ‘The marginalised mainstream: Making sense of the ‘missing middle’ of youth studies’, *Sociological Research Online*, Vol. 18, No. 1, p. 21.

1. Exploring the missing middle in Europe

The most recent economic crisis has had an impact on various levels of labour market attachment of young people. Not only have young people experienced more unemployment than ever recorded in the EU before, but as a result of increasing difficulties in entering the labour market, transitions from education into the labour market, and into adulthood in general, have been prolonged and delayed in many instances. The crisis has affected all young people, but with education still being a shield against disengagement and unemployment, the low and middle attainers are those who experienced increasing difficulties.

Status quo of middle attainers

At European level, 46% of young people aged 15–24 are middle attainers, meaning that the highest level of education they have achieved is ISCED level 3–4 (Table 1). This value ranges from almost 39%, or less, for Cyprus, Portugal, Denmark, Spain and Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain to approximately 61% in the UK which, given also the high share of young people who have completed tertiary education, is the country with the most educated youth. Young females have a higher level of education than young males. In this regard, in the EU28 the share of young females who completed secondary education is 46.5%, against 45.8% of young males. In the UK, 61.8% of young females completed secondary education, against 60.7% of young males.

Table 1: Educational attainment of young people (aged 15–24), EU28, 2014

Country	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6	ISCED 3-4 Males	ISCED 3-4 Females
EU28	44.6	46.1	9.3	45.8	46.5
Austria	40.0	44.7	15.3	44.3	45.0
Belgium	43.4	42.9	13.7	43.2	42.7
Bulgaria	43.1	51.9	4.9	53.2	50.6
Croatia	38.3	56.7	5.0	57.0	56.3
Cyprus	42.2	38.6	19.1	45.3	32.8
Czech Republic	42.3	51.5	6.2	52.5	50.6
Denmark	59.5	36.3	4.2	34.3	38.5
Estonia	46.5	45.4	8.1	44.6	46.3
Finland	49.8	47.5	2.8	46.7	48.2
France	41.1	44.5	14.4	44.6	44.4
Germany	53.9	42.9	3.2	42.0	43.9
Greece	41.6	52.7	5.6	52.2	53.2
Hungary	47.1	47.8	5.1	47.5	48.1
Ireland	46.0	42.1	11.9	42.6	41.7
Italy	51.3	44.5	4.1	43.6	45.5
Latvia	45.0	45.2	9.8	44.8	45.7
Lithuania	45.0	45.0	10.0	46.1	43.9
Luxembourg	59.6	32.9	7.6	33.3	32.4
Malta	35.9	52.6	11.5	53.1	52.1

Netherlands	49.5	41.1	9.5	40.6	41.6
Poland	45.1	46.6	8.3	47.4	45.8
Portugal	54.4	36.4	9.2	35.2	37.6
Romania	51.1	43.2	5.7	43.4	43.0
Slovakia	43.9	48.6	7.5	50.9	46.1
Slovenia	41.7	53.2	5.1	53.9	52.4
Spain	51.5	36.3	12.1	34.1	38.6
Sweden	46.0	45.0	8.9	46.0	44.0
United Kingdom	21.1	61.3	17.6	60.7	61.8

Source: Eurostat, 2014

Regardless of their educational level, the share of employed youth was 32.4% in 2014 in the EU. This value varies from below 16% in Italy and Greece to 48%, or higher, in Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria and the UK. The share of employed youth increases with educational level varying from 18% among those with lower education to 43% among those with secondary education and 56% with tertiary education. In the UK, the employment rates recorded are 33% among those with lower education, 54% among middle attainers and 74% among those with higher education.

Middle attainers among the NEET group

While constituting the largest cohort among young people, middle attainers are also the largest cohort among the NEET group in the EU. In this regard, while the NEET population reached 12.5% in 2014 in the EU, approximately 50% of young NEETs have completed secondary education. This share varies from 82% in Croatia to less than 40% in Portugal, the Netherlands, Germany, Malta and Spain. In all these countries, the largest population of NEETs is made up of those with lower educational level. According to Eurostat, in 2014 the UK recorded a NEET rate of 11.9%, composed mainly of middle attainers (46%) followed by those with low educational level (41%). The incidence of being NEET among the various educational levels reveals however that those with a lower educational level are most at risk: 20.3% of those with lower education are NEETs), followed by middle attainers (15.4%) and those with tertiary education (11.4%). In the UK, this difference is even more marked and skewed towards the lower skilled. In fact, about one-third of those with lower education are NEETs, followed by 12.5% of middle attainers and 9% of those with tertiary education. Finally, looking at the composition of the NEET groups with secondary education in the UK reveals that 42% of them are short-term unemployed, followed by those with family responsibilities, 22%, whereas 16% are long term unemployed and 5.5% are those unavailable for their own illness or disability.¹⁹²

¹⁹² For more information on the decomposition of the NEET group see: Eurofound (forthcoming), *Exploring the diversity of NEETs*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

2. Youth transitions crucial for labour market and social integration of youth

Protracted school-to-work transitions are also a worrying development for the individual, as the quality of transitions early in a young person's life are a strong determinant of subsequent labour market outcomes, such as lifetime earnings and future employability.¹⁹³ Yet successful school-to-work transitions have a much wider implication. They are an important step towards a young person's full integration into society and their general transition into adulthood. If the move into (secure) work and financial independence is delayed, this may have spillover effects for these other aspects of adulthood and postpone those transitions. In this way, problematic school-to-work transitions delay the transition into adulthood of young people and their establishment as independent citizens.¹⁹⁴

Smooth school-to-work transitions

Capturing the time between leaving formal education and securing a first job, which can be a major challenge for young people, school-to-work transitions are the most important youth transition from a labour market perspective. The reason for this is that young people can deal relatively well with short spells of unemployment, while protracted unemployment at a young age is likely to have a negative impact on young people's working lives both in terms of labour market status and wages.¹⁹⁵

Average time before starting the first job

According to Eurostat's 2009 EU-Labour Force Survey ad hoc module on youth entry to the labour market, in the EU the average time to start one's first job after leaving education was 6.5 months. This value varies from five months or less in Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK, to eight months or more in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Romania and Spain. Interestingly, those countries with a higher share of students who combine school and work are also those with a shorter average gap between finishing education and starting a first job. In fact, acquiring early labour market experience will permit young people to learn the norms and behaviour of the labour market and hence to find a job more quickly.

The average time starting the first job after education decreases as the level of education increases. At European level, students with at least a lower secondary education wait, on average, almost 10 months before getting a job, while middle attainers wait seven months and those with tertiary education wait about five months. At Member State level, middle attainers wait four months or less to start their first job in Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK, compared with 10 months or more in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Romania. School-leavers with a tertiary education wait three months or less in Estonia, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands and the UK, compared with seven months or more in Greece, Italy, Romania and Spain.

¹⁹³ Arulampalam, W. (2001), 'Is unemployment really scarring? Effects of unemployment experiences on wages', *The Economic Journal*, Vol. 111, No. 475, pp. F585-F606; O'Higgins, N. (2001), *Youth unemployment and employment policy: A global perspective*, International Labour Organization, Geneva; Dietrich, H. (2012), *Youth unemployment in Europe: Theoretical considerations and empirical findings*, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Berlin.

¹⁹⁴ Eurofound (2014), *Mapping youth transitions in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

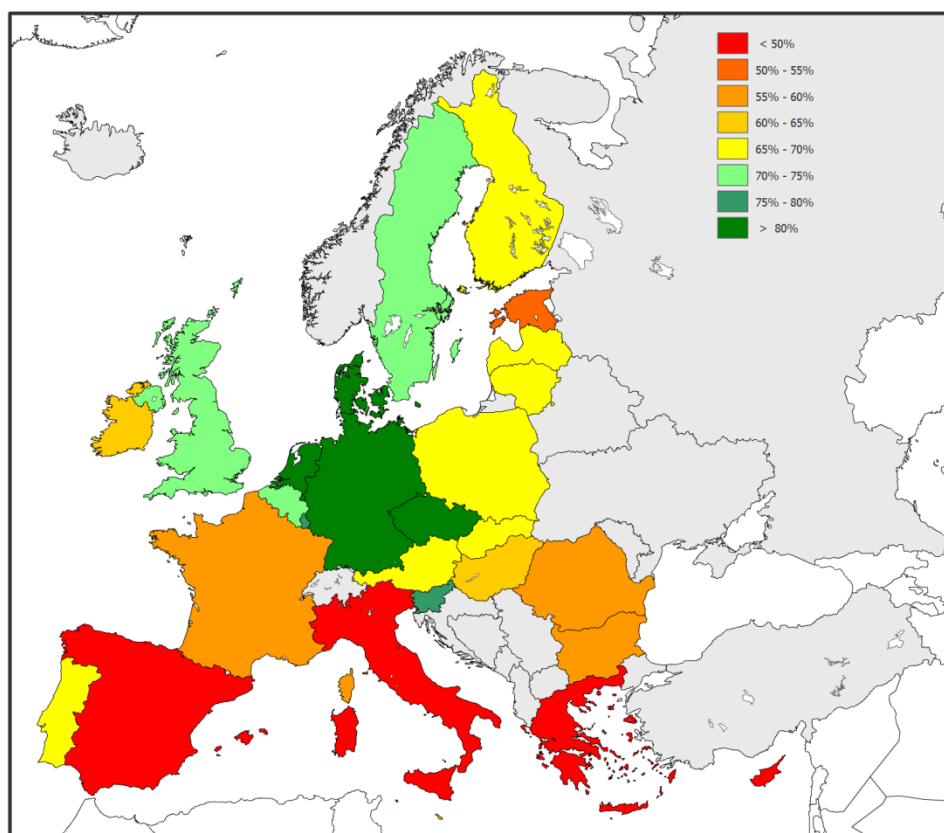
¹⁹⁵ Eurofound (2015), *Social inclusion of young people*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg; Eurofound (2014), *Mapping youth transitions in Europe*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Share of school-leavers employed a year after graduation

Together with the average time before starting the first job, the share of school-leavers employed one year after graduation is an equally important indicator in order to better understand how smooth and quick school-to-work transitions are. According to Eurostat, regardless of the educational level attained, about 68% of European school-leavers were recorded as being employed one year after completing their education. However, huge differences among countries are observed (Figure 1).

In Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands, where there are strongly institutionalised vocational training systems, around 80% or more of school-leavers are employed one year after leaving education. This share decreases to slightly more than 70% in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Sweden and the UK. The share of school-leavers similarly employed in Finland, Austria and Cyprus drops to 67%, 66% and 48% respectively, although it has to be noted that, in these countries, a considerable number of young people must do military service one year after graduation. As expected, the share of school-leavers who are employed increased with educational level. In the EU, in 2011, about one-third of those who left education with a lower secondary education found employment. This share increases to 65% of those middle attainers and reaches 79% for those with tertiary education. The UK performs better than the EU average. In particular, in the UK on average more than 74% of school-leavers are employed one year after graduation. This value varies from 55% of those with primary education, to 72% of those middle attainers and 80% of those with tertiary education.

Figure 1: Percentage of school-leavers in employment one year after graduation, EU28, 2011



Source: Eurostat, 2011; Eurofound elaboration

3. Recent policy trends at EU and national level

Supporting young people's successful transition from school to work has become central to the European and national-level policy agendas. With a steady increase in the number of university graduates in the majority of European countries over the past years and even decade(s), and with an increased policy focus on early school-leavers, policy attention towards the middle attainers seems to have decreased. The economic crisis has, however, highlighted the problem of integrating young people into the labour market. In this regard, some countries have found it increasingly challenging to provide effective assistance to young people who chose alternative pathways into the labour market. And while the youth unemployment problem is not new, what is new from the recent crisis is the size and scope of the problem. As a result of the crisis, 17 out of 28 Member States have recorded their highest ever level of youth unemployment, according to Eurofound research. Moreover, and in contrast to previous economic downturns, the most recent crisis however revealed that, while education still constitutes a shield against disengagement, higher education may no longer sufficiently prevent young people from becoming unemployed if skills learned during education are not relevant to the labour market.

In the attempt to help young people back into employment, education or training, a range of policy initiatives at Member State and EU level have been deployed in recent years.¹⁹⁶ Launched by a Recommendation of the Council of the European Union in 2013 and put in place in the course of 2014 across the EU, the **Youth Guarantee** is the most important policy initiative at European level and includes some key features which help Member States to effectively support middle attainers. The Youth Guarantee is a policy framework which foresees that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good quality offer of employment, apprenticeship, further education or training within four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education.¹⁹⁷ Inspired by similar, well-functioning schemes in Finland and Sweden (and to some extent in Austria), the Youth Guarantee seeks to launch long-term reforms for making structures more adequately prepared to deal with young people while in parallel already offering policy interventions for this group to avoid leaving them stranded. The implementation of the Youth Guarantee started in 2014 with the presentation of the national Youth Guarantee Implementation Plans (YGIPs). To support the implementation of the Youth Guarantee, Member States receive financial assistance from the Youth Employment Initiative (YEI).¹⁹⁸ In addition, following a request from the European Parliament, a total of 18 Youth Guarantee pilot projects were put in place across the EU starting in August and December 2013 for around 12 months which provided countries with the opportunity to gather early experience in Youth Guarantee implementation. Building on the preliminary and recent experience of Youth Guarantee implementation, its most

¹⁹⁶ Eurofound (2015), *Social inclusion of young people*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

¹⁹⁷ Council of the European Union (2013), 'Council Recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a Youth Guarantee', *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 120/01, 26 April.

¹⁹⁸ European Commission, Youth Guarantee, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079&langId=en>

relevant aspects in view of assisting middle attainers back into employment, education or training are outlined below.

Early activation and tailored support for young people

The four month intervention point guarantees early activation without leaving young people at risk of suffering long-term consequences of protracted disengagement.¹⁹⁹ Together with personalised support measures, the short intervention time is therefore a key feature of the Youth Guarantee which has been largely inspired by previously existing schemes in some Nordic Member States.

Early activation and personalised approach to assisting young people in Finland²⁰⁰

With a pioneering role in setting up Youth Guarantee schemes, both Finland and Sweden have introduced such provisions as early as in the mid-1980s and early 1990s. Youth Guarantee systems are still in place, although they have been periodically revised, and early activation and personalised support for young people are the central building blocks of these initiatives. With the aim of reducing the time young people spend in unemployment or inactivity, in both cases the Public Employment Service (PES) plays a central role in assisting young people back into employment or education. At the start of their engagement, the PES and the young person draft a personalised development plan with the guarantee of a place in work, education or training and focusing on the identified needs and challenges of the individual. The intervention point is set at three months after registration with the PES.

A distinctive advantage is that the personalised support helps young people, including middle attainers, to take more informed decisions about their transition into the labour market. In terms of focusing on middle attainers, the European Commission found that recent reforms in Finland which include measures set out to extend working careers at the beginning by six months will improve 'both vocational and higher education, combining vocational upper secondary education and apprenticeship training'.²⁰¹ In concrete terms, Finland has been strengthening its vocational guidance and career planning services provided by the PES and now offers more work experience training for young people. At the same time, the PES differentiates clearly between young people with or without vocational qualifications. For the former group, work trials are promoted as a valuable option with the exception of recent graduates where employment incentives for employers are used to foster labour market attachment. For the latter group, 'more vocational labour market training in the form of further and supplementary training and licence training can be provided to young people who have not completed their studies in vocational upper secondary education or higher education, or whose professional skills are not sufficient to meet the requirements of the labour market'.²⁰²

Recent evaluations show that the Youth Guarantee in Finland has helped '67.8 % of guarantee beneficiaries start a job, a traineeship, apprenticeship or further education within

¹⁹⁹ In the course of 2016, Eurofound will further explore the situation of long-term unemployed youth including determinants of belonging to this group and a discussion of effective policy responses. An overview report will be published in 2017.

²⁰⁰ Eurofound (2012), *Youth Guarantee: Experiences from Finland and Sweden*, Dublin.

²⁰¹ European Commission (2014), *Assessment of the 2014 national reform programme and stability programme for Finland*, SWD(2014) 427 final, Brussels, http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2014/swd2014_finland_en.pdf

²⁰² See: http://www.nuorisotakuu.fi/en/youth_guarantee/work

four months of registering with the Finnish public employment service (after six months this increased to 89.6 % of guarantee beneficiaries).²⁰³ Due to the Youth Guarantee, the share on long-term unemployed and discouraged workers recorded in Scandinavian countries is the lowest in Europe.²⁰⁴

Focus on partnership approaches to re-engage young people

Inspired by the Finnish example, the Youth Guarantee should function as a public-private-people partnership.²⁰⁵ Especially for policies targeting middle attainers, which are frequently linked to the provision of training experiences, work-based learning or vocational educational training including apprenticeships more broadly, it can be crucial to ensure that employers are involved in the design and delivery of different measures. More generally, partnerships may help to generate synergies, capitalise on experience of different partners, identify gaps in service provisions and limit the risk of duplication of efforts.²⁰⁶ This is why the setting up of local partnerships can be very beneficial for bringing stakeholders such as employers but also different institutions working with young people to cooperate with one another.

Good practice among Youth Guarantee pilot projects: Ballymun's success story of working together²⁰⁷

Since its inception in January 2014, the Ballymun Youth Guarantee pilot project²⁰⁸ in Ireland has been frequently mentioned in the EU policy debate as an example of good practice for bringing on board a range of actors in order to design and deliver initiatives for young people. By engaging and building links with local employers who provide guidance and training elements, this pilot project ensured that young people received support targeted to the needs of the labour market which in turn generated work placements for participants. Three different target groups of young people were identified in terms of their distance from the labour market:

- young people with Junior Certificate/equivalent or less and little or no work experience;
- young people with Leaving Certificate/equivalent or some work experience;
- young people with above Leaving Certificate/equivalent or good work experience.

Out of the participants in the pilot project, 35% of young people belonged to the first, 47% to the second and 18% to the third target group. Under the guarantee, each young person

²⁰³ See: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/csr2015/cr2015_finland_en.pdf

²⁰⁴ Eurofound (forthcoming), *Exploring the diversity of NEETs*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

²⁰⁵ Ministry of Education and Culture (2012), *The Youth Guarantee in Finland*, Helsinki, http://www.oph.fi/download/148967_The_Youth_Guarantee_in_Finland.pdf

²⁰⁶ Irish Department of Social Protection (2015), *Policy and practice report: Key learning from the Ballymun Youth Guarantee project*, Dublin, <http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/key-learning-ballymun-youth-guarantee-project.pdf>

²⁰⁷ Irish Department of Social Protection (2015), *Policy and practice report: Key learning from the Ballymun Youth Guarantee project*, Dublin, <http://www.welfare.ie/en/downloads/key-learning-ballymun-youth-guarantee-project.pdf>

²⁰⁸ Following a request from the European Parliament, a total of 18 Youth Guarantee pilot projects set to run for around 12 months each were put in place between August and December 2013. For more information, see: European Commission (2014), *Preparatory action on the Youth Guarantee: First findings report*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

received access to career guidance/assistance resulting in an individual career plan including follow-through to training, education, work experience or full-time employment, provided in partnership with a range of stakeholders. Out of the 739 clients, young people belonging to the first target group most often were referred to further education and training programmes (NQF Levels 3, 4 and 5), followed by publicly funded employment and blended learning. In the case of the second target group, the majority took part in further education and training programmes at different levels, followed by publicly funded employment, followed by a small proportion which secured full-time or part-time employment. Among the third target group was the largest proportion who secured private sector employment and completed further educational training at higher levels (NQF Level 5 and above). One of the most interesting aspects of this project is indeed the cooperation among stakeholders at local level which led to enhanced formal and informal contacts for identifying work placement opportunities for young people. In the case of Ireland, employers have been involved at both national and local level in advising the PES on how to better engage with businesses. The identified measures to create better cooperation were far-reaching and included the design of information material, regular information exchange with employers also taking on board their suggestion to tailor Youth Guarantee training elements to employers' needs, as well as employers hosting information and training sessions for young people (for example, on employability skills or running a blended learning programme). Outcomes suggest that this strategy was successful in terms of bringing employers on board especially given the previously identified lack of private sector opportunities for job-ready young people in the Ballymun area. While existing evaluations do not allow conclusions to be drawn on causality, the proportion of young people registered as unemployed in Ballymun fell by 29% throughout the duration of the pilot project (compared to a decrease of only 19% nationwide).

Focus on employability and life skills of young people

There are a range of approaches which focus on building up young people's employability in the broadest sense. In particular, those who are not yet ready to enter the labour market directly may need some forms of assistance first before re-engaging in employment, education or training. In this respect, Member States are deploying a range of measures focusing on building up young people's life skills. Typical measures include non-formal education, civic work including volunteering and work placements in the non-profit sector.²⁰⁹ In addition, countries are also putting in place a diverse range of measures focusing on individual capacity-building, skills development, as well as access to services and support for young people.²¹⁰

Production schools from Austria

Frequently considered as good practice examples, so-called 'production schools' in Austria try to re-engage young NEETs. Inspired by a similar initiative in Denmark and Germany, production schools have been in place for a number of years with the aim of supporting school-to-work transitions for young people who might find it difficult to find a work or training opportunity in the first place or who have dropped out of apprenticeship training previously.

²⁰⁹ Eurofound (2015), *Social inclusion of young people*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

²¹⁰ For an overview of recent examples of measures fostering the social inclusion of young people in the broadest sense, see Eurofound (2015), Chapter 4.

The aim of this measure is not to leave these young people stranded but to provide training in basic and social skills and ultimately bring them back into education and work by engaging them in practical training. Another central aspect of the programme is to help identify achievable training and labour market options for the young participants. The young people who engage in this initiative receive a basic income. Production schools also allow young people to catch up on any missed qualifications while increasing their practical skills.²¹¹ The programme is highly individualised, coordinates its efforts with other youth-centred measures and includes the possibility to follow up with individuals after having completed the production school. As part of this programme, young people up to the age of 25 engage in up to 30 hours of practical work in an area such as trades and crafts, office and multimedia or sales for a period of up to 12 months (with a possibility of extension). A coach assists each young person in setting and achieving their individual goals. Continuous monitoring of the young person's exit into employment, education or training is an integrated pillar of this programme, closely involving the PES in following up with participants.

Actors involved include local, regional and national stakeholders including the Ministry of Labour, the PES, the Ministry of Education, schools and employers whose main role is to ensure that the target group of young people in need of support can be identified and reached. The first production school in Austria was set up in 2001 but most production schools were opened in 2010 and partly co-financed by the European Social Fund. In 2014, a total of 30 production schools were in operation, with a total of 2,749 young people participating.²¹² An evaluation of the outcomes of this measure found that since 2006 the number of participants has grown ninefold.²¹³ Moreover, it found that production schools are performing very well in terms of reaching their target groups, but also in terms of young people exiting into employment with one-third of previous participants being in (non-subsidised) employment after one year of participating in this measure.

Focus on vocational education and training and dual educational pathways

While the above features play an important role for young disengaged people, it can be argued that vocational education and training (VET) and apprenticeships play an even more important role for the middle attainers. As previously mentioned, the crisis has revealed that higher education may no longer shield young people from becoming unemployed as well educated young people have been struggling to get a foothold in the labour market in recent years. Another interesting aspect revealed by the crisis is that Member States with well-functioning VET and especially well-established apprenticeship systems²¹⁴ have been performing comparatively better than the majority of EU Member States in terms of youth

²¹¹ Sozialministerium Österreich (2014), *Produktionsschulen: Konzept inklusive Umsetzungsregelungen*, Vienna, https://www.sozialministeriumservice.at/cms/site/attachments/9/9/1/CH0013/CMS1434111677157/anlage_produktionsschule_01_-_konzept.pdf

²¹² Sozialministerium Österreich (2015), *Jugend und Arbeit in Österreich*, Vienna, http://www.sozialministerium.at/cms/site/attachments/1/0/6/CH2124/CMS1402033052188/jugend_und_arbeit_in_oesterreich_berichtsjahr_2014_2015_webversion.pdf

²¹³ Bergmann, N. and Schelepa, S. (2011), *Bestandsaufnahme der österreichischen Produktionsschulen*, L&R Sozialforschung, Vienna, http://www.lrsocialresearch.at/files/Endericht_Produktionsschule_L&R.pdf

²¹⁴ Apprenticeship defined as 'systematic, long-term training alternating periods at the workplace and in an educational institution or training centre. The apprentice is contractually linked to the employer and receives remuneration (wage or allowance). The employer assumes responsibility for providing the trainee with training leading to a specific occupation' (see: Cedefop (2014), *Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 130 terms*, 2nd ed., Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg).

unemployment. In particular, the **German apprenticeship system** is often referred to as an efficient example of training young people with subsequently good employment and earnings prospects. In view of the well-functioning German model, the majority of EU Member States have committed to revamping their VET systems, including the set-up of dual educational pathways in line with the Austrian, German or Swiss apprenticeship models. In these countries, apprenticeships are highly standardised, typically last around three years and take place at company level where young people work and study in alternation working towards a vocational qualification while earning money. All of these factors may take some time to develop and require both medium and long-term investments. In general, many countries still need to develop a culture of apprenticeships and dual trajectories, and even traineeships. For the time being, Member States are especially struggling to provide meaningful VET pathways due to:

- a large stock of unemployed young people as a result of the crisis;
- a negative image and linked lower attractiveness of VET among young people, which is often paired with a low level of trust towards young people from employers and linked to a lower willingness to engage in VET;
- underdeveloped and underresourced apprenticeship systems.

The European Commission has therefore initiated the **European Alliance for Apprenticeships**²¹⁵ which now accompanies the Youth Guarantee under the current Youth Employment Package, set out to support Member States in developing such cultures. Launched in 2013, the aim of the Alliance for Apprenticeships is to increase the supply, quality and attractiveness of apprenticeships in Europe. It acknowledges the important role that high-quality apprenticeship schemes can play in dealing with and preventing youth unemployment by:

- promoting smooth school-to-work transitions;
- fostering skills relevant to the labour market;
- improving skills mismatches across the EU.

This initiative focuses on supporting the reform of apprenticeship systems through peer learning, ensuring the smart use of EU resources, and exploring the option of including apprenticeships in the EURES network.²¹⁶

Reformed apprenticeship systems across the EU

Since the onset of the crisis, the majority of Member States have started reforming their VET systems including the design and delivery of apprenticeship training. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) identifies a number of important trends to have taken place between 2010 and 2014 across Europe, including open access to VET including lifelong learning provisions, innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship in VET, as well as socially inclusive VET, but the most important trend for

²¹⁵ European Commission, European Alliance for Apprenticeships, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1147>

²¹⁶ European Commission (2013), *Launch of European Alliance for Apprenticeships*, press release, Brussels/Leipzig, 2 July.

middle attainers is likely to be an increase in quality, efficiency, attractiveness and relevance of VET.²¹⁷

A number of countries have been improving their VET and most notably their apprenticeship offer to attract, train and retain young people across different professions.²¹⁸ Examples come from Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Italy and Spain which are all currently expanding and modernising their VET provisions. In view of low take-up of apprenticeships, Italy decided to simplify the hiring conditions for apprenticeship contracts in order to make apprenticeships more attractive for employers. Greece meanwhile decided to introduce a dual system by setting up a so-called 'apprenticeship class' which essentially is a fourth option year of studying at Vocational Senior High Schools. New efforts in France include financial incentives for small and medium-sized enterprises to train young apprentices. Meanwhile in Belgium, new opportunities including apprenticeship offers have been set up in cooperation with service providers, the PES, employers and youth organisations. Provisions in Ireland are also subject to ongoing reform of its further education and training (FET) system, employment support schemes and apprenticeship programmes with the aim of making apprenticeships more relevant for the labour market. Austria continues to provide supra-company apprenticeship schemes for young people unable to secure an employer-based apprenticeship opportunity. In this case, young people are trained in state-financed training facilities where they alternate between classroom and practical training and acquire a qualification equal to that of company-based apprentices. As most of these initiatives are however relatively recent, there are only few evaluations of the above measures and reforms currently available.

4. Conclusions

Despite the considerable proportion of young people belonging to the group of the so-called 'overlooked middle', prior to the crisis most policy efforts were devoted to low achievers which has been further reinforced with the continuation of the economic downturn. In addition, the recent economic and financial crisis revealed that, in contrast to previous crises, those with higher education may no longer be adequately protected from becoming unemployed due to skills mismatches in the labour market. As a result, policymakers across many EU countries have been devoting more efforts to assisting the labour market entry of highly educated young people. Therefore, there is a persisting gap in both research and policy measures focusing on middle attainers, a group of young people which is now being referred to as the 'missing middle'.

Research shows that smooth school-to-work transitions are an important aspect in young people's lives and contribute significantly to their labour market performance in the short and in the long run. The longer it takes for young people to gain a foothold in the labour market, the more difficult this transition from the world of education to work can be. In an attempt to smoothen labour market transitions of young people not opting for tertiary education, Member States have recently committed to improving their VET and especially apprenticeship systems using the German apprenticeship model as a guideline, especially the aspect of apprentices alternating between training institutions/VET schools and practical company-based training. However, setting up the structures to provide good-quality,

²¹⁷ Cedefop (2015), *Stronger VET for better lives: Cedefop's monitoring report on vocational education and training policies 2010–14*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

²¹⁸ See the European Commission review of Youth Guarantee progress for more detail on country-by-country actions, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1161&langId=en&intPageId=3324>

efficient, relevant and attractive apprenticeship training is not an easy task and will need mid-term and long-term investments. At the same time, the involvement of labour market actors, especially employers and the PES, may be an important aspect to accelerate improvements both in VET and policy measures targeted at young people more generally. To conclude, more has been done in recent years at EU and national level to reach and engage middle attainers, notably in the framework of the Youth Guarantee which puts a strong focus on VET and apprenticeship systems. Despite an increase in recent policy action in this field, given that middle attainers form the largest group of NEETs in the EU, more efforts are required to understand the situation of the missing middle and subsequently engage those young people affected in meaningful ways.

27 January 2016

Fair Train – Written evidence (SMO0067)

Select Committee on Social Mobility Call for Evidence

Inquiry: The transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds

Written evidence submitted by Fair Train – September 2015

Introduction

Fair Train is a national charity which champions the benefits of all types of work experience, including Traineeships, Internships and Apprenticeships, as routes to employment.

We believe in the benefits of work experience to support young people to start their career, and we work with employers and learning providers to encourage social mobility through work experience. One of the ways we do this is through the national Work Experience Quality Standard accreditation – a set of frameworks which organisations can work towards to ensure they are delivering comprehensive work experience programmes. The Work Experience Quality Standard allows independent verification from an external source which can be used to demonstrate quality to bodies such as Ofsted. Developed by Fair Train following funding from UKCES, the accreditation was put together with support from the DfE, TUC, Ofsted, and a range of learning providers and employers.

Fair Train is also the Group Training Association for the Voluntary and Community Sector, which means we help other charities identify and overcome barriers to offering high quality work experience, and promote the benefits of Apprenticeships, Traineeships and other forms of work experience as a means of workforce development.

We also organise national Work Experience Week every October, to raise awareness of the benefits of work experience in helping young people find employment and allowing employers to recruit from a diverse talent pool. More information can be found at www.fairtrain.org/weweek

Fair Train believes that the Government should increase investment in vocational training in order to tackle youth unemployment and provide young people with the skills that they need to secure long term and valuable employment.

Fair Train welcomes all opportunities to engage with the Government on ways to extend and improve social mobility through work experience, including Traineeships and Apprenticeships.

Fair Train believes that the national Work Experience Quality Standard accreditation could provide a cost effective, industry-led, trialled and tested solution to some of the issues raised.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

The most significant factor affecting social mobility is the lack of work-based opportunities available to young people. Fair Train believes that high quality work experience can help to improve social mobility because placements are generally not based on academic performance or social status, and *should* therefore be accessible to everyone. Work experience allows young people to gain a taste of working life, and good quality work experience opens the door to good quality employment opportunities.

Many schools are focused on the traditional academic route of sixth form and university, which leaves behind those who are less academically able, or who are unable or choose not to go to university. Schools are often focused on academic results and targets for sixth form, which creates an immediate barrier for those looking to deviate from this path.

Fair Train welcomed the announcement by Nick Boles MP, Minister for Skills & Equalities, of new statutory guidance for schools in the wake of the 2013 Ofsted report which found that Apprenticeships were rarely promoted effectively, especially in schools with sixth forms. However, Ofsted guidance effective from September 2014 states that schools should give employers and other providers delivering Apprenticeships the opportunity to inform pupils directly about what they offer, and emphasises that Apprenticeships and university offer two equally effective routes into a successful career.

One of the biggest problems we hear is that young people simply don't know about alternative opportunities, such as Apprenticeships and vocational training routes. Fair Train believes that high quality work experience should complement high quality, independent careers advice in schools. Work experience helps to break the cycle of 'no work experience - no work' by offering good quality work opportunities, allowing young people to gain invaluable skills, aiding them to tackle the first steps into work. Now that work experience is no longer compulsory for schools to arrange, participation is limited for young people who are harder to reach.

Many schools use internal staff to provide careers advice. Not only is this not independent, but to become a teacher, you require a degree, so teachers are more likely to reflect on their own experience. We support the National School Apprenticeship (NSA) campaign (<http://www.fairtrain.org/latest-news/Fair-Train-welcomes-school-apprentice-plans.aspx>), which encourages every school in England to employ at least one apprentice by 2020. This will help to promote vocational education to impressionable young people, and allow teachers to see first-hand the benefits of Apprenticeships.

Outside of school, changes in social norms have added to a lack of work experience for young people. With the decline of the traditional Saturday job (<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/cei/centrelinkmagazine/march2014contents/ukcesworkexperierereport/>), fewer young people are combining part time work with their studies. In the late 1990s, 40% of learners also worked, yet this has dropped to 20% today. Learning providers and employers tell us the same stories time and time again: "*Many young people*

come to us never having done a day's work in their lives, not even a paper round or voluntary role. This creates unrealistic expectations of work and the value of their impact at an early age" (Fair Train member). Fair Train would like to see an increase in the range of vocational training available to young people, particularly in non-traditional sectors.

Fair Train members also report that many young people have high expectations and significantly low self-esteem in an increasingly individualistic society.

A recent UKCES study showed that word of mouth and personal recommendation is the primary route by which employers recruit young people (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/404997/15.02.18_Youth_report_V17.pdf). The study quotes that: "Reliance on informal recruitment methods, at the expense of more open and accessible methods can mean that young people are at a labour market disadvantage without even realising it if they lack the right networks and contacts". This is a prime example of social mobility affecting young people at a very early point in their working lives.

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UKCES (2015) Catch 16-24

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

The most comprehensive data about this group of young people can be obtained from destination data held by the Department for Education.

Students who do not achieve maths and English at GCSE grade C or above (or equivalent) face huge challenges to secure a Level 3 learning opportunity and a quality employment offer. It is often these young people who are classed as 'unknown' and therefore those who most require help are the hardest to reach. This is why an early introduction to work-based learning is key.

Fair Train welcomes the recommendations from the Wolf Report (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-vocational-education-the-wolf-report>) which led to the increase in work-based learning in 16-19 education, reflected in the recent changes to 16-19 study programmes, which must contain an element of work experience. However, we know, and Ofsted has confirmed, that the implementation of the work experience element is patchy at best. Fair Train and the Association of Employers and Learning Providers (AELP) produced an e-guide to support learning providers with this

(<http://www.fairtrain.org/quality-standard/work-experience-e-guide>). Fair Train also offers free advice and guidance to learning providers about the work experience element of study programmes, but delivery remains patchy for all students on all courses in all institutions, which worries us.

Fair Train would like to see the reintroduction of statutory work experience for 14-16 year olds who are at risk of becoming NEET. The Risk Of NEET Indicator (RONI) would be an effective way of highlighting learners who would benefit from work-based learning at an earlier age, which could help to prepare them for Apprenticeships and Traineeships in a supportive environment. With the introduction of Raising the Participation Age (RPA), Fair Train would also like to see statutory work experience for *all* 16-19 year olds, and support for schools in delivering this.

Fair Train believes that study programmes and Traineeships are a beneficial way of improving the transition from school to work, but many young people are not aware of them. There are large numbers of young people who do not complete A-Level courses and leave after a year - the Local Government Association estimated the cost of 6th form drop out to be £800 million per annum (<http://www.local.gov.uk/documents/10180/11431/Achievement+and+retention+in+post-16+education,%20February+2015/746a1fb2-2a89-49e9-a53b-f5339288d4b1>). Many of these young people would have benefitted from careers support to assist them to find a more suitable employment/learning opportunity such as a study programme or Traineeship, perhaps then leading to an Apprenticeship.

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3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Fair Train believes that current routes from school to work are not effective for disparate groups of young people. We believe that vocational routes such as Apprenticeships, Traineeships and other forms of good quality work experience should be more accessible to these young people.

The current transition system is complicated and confused. There is duplication from national level (DfE/BIS) right down to local level (local authorities/Local Enterprise Partnerships). The recent announcement of the Careers and Enterprise Company to take up some of this role has been seen by some as a continuation of this duplication, which means it is facing barriers before delivery has started, making it harder to engage organisations. On the flip-side, it is also being hailed as a panacea, but hasn't really got the resources to support every young person in every school in every area, which could exacerbate social mobility issues.

The traditional A-Level and university route is still seen by key influencers of young people - parents and many teachers – as at best superior and at worst the only route into a successful career. Fair Train would like to see the Government tackle this barrier with support for the National Careers Service and, more importantly, by raising awareness of the value of Apprenticeships and Traineeships with parents.

More work needs to be done to break down the perceived barriers surrounding vocational training. A recent study from [Notgoingtouni.co.uk](http://www.notgoingtouni.co.uk) showed that out of 80,000 year 11-13 students, 45 percent felt that an Apprenticeship was a good way to progress onto higher education, but 27 percent still thought they were for people who had no academic skills (<http://www.onrec.com/news/statistics-and-trends/study-of-80k-british-teenagers-reveals-more-than-1-in-4-have-%E2%80%98no-idea%E2%80%99-wh>).

Whilst Apprenticeships are gaining momentum, Traineeships are still slow on the uptake. It is young people, rather than employers who need to be engaged in the benefits of Traineeships, as the number of vacancies far outweighs the number of applicants. This is because many young people do not see the immediate benefits of Traineeships, as they are unpaid roles. Many organisations offer a bursary to cover travel costs, which is a key motivator for young people in this age group. Adjusting simple things such as the standard template used to advertise these vacancies on the Gov.uk website, so that the financial assistance is highlighted at the top, and the general way the vacancies are promoted, would help breakdown some of the barriers to recruitment. Additionally, more work needs to be done to raise the status of Traineeships and the brand itself. For instance there is no central resource for learners and parents as there is for Apprenticeships. We have found that Traineeships work most effectively when they are used by the learning provider as an intensive support programme to help get learners ready for an Apprenticeship or employment.

Fair Train welcomes the announcement of Degree Apprenticeships in fast moving sectors, which brings vocational training in line with and equal to the A-Level and university route. However, we also propose that *all* Higher Education courses link in with employers and offer work experience, as graduates are also affected by limited social mobility. Nottingham Trent University is a forerunner in this field, and the Vice Chancellor is very forward thinking, pushing for all students to be offered work experience. We agree with this model and would like to see this rolled out nationally.

The increase in studio schools and career colleges is also welcomed, as these providers create bespoke programmes for learners based on extended work placements. Fair Train recommends that more research is done into the destinations and progress from learners who undertake this route, via a longitudinal study, and if positive, that more of these initiatives should be rolled out nationally. We would be interested in working with Government on this if that would be helpful.

References

Notgoingtouni.co.uk (2015) ‘¼ of 16-18 year olds don’t know what to do when they finish school’

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

In a recent study of learning providers that Fair Train works with, finding quality placements with employers was the biggest barrier to offering work experience (<http://www.fairtrain.org/latest-news/Lack-of-quality-placements-with-employers-is-biggest-barrier-for-work-experience.aspx>).

There is also a national postcode lottery in work experience and employability support for young people, which was highlighted in a recent UKCES study (<http://www.fairtrain.org/latest-news/New-research-show-work-experience-is-a-postcode-lottery.aspx>). For example, in the Humber area, only 29 percent of employers offer work placements and the area also has a high level of youth unemployment, meaning that those young people who are most in need are also most likely to lose out.

The Mayor of London, Boris Johnson, recently outlined a proposal entitled 'London Ambitions' which commits young Londoners to 100 hours of work experience and careers guidance per learner (<http://www.fairtrain.org/latest-news/Boris-backs-100-hour-careers-and-work-experience-plan.aspx>). Fair Train welcomes this proposal, but feels it should be rolled out nationally, as it will only create a bigger gap between the capital and more rural / geographically dispersed areas which need the support even more, adding to the postcode lottery problem and exacerbating social mobility issues

Employer engagement is key to reducing social mobility, and employers who offer work experience and Apprenticeships are more encouraged to employ young people. Fair Train believes that one way to encourage more employers to offer opportunities is via the Traineeship route. Traineeships allow employers to get used to offering work experience and encourage them to consider the benefits which Apprenticeships offer (to both the young person and the employer). They are an effective recruitment tool for the employer and allow learners with little or no work experience to gain valuable skills.

Fair Train coordinates and promotes Work Experience Week (<http://www.fairtrain.org/weweek>), a national celebration of work experience and its importance for young people. Work Experience Week 2015 runs from 12th to 16th October. During this week there are a wide variety of events spanning several sectors to encourage employers to consider offering good quality Apprenticeships, Traineeships and other forms of work experience; and PR work to raise awareness of the benefits of good quality work experience for both young people and employers. The Government could actively support this existing initiative, at very little cost, to promote the benefits of work experience in tackling social mobility.

Employers who want to offer work experience often don't know where to go for support, or feel they do not have the time or resource to offer placements (UKCES, 2015). Fair Train works with employers to try and break down these barriers, which can be both real and

perceived. One of the ways we do this is through the national Work Experience Quality Standard, a national accreditation recognising those organisations offering good quality work experience in all its guises (including Apprenticeships and Traineeships). The Work Experience Quality Standard acts as a framework for development, supporting organisations wishing to commence the journey - perhaps by employing their first apprentice - as well as those looking to improve their support to young people. It aims to drive up the quality of work experience offered to young people across the private, public, and voluntary sectors. The Work Experience Quality Standard was developed using funding from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). More information can be found at www.fairtrain.org/quality-standard.

We think the Government could very easily answer all of the concerns regarding quality, particularly surrounding their commitment to introducing three million apprenticeships, by requiring organisations to become accredited with the Work Experience Quality Standard. This is an already established way of enhancing quality, which could be done at minimal cost to Government. The Work Experience Quality Standard has been put together by employers and learning providers, alongside the DfE, TUC and Ofsted; is robust through independent assessment and audit; and is a solution which has been put together by the sector for the sector, so offers very little effort and investment for maximum gain.

In addition to external support to understand Apprenticeships and Traineeships, how employers could benefit and how to go about offering suitable opportunities; financial incentives will help employers to put the internal support in place (such as implementing the Work Experience Quality Standard) to enable them to offer good quality opportunities to benefit both young people and the economy itself. It is particularly difficult for the majority of Voluntary and Community Sector employers, as well as many SMEs (see Holt report at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/34731/12-891-making-apprenticeships-more-accessible-to-smes-holt-review.pdf for an overview) to put the infrastructure in place in order to offer good quality opportunities for young people without a financial incentive to support this. Many SMEs just don't know where to start, and taking time out to train a young person to high quality can be hard when they are pressured to focus on the bottom line. Fair Train would like to see financial incentives targeted at the Voluntary and Community Sector, and SMEs, in order to drive up Apprenticeship and Traineeship numbers in a significant area of the economy. An increase in work experience opportunities in this sector will help to address social mobility, and introduce young people to a career in an area they didn't even know existed.

Many employers offer work placements through internal networks such as family and friends which limits social mobility for those who can't access the opportunities. We believe that employers should be required to take on a diverse cohort of learners from a range of backgrounds. This could be a criterion as part of the new Government initiative for large companies bidding for government funding to show a commitment to Apprenticeships (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-unveils-plans-to-boost-apprenticeships-and-transform-training>).

The proposed changes to Apprenticeships are likely to see more employer engagement (in certain sectors), which will have been demonstrated by the Trailblazer projects. However, there are further steps which the Government could take to increase engagement, such as assigning a range of sector champions to support employers, for example the CEO of Jaguar Land Rover as the ambassador for Apprenticeships within the automotive engineering sector. Fair Train would be keen to support Government in further discussions, and could, as the Group Training Association (GTA), act as a formal champion for promoting Apprenticeships within the Voluntary and Community Sector, etc.

References

Fair Train (2015) 'Lack of quality placements is biggest barrier for work experience'

Gov.uk (2015) 'PM unveils plans to boost apprenticeships and transform training'

Holt, J (2015) Making Apprenticeships more accessible to small and medium-sized enterprises

London Enterprise Panel (2015) London Ambitions: Shaping a successful careers offer for all young Londoners

UKCES (2015) Catch 16-24

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

There are a variety of opportunities for organisations to be responsible in different areas of the transition to work. As a key organisation within the sector, Fair Train would be ideally placed to lead on this. Other organisations such as the National Careers Service, for example, could be given more resource to be responsible for managing this transition period on a national level.

We believe that prime contractors of the National Careers Service should work with LEPs to ascertain local labour market information to inform job vacancies. The National Careers Service could also disseminate information on national skills shortages so that young people gain a greater understanding of where there are likely to be greater employment opportunities. That said, the new Careers and Enterprise Company will most likely play a key part in this role. As both the new Careers and Enterprise Company and the National Careers Service will report to BIS, we hope that they will work together effectively and that current provision will benefit from having a stronger employer input.

From a quality perspective, Fair Train could support the National Careers Service and the Careers and Enterprise Company to support driving up and independently assessing provision. We already work with some LEPs as part of their skills strategies to link employers with education across their region. We also have strong links with many of the National Careers Service prime contractors.

As employer engagement is key to delivering effective vocational training and reducing social mobility, it is important that employers at all levels understand the reasons for offering work experience, from senior management to entry-level staff. The national Work Experience Quality Standard accreditation ensures that this relationship is in place, and looks for employers to have a thorough, appropriate induction plan in place as well as regular reviews with the learner to ensure that the work experience placement is effective. We have found that putting these measures in place to establish a positive working relationship makes the placement more beneficial for the learner *and* the employer and is more likely to lead to progression internally or externally once the placement comes to an end.

The Work Experience Quality Standard (<http://www.fairtrain.org/quality-standard>) contains these measures as part of a framework which organisations can work towards to ensure they are delivering comprehensive work experience programmes. It allows independent verification from an external source which can be used to demonstrate quality to awarding bodies such as Ofsted. Developed by Fair Train following funding from UKCES, it was put together with support from the DfE, TUC, Ofsted, and a range of learning providers and employers.

Fair Train members believe that vocational training offers value for money for both the employer and the young person, as well as to the state. This value is both financial as well as social. Recent figures from BIS show that for every £1 invested in Apprenticeships, the country gets a £26 benefit (<https://vine.co/v/e6xMVY6dztQ>).

As the Work Experience Quality Standard has been developed with Government funding awarded via UKCES, the Government could increase effectiveness at no additional cost by requiring employers to become accredited as a condition of their Apprenticeship funding. This would also tackle the criticisms of quantity over quality for the 3m target figures. The process has been designed by employers and learning providers as a simple and effective way of removing barriers to and increasing the effectiveness of the work experience placement for both the young person and the employer. As Fair Train is the Group Training Association for the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS), we also represent SMEs and VCS organisations that may be overlooked by the Careers and Enterprise Company. Fair Train could therefore act as a champion for the Voluntary and Community Sector and work with the Government in an advisory role to help overcome barriers which the sector is facing.

UKCES recommends that employers offer work inspiration in order to appeal to young people. These opportunities need to be good quality in order to generate real benefits for the young person, the employer and the UK economy. Fair Train would like the Government to consider making the national Work Experience Quality Standard accreditation a statutory requirement for any organisation (employer or training provider). This will provide the Government with a robust due diligence process so that they have an easy, industry led and established method of ensuring quality provision for their funding invested, at little additional cost to Government, thereby providing an extremely cost effective and rapid solution for tackling social mobility issues highlighted as part of this inquiry.

References

BIS (2015) 'For every £1 invested in apprenticeships the company gets at least a £26 benefit'

14 September 2015

FIRST Face to Face Limited – Written Evidence (SMO0100)

This evidence has been written and submitted by Charlotte Windebank, aged 29 - Managing Director of FIRST Face to Face Ltd: A company set up to facilitate young person led enterprise and employment projects – www.firstfacetoface.co.uk and on the second page, Eloise Lotz, aged 23 who has been involved with a project and is now currently employed as a mentor.

Q1

The evidence we have collected is based on findings and experience from running young person led enterprise and employment projects in North East England. It is important to note that factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people will be different dependant on the age of the young person.

Our evidence is based on 185 survey results taken from 16 – 24 year olds living in and around Sunderland. Amongst a variety of interesting results we found that that attitudes towards work and opportunities were positive within the 16 – 18 category with over two thirds of participants saying they had received very good or excellent services from their local authority and agreed that there were plenty of opportunities in and around their local area. 19 – 24 year olds however gave a very different story using adjectives such as ‘isolated’ ‘lonely’ and ‘forgotten about’ with over half rating their experiences negatively saying that more needed to be done.

Q4

Best practise comes from the learnings of the National Citizen Service; a government scheme which gives 15 – 17 year olds the opportunity to develop their own community projects that improve the lives of groups of people the young people have chosen to help: <http://www.ncsyas.co.uk/> FIRST Face to Face uses a similar model but gives young people ownership and the resources to be able to plan, execute and evaluate their own enterprise and employment projects. Allowing young people to decide what they want to and how they want to do it gives them confidence and significantly improves engagement and social mixing. An example of a project that highlights this model is a FIRST Face to Face initiative called ‘Design Your Own Future’ www.designyourownfuture.com. This is in partnership with Sunderland City Council and Job Centre Plus and looks at giving young people work experience where they design and execute a project based on a brief given to them by the council. Previous projects have looked at how the council could improve communications to its local young people and currently, how they can encourage young people to sign up to a civic crowd funding platform called Spacehive: <https://www.spacehive.com/>.

We are employing young people from the previous project to mentor the next cohort as survey results suggest that careers guidance and coaching is better received if the mentee and mentor are of a similar age. We believe that employers should have more interaction with 18 – 24 year old job seekers and be able to advertise work experience directly to job seekers instead of going through advisors. Currently Job Centre Plus will not advertise work

experiences on universal job match – the online system used by job seekers to apply for jobs.

We would also like to see business networking to be included in the National Curriculum so that students have the experience of speaking to people within their local business community on a 1 on 1 basis. Instead of having a single person speak to a room of 100 students we believe that this is much more effective and inspiring to students. FIRST Face to Face run young person led networking events in the North East and we would be interested in progressing this concept nationally.

Q5

It is the responsibility of the young people to improve their transition from school to work but they must be equipped with the right information, guidance and resources in order to feel empowered and in control of their own destiny. Too many people are coming out of the education system shocked and unprepared because they have not engaged in the services the current education system is offering. We need to install a 'can do' attitude and allow them to test their ideas and assumptions whilst still in a safe and environment. Young people need to have the power to run their own projects and FIRST Face to Face is in the position to be able to assist with this.

Q1 thoughts from Eloise Lotz, 23 year old currently employed by FIRST Face to Face as a mentor after previously participating in 'Design Your Own Future'
www.designyourownfuture.com:

"North/South Divide - there is less money in the north (in particular the north east as Manchester has a lot more funding) therefore less funding and schemes running to help these young people.

Traditional Industries Lost - those who have come from cities/towns (especially in the north east, Sunderland - shipping, Durham - mines) who had previously relied on manual labour industries to create jobs and money may now struggle to find basic entry level in a manual labour positions and therefore when up against those who have gone through the academic route would struggle to get into an admin position etc.

Mental health - North East has one of the highest ratios of people who suffer from Depression. If a young person is suffering from Depression/anxiety etc they would struggle to see a positive outlook for their future and being unemployed for a low period will only make this worse.

Rising university fees could put off a young person from a working class background off from continuing in their education. If there are families who have never had anyone in them going to university then raising the tuition fees and cutting grants would push the young person further and further away from applying for university.

Coming from a background in care & perhaps if they have not received the best education/support whilst at school would mean they could struggle with the whole job application process, a lot of the time jobs ask for previous experience as they are unwilling to train from the beginning steps. If the young person has an unhelpful support worker/job centre advisor who is more interested in ticking boxes and sanction targets, how will they receive the correct guidance, encouragement and support to understand the job application process and desire to find a career?

More community support networks need to be put in place which run solely to help and support people who are struggling rather than for profit. A community where skills are taught and shared around and those of all abilities can engage with one another to create a network. – In Sunderland the survey results showed that 16 – 24 year olds would be interested in a face to face Drop-In Centre for young people, ran by young people.

Businesses who trust the young people they are employing and give them the time to learn and develop would be much more effective than a high competition for jobs where 'experience is needed' and certain qualifications are needed before employment."

14 September 2015

The Found Generation – Written evidence (SMO0101)

Written Evidence for House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility **The Found Generation – September 2015**

Introduction

The Found Generation is a youth-led, cross-party, not for profit campaign group set up in 2012 which aims to tackle Britain's youth unemployment crisis and prevent the creation of a so-called "*lost generation*" of unemployed young people. We are a group of young people from a range of backgrounds – many of us have personal experience of youth unemployment – and we run The Found Generation on a voluntary basis in our spare time.

Our purpose is to campaign on behalf of young people for local and national politicians to implement policies to reduce and prevent youth unemployment. We have received awards from the British Youth Council for our campaigning efforts as well as running or supporting a number of successful campaigns. Examples of our campaigning work include:

- Attending and contributing to various debates, seminars, conferences and other events on youth unemployment, providing a 'youth voice' at these events which would often be missing otherwise. In particular, we have given speeches or run workshops at a number of events including the Oxford Education Conference (2014), the Youth Employment Convention (2014) and the Youth Employment Summit (2015).
- Meeting and discussing youth unemployment with various MPs and Lords (including current and former Government Ministers) as well as other stakeholders including local councils, employers, think-tanks, charities, voluntary sector organisations and other young people.
- Providing evidence to the British Youth Council's Youth Select Committee on 'A Curriculum for Life' (2013) and the National Union of Students' Commission on the Future of Work (2014), publishing a report on 'Practical Solutions to UK Youth Unemployment' (2014), which was cited in a House of Commons Westminster Hall debate in July 2014, and preparing a comprehensive Manifesto for Youth Employment (2015) before the last General Election.
- Actively promoting greater cross-party consensus on youth unemployment across the major political parties. For example, we were one of the only organisations to campaign for the establishment of an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Youth Employment in the UK Parliament, which has since been established and which we are working closely with.
- Supporting, advising and working in partnership with the 'Youth Employment UK' campaign.

You can find out more on our website – <http://www.thefoundgeneration.co.uk> – or follow us on Twitter at [@TheFoundGenUK](https://twitter.com/TheFoundGenUK)

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Social mobility describes the relationship between an individual’s starting point and where they end up as adults; usually in terms of their occupational status, individual earnings or household income²¹⁹.

We believe that there are many significant factors which affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people with regard to the transition from school to the workplace, or more broadly from education into employment. Three of the most significant are as follows:

- **The personal situation and background of the young person.** This includes their family situation; how much their parents earn; what sort of area they live in; whether or not they have any illnesses, disabilities, learning difficulties or other challenges which put them at an additional disadvantage. For example, recent research suggests that, on average, children from lower income families or those with less advantaged social class backgrounds do not perform as well in a series of cognitive tests taken at age 5 as children from higher income families or those from advantaged social class backgrounds.²²⁰
- **The role played by employers.** For example, other recent research has also found that, despite efforts to improve social mobility, “elite” law and accountancy firms continue to be heavily dominated at entry level by people from more privileged socio-economic backgrounds.

This is in large part due to a tendency to recruit the majority of new entrants to these firms from a narrow group of elite universities, where students are more likely to have attended selective or fee-paying schools, and/or come from relatively affluent backgrounds. In addition, these elite firms often define ‘talent’ according to a number of factors such as drive, resilience, strong communication skills and in particular confidence and ‘polish’, which participants in the research acknowledged can be mapped on to middle-class status and socialisation.²²¹

- **The extent to which the education system prepares – or does not prepare – young people for adult life, including but not limited to employment or self-employment.** This is probably the most important of the three, as the education system can to a large extent overcome the disadvantages faced by young people from certain

²¹⁹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447575/Downward_mobility_opportunity_hoarding_and_the_glass_floor.pdf

²²⁰https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/447575/Downward_mobility_opportunity_hoarding_and_the_glass_floor.pdf

²²¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/434791/A_qualitative_evaluation_of_non-educational_barriers_to_the_elite_professions.pdf

backgrounds and prejudice or entrenched attitudes from employers. For example, a young person from a disadvantaged background is much more likely to make a successful transition from the education system into the workplace if they have had proper careers advice and guidance; work experience opportunities; employer engagement; networking opportunities (such as access to alumni networks from their school or other institution); extra-curricular/voluntary opportunities; and have developed key soft skills or employability skills such as self-confidence.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

This question can be better answered in evidence from other organisations, but we would just briefly observe that these young people are not one homogenous group. Some young people, for example, may be undertaking apprenticeships or traineeships. Some may have left school and gone straight into a job. Others may be setting up a business or working for a family business, or may be working in a temporary job while working out what they wish to do for a career.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

The current transition system does not provide enough support to young people who do not follow the A-Level/higher education route to perform better on employment outcomes.

This is, in essence, because there are not enough opportunities for young people who do not wish to go down the higher education route, and young people are not properly prepared by the education system for the opportunities which are available.

As the Prime Minister, David Cameron MP, has argued: *“I want us to have as a new norm the idea that in school, everybody, everyone who can, either takes that path on to university, or takes that path on to an apprenticeship. You should be doing one or the other.”*²²²

It is therefore clear that the Government sees apprenticeships (as well as traineeships, which are often intended to prepare young people for apprenticeships) as the main alternative to A-Levels/higher education/university. However, much of the growth in apprenticeship numbers in recent years has been among people aged 25 and over, rather than among apprentices who are under 25.²²³ Much more therefore needs to be done to encourage young people to do apprenticeships and to encourage and incentivise employers

²²² <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/apprenticeship-speech-delivered-by-prime-minister-david-cameron-in-milton-keynes>

²²³ See for example <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06113/SN06113.pdf>

to offer apprenticeships to young people²²⁴ and the Government should act to ensure that apprenticeships for young people are a majority of the 3 million apprenticeships which they hope will be created in the next few years.

Much more also needs to be done to ensure young people are taught about apprenticeships and that they are properly covered within careers advice in schools. There have been a number of recent concerns raised – including from the Prime Minister himself – about careers advice and apprenticeships, suggesting that schools are failing to tell young people about apprenticeships when giving careers advice, or even that schools are actively steering young people away from apprenticeships and warning them not to become apprentices.²²⁵

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

There are a number of ways in which the transition to work can be improved for young people and a number of ways in which employers can be encouraged to employ more young people, particularly those who do not take the A-Levels/higher education route (we also believe that more can be done to help young people start up their own businesses, rather than just going into employment).

Our recent Manifesto for Youth Employment²²⁶, a cross-party report prepared by our young volunteers, contains a list of 32 reasoned policy proposals for the next Government to act on in order to scrap youth unemployment, and covered these topics in considerable depth. Although we believe the Committee would find it useful to read the Manifesto in full, we enclose a brief list of the key policies from the Manifesto below:

Improving the transition from school to work

- Requiring every state secondary school to embed enterprise education into their curriculum
- Creating more enterprise societies, business start-up schemes and optional enterprise courses across the education system
- Improving the way literacy and numeracy are taught in primary and secondary schools
- Embedding employability skills and character education into secondary schools
- Increasing the number of University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools and adopting best practice from these institutions in mainstream secondary schools
- Encouraging more young people to get involved in extra-curricular activities or voluntary work

²²⁴ See our ideas on this subject as set out here: <http://thefoundgeneration.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/The-Found-Generation-Manifesto-for-Youth-Employment-FINAL-16.04.15.pdf>

²²⁵ See <http://www.ncfe.org.uk/media/661817/Call%20for%20careers%20advice%20on%20apprenticeships.pdf> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/10573567/Woeful-careers-advice-for-apprentices-condemned.html> and <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/politics/david-cameron/11420718/David-Cameron-urges-teachers-to-do-more-on-apprenticeships.html>

²²⁶ <http://thefoundgeneration.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/The-Found-Generation-Manifesto-for-Youth-Employment-FINAL-16.04.15.pdf>

- Ensuring all young people receive high quality, face to face careers advice, particularly in schools
- Improving work experience opportunities for young people in schools and colleges
- Setting up an active alumni community in every state secondary school and college
- Making schools properly accountable for preparing young people for the world of work
- Encouraging and supporting unemployed young people to undertake voluntary work, work experience or internships
- Setting up a network of Youth Employment Centres across the country

Encouraging employers to employ more young people

- Offering more generous financial grants and other support to SMEs for hiring young apprentices
- Improving the reputation and brand of apprenticeships
- Increasing the number of apprenticeships for young people in the public sector
- Reducing the financial costs to employers of hiring young people
- Expanding the use of public sector procurement to create more jobs and other opportunities for young people
- Creating or backing a nationally recognisable ‘kitemark’ for “youth friendly” employers

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

The primary responsibility for this should fall to the UK Government, working in conjunction with appropriate stakeholders, including in particular local councils, employers and schools. However, this will need to be co-ordinated and managed properly, both locally and nationally.

Our Manifesto for Youth Employment²²⁷ and our earlier report on Practical Solutions to UK Youth Unemployment from July 2014²²⁸ both made two key proposals which the Committee may find of interest.

Firstly, we propose that the Government should, to improve co-ordination of policy and initiatives on youth unemployment, appoint a “*Minister for Youth Employment*”. This could be done either as a new stand-alone cross-departmental post, similar to the post of “*Minister for Youth Employment*” which existed in the Scottish Government in recent years, or it could be an addition to the Minister for Employment role at the Department for Work and Pensions – similar to the ‘add-on’ Minister for Cities post operated by the UK Government.

²²⁷ <http://thefoundgeneration.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/The-Found-Generation-Manifesto-for-Youth-Employment-FINAL-16.04.15.pdf>

²²⁸ <http://thefoundgeneration.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/The-Found-Generation-Practical-Solutions-to-Youth-Unemployment-FINAL.pdf>

Whoever held this post would be responsible for co-ordinating government policies on youth unemployment across Government departments, including with regard to supporting the transition to the workplace for school leavers, and would be supported by a cross-departmental unit or agency which had input from a range of departments, in particular the Department for Education (DfE), the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), and the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS). This Minister would also be responsible for ensuring young people are properly consulted on youth unemployment policy and that the effects of policy changes on young people in this area are properly assessed and considered by the Government.

Secondly, we propose that the Government should encourage and incentivise the creation of local partnerships to co-ordinate action to tackle youth unemployment at a local level. These could be set up along on the basis of the formal Youth Employment Partnerships proposed by the ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment, or on a more informal basis, taking inspiration from existing successful local partnership initiatives such as Ladder for London, the Birmingham Bacclaureate or Norwich for Jobs. These partnerships should include representation for young people and relevant stakeholders in local communities, but should be designed and run locally managed to encourage involvement from local stakeholders such as local councils, MPs, Local Enterprise Partnerships, Jobcentre Plus, employers, educational institutions and voluntary sector organisations. Where possible, these local partnerships should be offered additional powers or funding by the Government to help them undertake certain initiatives.

14 September 2015

Futures Advice Skills Employment Ltd – Written evidence (SMO0028)

The following questions cover the full focus of our inquiry. It is not necessary to answer every question in detail in your submission and invite you to share any other information with us that you feel is relevant to the focus of the inquiry. Please consult the staff of the Committee if you have any questions. There is further information on each question attached to this call for evidence. Please focus your answers on young people aged 14-24 who are not on, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A-Level to Higher Education pathway

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Young person:

- Family, social and cultural background
- Individual aspiration and ambition
- Personal focus, determination and attitude (both inherent and trained characteristics)
- Preparation (employability skills and competences acquired and deployed; and includes both 'hard' skills and social capital)
- Access to independent, impartial and informed advice and guidance

- Access to and participation in a diverse range of out of school activities (key to improving social capital)

School

- Approach school takes to wider learning and personal growth beyond just academic attainment – is preparation for adult working life a central theme of the schools vision for its students
- Quality of careers programme
 - o Where it sits in the schools priorities
 - o Competence and commitment of staff delivering the programme
 - o Teaching the skills and attitudes for employment (including Personal Learning and Thinking Skills [PLTS] and Social and Emotional aspects of Learning [SEAL's] – both contributing to social capital)
 - o Aspiration raising
 - o Opportunity awareness raising
 - o Introduction to the global workplace and the opportunities and threats it presents
 - o Exposure to work related activities and people in employment

Availability

1. Availability of employment opportunities, awareness of and access to them.
2. Structured post entry training

2. **There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**

who are they,	why are they in this position	what are their career trajectories?
1. Those undertaking full time vocational training at college	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Chosen career path requires vocational training · Prefer vocational learning to academic learning · Failed to obtain required GCSE passes to attend academic training · Lack of availability or failure to take up opportunity of apprenticeship in 	<p>Can be good, leading to vocationally based higher education or high level employment but varies depending on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · area of vocational training undertaken, · level of that training success rates achieved work experience gained whilst on programme · availability of jobs in the geographical area. <p>Most would move into</p>

	chosen work area	employment and progress along the lines of 2 below
2.Those in employment with formal and recognised training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Chosen career path requires vocational training · Prefer work based route to full time education · Want/need to be earning money 	Can be exceptionally good, offering long term job security and continued training and progression. Good firms would look to secure their investment as long term employees. For the young person themselves they will acquire experiences and competences which will make them attractive in the marketplace.
3.Those in employment without formal and recognised training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Rejected continued learning either full time or part time · Lack of aspiration and long term planning · Short term financial benefits can be attractive 	May or may not be good in terms of long term economic security but likely to be poor in terms of lifelong learning, upward salary, responsibility progression and skill transferability.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes?

The current transition system is heavily influenced towards A Levels and higher education. Despite the fact that there are an increasing number of high quality and high status apprenticeships available post 16 and post 18, these are still widely regarded as inferior to the academic progression route. Post 16 full time vocational education suffers similar attitudinal consequences.

However, in practice, many of those who do enter high quality vocational training instead of academic learning post 16 or post 18 do make just as good and sometimes better progression in the workplace than those who have continued in full time education.

If not, why not?

- Teacher/parent/student ignorance of, or ill informed about, the apprenticeship framework
- Intellectual prejudice
- Vested academic interest – for both school sixth forms and universities increased student numbers equates to increased revenue

- Lack of forward planning by employers (too many employers advertise their vacancies only at the end of the academic year. By this time most young people have already been offered places in the Sixth Form or at college)
- Ease of access into post 16 and post 18 learning compared to access to employment where more effort is required by the young person
- Entering employment involves higher emotional risk for those unfamiliar with it. Remaining in full time education is 'safe'. Schools should do more to prepare for working life and employers should recognise that young people as new employees need to be nurtured.
- 'Right of passage' attitude by young people. Being employed you are expected to be an adult. Being a student means that you are still a young person. Continuing in full time academic education allows you to delay the responsibilities of adult life

What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

- Lack of workplace skills
- Lack of awareness of a workplace environment
- Lack of awareness of work opportunities
- Overcoming years of drip feed inculcation that staying in full time academic education is best

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education?

- Some schools are doing a very good job already. Others have recognised the need to improve. These are the schools who have or are working towards a careers quality awards such as Career Mark but:
 - Research commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE), published three years after the Government introduced new statutory duty on schools to secure access to independent careers guidance for pupils aged 12 to 18, has found that only two-thirds of schools are meeting this requirement by engaging external, professional careers advisers.
 - DfE also found that one in five schools no longer provide careers education in the curriculum.
 - As a result the DfE strengthened its Statutory Guidance to schools in March of this year, and recommended that all schools should work towards achieving a quality award for careers, such as Career Mark, which is nationally validated by the Quality in Careers Standard
- Career Mark provides a framework for improvement, a support process, a rigorous assessment and a recognition process. It requires schools to provide equal and balanced support for all post 16 and post 18 options and to

provide students with employability skills and a positive approach to lifelong learning

- For all schools the requirement to apply the 8 principles defined in the 'Gatsby Report' would constitute a significant step forward and should form the basis of any school's responsibilities
- The increased interest of Ofsted in progression planning and destinations is to be welcomed but Ofsted is unlikely to concentrate on this specific group, it will more likely consider the overall outcomes process. Nonetheless there are already signs that schools are devoting more strategic and delivery time to careers education.
- Introduce key performance targets for schools relating to work related learning

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

At Government level

- DfE
- DBIS
- Local authorities – see for example 'London Ambitions' and 'The Kent Model of Career Education and Guidance'

At the Advisory/Pressure Group level

- Academic Research
- Employer Groups such as CBI
- Education Groups such as NAHT
- Political Groups such as LGA

At the strategic level

- Academy groups
- Governing bodies
- Head teachers

At the delivery level

- Departmental heads and delivery staff
- National Careers Service
- Careers advisers
- employers

At the personal level

- Students
- Parents

At the inspection/assessment level

- Ofsted
- Careers quality awards such as Career Mark

John Yarham
Chief Executive
Futures Advice, Skills & Employment Ltd

10 September 2015

Social Mobility and the Transition to Work
Consultation

11/09/2015

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation

1. Gatsby is a foundation set up in 1967 by David Sainsbury (now Lord Sainsbury of Turville) to realise his charitable objectives. We focus our support on a limited number of charitable areas:
 1. Plant science research
 2. Neuroscience research
 3. Science and engineering education
 4. Economic development in Africa
 5. Public policy research and advice
 6. The Arts
2. As the committee correctly recognises, the students who are not NEET or following a traditional A-level route are poorly identified and understood. It is a group that is of particular interest to the Gatsby Foundation, as we believe they are critical to solving the skills gaps that are afflicting the UK. In particular, there are significant shortages of technicians in the science, engineering and technology (SET) sectors that are holding back economic growth. Whilst the work that Gatsby has done has focussed on the technical pathways that lead to technician roles, the lessons that we have learnt seem to be more broadly applicable.
3. Our work has identified a number of structural issues that mean the pathways for these students are under-developed:
 - many of the occupations that do not require a degree are poorly understood by the opinion formers, such as politicians and journalists. This means that the contribution of these middle-skill roles to the economy, and to our lives more broadly, are not sufficiently recognised;
 - the lack of visibility for non-graduate occupations has significant ramifications on the attractiveness of these occupations to young people and their consequent willingness to embark on the education and training that leads to these roles;
 - those young people who do wish to progress to these roles are faced with a bewildering array of qualifications with little or no certainty about whether these qualifications are valuable;

- the recruitment of graduates into non-graduate roles has also increased uncertainty about the value of non-academic pathways;
 - Gatsby-commissioned work by Sir John Holman has highlighted that these young people are unlikely to be able to find help from teachers or careers advisors in navigating the system as there is a paucity of knowledge about technician roles, the skills required and the qualifications that lead to them.
4. We believe that Professional Bodies should play a major role in supporting the students that the inquiry is focussing on. In particular, they should be enabling these students to navigate their way into the professions through a work-based rather than university route.

Professional Bodies

5. The professions with the strongest reputations gain their status and identity from the public, not from government or its agencies. These professions prize highly their independence and, crucially, they use professional standards and schemes of professional registration as a means of self-regulation. The professional bodies that manage self-regulation through:
- entry requirements based on education and experience
 - a register of individual members
 - a code of conduct for members
 - systems to maintain standards and quality within their profession.
6. Professional Bodies in fields such as accountancy, science and engineering, HR and medicine are well-known, but in fact professional bodies cover (and to varying degrees formally regulate) most occupations. The Professional Associations Research Network (PARN) is currently mapping professional bodies to occupations across the economy. To date, PARN has identified professional bodies for 85% of all UK occupations.
7. In the past, many of the Professional Bodies played a significant role in the development and accreditation of vocational qualifications, particularly at technician level. This engagement ensured access to the professions via a vocational route. However in recent decades the engagement of the Professional Bodies in vocational education has gradually eroded and as result an important route to the professions for those who succeed at work rather than at school was closed off.
8. The recent apprenticeship trailblazer initiatives have sparked a renewed engagement of Professional Bodies in vocational education. Indeed many of the trailblazer apprenticeships are now being positioned as the gateway into the profession. For example, in science, completion of the Laboratory Technician apprenticeship enables the apprentice to become a Registered Science Technician (RSciTech). RSciTech is the first rung of the professional ladder that can lead to Chartered Scientist.

9. With encouragement from government, this type of self-regulation could be used more widely to raise standards and assure the quality of education for all, not just those on academic pathways. In this way, well-understood vocational routes could be developed that command the respect both of employers and the public.
10. As part of their charitable remit Professional Bodies should be ensuring that they are helping to induct individuals into the profession whatever their background. We know that there is more to obtaining a respected and well-paid job than just having the right qualifications; the applicant needs to believe that this is something that they are capable of. Through formal mentoring schemes and informal networking Professional Bodies can help their younger members understand what is expected of a particular role. Although there are some notable exceptions, too much of this work is focused on graduates, and there is not enough support for apprentices and students on vocational programmes. We believe that as part of its regulatory role the Privy Council could do more to ensure that the Professional Bodies actively promote social mobility.
11. **We suggest that as part of their inquiry the committee should consider the role of Professional Bodies in**
 - **Assuring the quality of the non-academic pathways**
 - **Supporting students from non-traditional backgrounds entering the professions**

Science & Engineering Education Team
The Gatsby Charitable Foundation

11 September 2015

Select Committee on Social Mobility - written submission – September 2015

Recent research on the pathways into work for school leavers

1. The need to widen social mobility research

- 1.1 Family background influences later economic success. Much research has been devoted to several aspects of this complex topic. The household in which you grow up clearly matters in determining education, the transition to work and family, and later career (Serafino & Tonkin, 2014).
- 1.2 Social mobility research has traditionally focused on what social class or status people attain relative to their parents' social class or status (Breen & Goldthorpe, 2001) while economists have focused on income (Blanden, Gregg, & Macmillan, 2007; Mazumder, 2005). Only more recently have studies focused on the intergenerational effects of unemployment or worklessness.
- 1.3 This affects the most vulnerable in society. Early unemployment has a scarring effect on wages and later employment, thus continuing disadvantage (Gregg & Tominey, 2005). Unemployment over generations implies costs for society as well as for the individual.
- 1.4 This note summarizes what is currently known about the effects of growing up with workless parents and especially how this can lead to an intergenerational transmission of worklessness. This is highly relevant for young adults, especially when not traditionally highly educated as education can provide a buffer from family background effects (Torche, 2011). Policy interventions should focus on the job search and labour supply.

2. Effects of parents not working

- 2.1 Children growing up with a parent not working are affected at different stages in their life. There is some evidence that the shock of parental unemployment induces stress on the children, affecting their wellbeing and influencing their grades (Stevens & Schaller, 2011). A report for the Department for Education (Schoon et al., 2012) used data on young adults in the UK to show that children who lived with workless parents had more behavioural problems, lower grades, and made a more difficult transition to the labour market. They also highlighted how related parental worklessness is to other types of disadvantage.
- 2.2 Children whose parents experienced some unemployment are also more likely to experience unemployment themselves. Most studies have focused on the role of the father and found that children whose father did not work are more than twice as likely to be out of work themselves at least once while in their twenties.
- 2.3 This intergenerational association in unemployment has increased over time in the UK (Macmillan, 2014), meaning that children now are even more affected by their background than earlier generations. This indicates that one's origins become all the more important in determining labour market success over time in the UK.

- 2.4 The same study (Macmillan, 2014), also found that there were local variations in how much the father's unemployment mattered for their children. At high levels of local unemployment, those whose fathers experienced some unemployment before were the first to be out of work, increasing the inequality over generations. Like other forms of intergenerational social mobility then, the inequality in unemployment increases during worse economic times (Zwysen, 2014). The prospects for young adults from a disadvantaged background entering the labour market during the crisis should be considered carefully.
- 2.5 A study for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation found no evidence of a culture of worklessness being transmitted over generations (Shildrick, MacDonald, Furlong, Roden, & Crow, 2012). They highlighted that there were families experiencing multiple forms of disadvantage, but that this was never a story of multiple generations in permanent worklessness.
- 2.6 Using the most recent UK household panel, Understanding Society (UKHLS), a study by the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) by Wouter Zwysen found that growing up with a father who did not work leads to a 14 p.p. reduction in employment probability and to working on average 3 hours fewer per week (Zwysen, 2015).

3. Pathways

- 3.1 A very big problem in this area is how to determine whether these associations between fathers and their children are causal, meaning that the unemployment of the father causes the child's worse outcomes; or spurious which means that both father and child are similar in some ways and that similarity makes them both more likely to be out of work (O'Neill & Sweetman, 1998).
- 3.2 The main ways in which parental employment could directly affect their children's labour market experiences are through social networks; financial effects which influence the potential of investing in children's education and employability; and by influencing the reservation wage. The reservation wage indicates the minimal wage someone would be willing to work for and it indicates someone's taste for work. It is possible that experiencing parental unemployment leads to experiencing work differently and possibly being less stressed when unemployed yourself and taking some more time in finding appropriate work.
- 3.3 Macmillan (2014) finds some support for an effect via networks. In another work, she also reports that accounting for education, cognitive skills, behaviour, wellbeing and stress explains only about a tenth of this intergenerational association in unemployment (Macmillan, 2013). Similar characteristics explain up to 40% of the association in income.
- 3.4 The ISER study looked into the mechanisms through which parental worklessness affects their children by studying several labour market aspects and comparing young adults whose fathers were out of work when they were 14 with those whose fathers were working, but in a low-paying occupation. This comparison minimises the difference in earnings. This study found that that father's worklessness affects

their children's labour supply, but not their skills or employability. More details on this work can be found here (<http://www.izajoels.com/content/4/1/2>).

3.5 The most plausible channel is that job search is harder or takes longer for the children of the unemployed. This could be because of a different appreciation of work, or because they have less access to good contacts, through their parents, that help in the job search process. They could take more time looking for a good job. A solution is then to provide more specific aid in the job search process and focus on activation of this group.

3.6 Why do young people decide to go to work instead of carrying on with study? ISER research by Mark Taylor and Alberto Tumino found that that family resources influence school leaving decisions mainly through past investment in the child's schooling ability. They find that local labour market conditions matter, but only for young people from disadvantaged socio economic groups. This study found that the school enrolment of young people from economically disadvantaged families increases in periods of higher youth unemployment while it is discouraged by high levels of adult unemployment. The schooling demand of young people from better off families is not responsive to changes in the local labour market conditions. They argue that factors associated with family resources, such as parental tastes for education or social norms, make young people from better-off families prefer to study even when it becomes less beneficial from an economic point of view. On the other hand, young people from economically worse-off families tend to enrol in post compulsory education when the expected net gains are sufficiently high. As labour market conditions improve after the Great Recession, these results highlight the importance of post-compulsory education being perceived as an economically attractive option, particularly among young people from lower socio economic backgrounds.

4. Conclusions

4.1 Parental worklessness is associated with more unemployment as well as other adverse effects. These young adults are especially vulnerable and need extra resources while looking for work. The limited literature on this topic suggests that the transmission in worklessness over generations is not due to children of workless fathers having lower skills or less desirable behaviours. Finding a job seems harder however, indicating that more support is needed during the job search.

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14 September 2015

Inclusion Trust – Written evidence (SMO0107)

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

Written submission by the Inclusion Trust

Inclusion Trust is a charity that exists to develop alternative models of learning, which help ‘pushed out’ young people to grow, learn and achieve. The trust has adopted the term ‘pushed out learner’ to provoke a debate amongst practitioners that will focus on the weaknesses in our education systems rather than the ‘abnormality’ of the individual child.

Inclusion Trust recognise the ‘missing middle’ as part of this group of pushed out learners. We believe learners who are ‘pushed out’ of traditional schools and the success of their peers should be given a truly alternative education opportunity that will bring about their highest engagement, highest expectations and highest achievement. We therefore welcome the focus of this enquiry.

1 SUMMARY OF SUBMISSION

In summary our submission to this Committee covers the following 5 points;

1. Schools urgently need alternative accreditation processes which value excellence, rigour and mastery of vocational pathways. It is only when students (and society as a whole) values non-academic vocations with greater emphasis on entrepreneurship, innovation that those in the ‘middle’ will excel and value both learning, unlearning and relearning to keep up with our changing world.
2. Careers education, within schools is currently not working for this group and a serious strategic rethink needs to be given to properly develop creative and relevant employment engagement programmes through which students experience and learn at a deep and high level within the real-world context where the learning outcomes

can be mapped to existing national standards frameworks. National programmes such as the Careers and Enterprise Company may kick-start national programmes but serious small-scale and local initiatives must be supported within these new programmes if we are to significantly reach those who potentially stand most to benefit.

Indeed there are extremely simple, low cost powerful programmes which can be integrated into school life such as 'Work-Out' days, alumni engagement and real world exhibitions which can help transform careers education, inspire students and enable exceptional progression of learners - particularly those at risk of disengaging and being pushed out.

3. There are some powerful lessons being learnt through very exciting education programmes in the US which have been successful in linking students with learning in real-adult workplaces for up to 2 days a week. Programmes from Big Picture Schools and High Tech High offer students from 14 years of age up to entry to college, real world learning experiences which enable very deep learning of skills to standards which may otherwise not be required until post graduate level!
4. Employability Training which includes helping students acquire what we term Employment Intelligences (EIs) should be taught in secondary schools and given the same weight and rigour as other more academic subjects. Acquiring these skills gives young people real confidence and insight into work and can inspire students to identify jobs and roles within work, where they can excel.
5. The role, value and status of small (family /local) business within the social mobility ladder debate should be examined more carefully. Currently you would be forgiven for thinking that to work for your family/ local community network is somehow a backward step when the reality is that for many young people in this group they provide the only nurturing, training and progression into the world-of work. Piloting family employment support initiatives could make an enormous difference for those in the 'missing middle'.

We expand on all these points in our response to the 5 questions which the Committee has set (see section 5). We have sought to give evidence from our recent conversations with this target group and have included real quotes from young people, teachers or practitioners to help illustrate our points.

We have also sought to pose further provocative questions, as a good answer often prompts a better question. (These are in red)

2 CAVEAT

Before responding to the Committee's 5 questions we would respectfully wish to challenge the potential assumption for this enquiry - the suggested implication that students fall into either academic or vocational pathways. All young people are capable of excellence. If learning by acquiring knowledge through rigorous and challenging real world relevant practical assignments is seen to be inferior to those who are praised for gaining formal accreditation, is it any wonder the 'missing middle' give up?

It is not just the youth labour market which is changing, employers in the 21st Century need young and old staff alike who possess high level academic, expert practical and also social work skills. People who possess what we term **Employment Intelligences (EIs)**²²⁹ combine thinking with the doing *and* combine this with an ongoing thirst for learning.

"The employment intelligences and non-academic competences that young people now need to develop as they face work may be more complex to codify, categorise and assess and but surely we should be measuring what is of value, not just what is easy !"

From Facework.today

3 ABOUT THE INCLUSION TRUST

Our mission as a charity is to advance learning opportunities for people that are marginalised or disengaged and 'pushed out' from traditional education systems. In doing so we aim to make learning more accessible and engaging, but without upper limits.

²²⁹ We see these as the attitudes and behaviours which help you become prepared for the world-of work. They are all active, practical and supremely relevant to today's world of work.



‘The alternative should not be inferior’²³⁰ - our most recent publication focuses on why young people find themselves ‘pushed out’ of traditional schooling and considers how the education system might offer these learners a truly alternative education that will bring about the highest

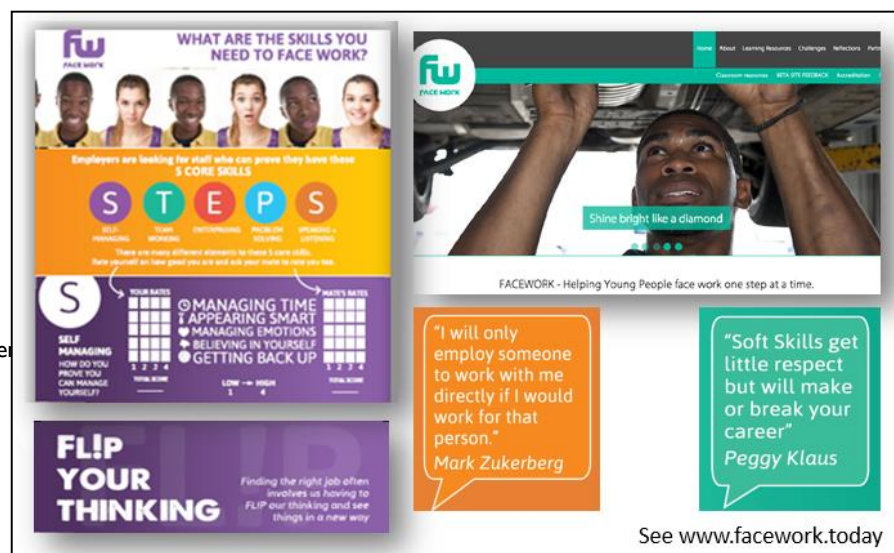
engagement, highest expectations and highest achievement.

We attach the summary findings of this report as an appendix to this submission as we believe that the findings and recommendations will prove very helpful to the Committee and should be read in conjunction with our answers to the 5 questions. You can read the full report online at <http://www.inclusiontrust.org>

Inclusion Trust projects include Notschool, an online Alternative Provision service which has reached over 10,000 marginalised young people since 2000 and was recognised in 2007 by the OECD as a new model of learning. It is this direct engagement with disengaged and disaffected young people, combined with what we learn through hosting round table events and visits to international projects tackling similar challenges, that helps us build our evidence and programmes. In all our work we are committed to co-designing authentic learning resources with and for ‘pushed out’ learners and our contribution to this committee has therefore been influenced by the direct engagement with the target group for this enquiry.

Another important programme the Inclusion Trust has pioneered which has helped shape our contribution to this call for

²³⁰SEE <http://www.inclusiontrust.org.uk/wp-content/people.pdf>



See www.facework.today

evidence is Facework.²³¹ This work-related learning programme, supported by the Nominet Trust and OCR, seeks to transform Work Related Learning and Careers Education for ‘pushed out’ learners and has been co-designed by working directly with young people.

‘Pushed-out’ young people tell us that when they are immersed in an environment which has a purpose and relevance to their passions, gifts and talents, their lives are transformed. Many of them will tell us that it was only when they found their ‘element’²³² that they were able to achieve and excel beyond anyone’s expectations.

4 EVIDENCE

There is compelling evidence that exclusion patterns are disproportionately high for particular groups of young people such as those who experience poverty, have Special Educational Needs and attend poor schools.²³³ Statistics released by the Department for Education in 2014 reveal that only one percent of pupils in ‘alternative provision’ and PRUs (pupil referral units) achieved five good GCSEs in 2013-14 (A*-C including English and Maths). Furthermore, of those entered for a GCSE in Maths or English, only one-in-ten achieved a C or above.

We know those who are excluded are:

- 4 times more likely for those on Free School Meals
- 8 times more likely for those with Special Educational Needs
- 17 times more likely for those with mental health problems
- 40% higher for those from most deprived secondary schools

An article published by the Guardian newspaper in 18 August 2015 ‘What about children who have no place in the GCSE story?’²³⁴ by Laura McInerney added these further statistics: 4,000 secondary children were permanently excluded from school in 2013-14 - gone, banished, expelled forever.

The most common reason given is persistent disruptive behaviour “we can’t handle you any more” syndrome.

When things get tough, the only solution seems to be sending them to a mythical elsewhere that has a magical answer to their woes.

²³¹ See <http://facework.today> which has been co-designed with young people

²³² As Sir Ken Robinson explains so well in his book ‘Finding your element’

²³³ Department for Education, 2014 “Permanent and fixed-period exclusions in England: 2012 to 2013” <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/permanent-and-fixed-period-exclusions-in-england-2012-to-2013>.

²³⁴ <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2015/aug/18/children-gcse-excluded-school-special-educational-needs-sen>

However, as the committee will find out there is perhaps less evidence of why many learners are, - as one teacher put it - ***‘wallpaper young people’ those who turn up but then just sit in the background... and disengage’***

Rather than accepting that almost half of young people fail to achieve a core set of good GCSEs²³⁵, we must acknowledge that the traditional methods of education are not doing enough to provide the access or the challenging opportunities this group need to make the successful transition from school to work. As Sir Michael Wilshaw recently put it:

“How on earth will we ever begin to address the shocking underachievement of bright youngsters from disadvantaged homes, if we carry on patronising the poor and serving them up with lower expectations?”

Sir Michael Wilshaw HMI Ofsted June 2015

5 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

- ❶ **What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?**

“You don’t get taught these thing in school [soft-skills for employment]. You’re on your own, you have to fake it till you make it”

22 year old contributor to the Facework project

From our experience we want to reflect on 3 significant factors:

- 1) Based on GCSE outcomes, mainstream education works for around 60% of students (who get 5 A*-C grades in English and Maths). But what about the 40 %? Is it because of the narrow focus schools have on measuring intelligences through exams and qualifications at the expense of promoting and validating non-academic career pathways?

Many schools have little capacity or expertise to nurture entrepreneurial spirit among students who have enormous skills and potential which is difficult to measure by the mainstream formal accreditation programmes of GCSEs and A Levels. But how much better if we valued learning on mastering crafts and trades to reflect industry standards. The Livery Companies built up a culture of esteeming training in the practice and theory of crafts and trades; they promoted innovation, specialist knowledge, functional skills and teamwork.

²³⁵ Department for Education, 2014, “Provisional GCSE and equivalent results in England, 2013 to 2014” https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/366556/SFR41_2014_provisional_GCSE_and_equivalents.pdf.

- Why have we lost this? Why do we not value the mastering of the craftsperson? What if there was a BBC young stone-mason of the year award?
- 2) The erosion of career counselling within the UK and in particular the counselling aspects of career advice is crucial to review when looking at this question. Online information on careers is plentiful, but schools need staff who are skilled at providing high quality face-to-face advice and guidance to the pupils they already have a relationship with and know; especially those who struggle academically. Following the government's decision to drop compulsory work experience for 14- to 16-year-olds last year, there is evidence that parents are now picking up the bill for risk assessments and admin associated with placements.²³⁶ This causes further inequality.
- Real-world work learning opportunities can be brought into the school life by using real world experts to assess and judge the quality of work - imagine what effort young people would make if their a short story, web design, dress making, a music performance, political debate were to be judged by real experts in the field – we would see multiple redrafts and practice to reach the level of excellence they know would be expected –standardised exams can neither motivate nor measure this level of excellence.
- 3) Schools can and should do more in helping students acquire core ‘employment intelligences’ the ‘soft-skills’ which employers say they need and which once acquired give students enormous confidence. Teachers are driven by a wider moral purpose to create informed, confident and well-rounded adults who can be leaders and team players. Young people who can empathise with others, be resilient and able to face changes and challenges. Great teachers inspire learners to have intellectual curiosity and new ideas. Our experience of developing the Facework soft-skills employment intelligences is that students find these practical and relevant not just in preparing for work in the future but helping gain confidence now.
- Why is work-related learning, unlearning and relearning – the process that takes place by re-working the problem to perfection - not taught as a subject within schools? Would not an employer be impressed with a student who secured an A* in employment intelligence?
- ② **There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group –who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**

²³⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/may/22/charging-parents-work-experience-children-suffer>

“I could go and start working with my dad right now and get £60 a day to do plastering. He needs me and says he can teach me a trade yet I have to be in this hell-hole learning things which are not relevant.”

15 year old contributor to the Facework project

From our experience we want to reflect on 2 significant factors:

- 1) From in-depth sessions with ‘Pushed-out learners’ in developing and co-designing the Facework employability resources the young people repeatedly talked about the importance of their family and wider community networks. This is no surprise as we know the enormous influence that families have on early childhood, however the support and aspirations from the families have when a young person leaves education is also absolutely crucial.

The family as employer (especially in the catering, building and security sectors) is a very important aspect, which we often fail to truly appreciate and understand. Many businesses can only survive by employing their family members to work long hours and be paid with in-kind services (accommodation, meals) and cash-in-hand. This is especially important for children from recently arrived or traveller communities who are seeking to establish their business. The wider family network of uncles, cousins and family friends is a crucial component of transitions into employment not just for the ‘old boys’ network of the well-connected affluent families. Indeed family run small businesses are a really important element of successful social mobility for many students and yet there appears to be very little status given to this employment which can be enormously rewarding, nurturing and empowering for many students as they come out of school.

- **Why do schools pay so little attention to the opportunities that their parents have within the school community to provide real world work learning experiences / employment? We hear about schemes which encourage adults to ‘take your child to work days’, why can’t schools begin to get children to ‘take their parents to school’ days to showcase their skills talk about their experiences and how they got into their line of work?**
- 2) Many secondary schools resist engaging the support of parents to enrich learning opportunities if the emphasis was on asking parents of small local businesses to come into the school to support children into employment we could see a much more genuine, organic and authentic partnership develop with small local employers and schools. Small businesses are crucial in taking on young people who need a rigorous mind and hands pathway of learning to engage and non-academic opportunities to prove and celebrate their talents and gifts.
 - **Piloting more creative “earning and learning” experiences within schools could make a very big impact in the lives of those in the middle. How many schools**

teach students to use an EPOS till system, understand concepts of gross profit within a business or how to manage employees and grow the best out of people's talents to ensure a small business thrives?

- ③ Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

“Many of the YP I take on have started jobs where they have been like fish flapping around in a shallow rock pool. They have been given little training, few opportunities to develop their careers; to go deep and learn to swim, and invariably they flip from one low paid job pool to another hoping that the next employer will let them do overtime, give them more responsibility, or cash in hand. But it's a risk. As soon as someone better comes along they find their zero hour contract becomes just that... zero!”

Manager of community café project employing young people in first jobs.

From our experience we want to reflect on 2 significant factors:

- 1) It used to be that *“employers recruited for attitude and trained for skills”* but sadly many employers don't understand or appreciate the new attitudes of the Millennials – the generation which is growing up in a time of very rapid change with a set of priorities and expectations sharply different from previous generations. Being constantly connected to social networks means that many potential employees are better informed, more savvy and have higher expectations about meaningful work and the desire to keep options and choices open. However, there is often a disconnect with this freedom and aspirations with the reality and shock of the first work experience which may be very poorly paid.
 - Why is it that companies cannot work more closely with schools in developing rigorous, real-world and relevant project based-learning within their work places for students. Educaion approaches such as Big Picture Schools²³⁷ in the US promote students to learn 2 days a week in a place of work thereby allowing students to learn and employers to help nurture students support their learning within the real world context. This learning can be accredited against educaion standards and in the real world context they often reach far higher standards than these. For those reaching 16 years of age - real world learning experiences enable very deep learning of skills by youngsters that may otherwise not be required until post graduate level - eg using industry standard software tools to design solutions to real problems.
- 2) Employers also have to recognise that many of the attitudes young people have today have been shaped through negative experiences. For example thousands of children grow up mastering impressive skills and gaining the courage to cope without supportive

²³⁷ See <http://www.bigpicture.org/>

adults in their lives. They acquire skills in managing to stay safe and protect themselves from harm, resilience when things go wrong yet again, patience in being a young carer, etc. The obsession of what counts as progress in schools, coupled with what is measured by exams and the league tables often omit to recognise the many passions, gifts and talents, these young people have and leaves them labelled as 'failures'.

➤ Why is it that both schools and future employers fail to often see the potential that this adversity brings and the way that personal resilience and enterprise learnt can be channeled within a work context? Students tell us they feel as though their mentors often focus on treating, correct and 'curing' them of these behaviours rather than channeling the energy and experience more constructively. Business enterprise training and entrepreneurship within schools could make a great impact in terms of employment outcomes for many young people.

- ④ **How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?**

"Have you ever been in trouble with the law and if you have, how would you answer that question in a job interview?"

14 year old participant in the Facework project in a session looking at preparing for work interviews.

From our experience we want to reflect on 2 significant factors:

- 1) One of the most powerful interventions that schools can do is to run 'work-out' sessions where local employers are invited to come into a school and run a series of 5 minute 'speed-date' sessions with young people. One organisation which has pioneered this approach is Worktree based in Milton Keynes^[1]. Where schools - both primary and secondary, are benefiting from an incredibly cost-effective high-impact programme. This is currently being measured for its long-term impact in Milton Keynes schools, but young people, teachers and employers already give extremely positive feedback about the model's cost-effective, high impact, fun learning engagement. Young people are given the freedom to ask their own questions and gain valuable first hand understanding of how workers view their work and take away powerful knowledge of both how work works and how to gain employment. Developing a school alumni programmes²³⁸ can also make a huge difference in creating stronger links with employers.

➤ Why do more schools not adopt this very simple cost-effective model of employer engagement? Once established a programme can be sustained and funded by the companies, (perhaps through a secondment, or early retired volunteer) and can be

[1] See <http://worktree.org/>

²³⁸ The report by Future First entitled Social Mobility, Careers advice and Alumni Networks at <http://futurefirst.org.uk/social-mobility-careers-report.pdf> is very relevant to this committee's work.

organised on a termly basis. Indeed every secondary school could benefit from having a Director of Employer Engagement to run employability activity.

- 2) Social media already enables young people to receive real-world validation on a social level. The genuine pleasure which young people receive when their achievements, creations and posts has been validated by their peers is enormous. To get 1,000 likes or hits on a YouTube video can mean far more than a teacher's validation or even an exam grade!

Instead of dismissing this peer-validation as purely social and non-academic, schools could do far more in creating assessment processes which build on this phenomenon or find traditional ways to get work published and disseminated e.g. in publishing an article in a newspaper, or contributing to a physical book. For this to be embedded within the culture of a school teachers themselves need to model this approach and seek out opportunities for their work, and reflections to be published, disseminated and praised. The opportunity to publish or exhibit work can be a tremendous motivator to produce something truly original and exceptional. Raising expectations and raising standards does not simply come through raising the bar on formal testing! Furthermore if students are able to create digital CVs they will be better equipped to demonstrate their skills and talents to employers and gain valuable peer-feedback and networks.

In the US a number of educational initiatives such as High Tech High ²³⁹and Big Picture Schools have applied final exhibitions as part of their school-to-work strategies to generate new ways of teaching and learning within their schools and in particular designing programmes which are based on the interests and goals of each student's passions. These final exhibitions have taken place in non-educational contexts and involved public speaking, publishing and contributing to useful real-world research or product development. This assessment gives greater authentic measurement because it comes from people and places that are relevant and exist in the real / adult world. We believe that If pushed-out learners have access to an online network of peers, adults and resources, who can work with them at their pace they will have more successful transitions from school-to-work.

If learners have an insight and understanding of how skills relate to the actual work place, they will be motivated to engage and take responsibility for learning new skills.

- Why do more schools in the UK not adopt principles of the public 'exhibition' of pupil's work to be assessed by a whole year group, peers and real-world external experts? You can imagine the impact that a year group might have if their science project was assessed by staff in Dyson, or an art project reviewed by Vivien Westwood's team? Of course there are real challenges of scale but every school has local connections with real-world experts and the

²³⁹ See <http://www.hightechhigh.org/about/>

opportunity to share students work digitally to wide audiences allows greater dissemination and showcasing. Could not a school take over a local shopping mall for its final parent's evening or end of year celebration?

⑤ **Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?**

'The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write. The illiterate will be those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.'

Herbert Gerjuoy

From our experience we want to reflect on just 1 factor:

- 1) The government is keen to set out its vision that schools, colleges and employers should work in partnership to spread outstanding careers advice, guidance and inspiration to every young person across the country, regardless of their background or location. The creation of the Careers and Enterprise Company is an important development as is the work that the National Careers service does, and the new online career sites such as Plotr. However how do these national initiatives work at the local level and what help do schools have to really broker relationships between employers particularly for students who are 'pushed out'?

We hope the Committee will undertake research as to what proportion of work currently underway by national agencies is indeed targeted at developing new models of learning for careers education specifically at this target group? Why is there still so little emphasis on vocational pedagogies in relevant and purposeful settings? By this we don't mean the type of activities that aim to domesticate resistant youth under banners such as 'empowerment' or 'civic participation'. We are talking about a careers education that will also capture the richness of human behaviours and capabilities, and allow all learners to flourish, particularly pushed-out learners, who face the biggest barriers not least of which are poor functional, social and emotional skills.

Of course government has to work strategically developing national initiatives, but improving the system of transition to work also requires localised expert careers advisors – who are highly trained and skilful in counselling young people to face work rather than just presenting information about what they could do. The changing, world of work is so much more complex these days. As the quote at the top here reminds us, we need to inspire all citizens to be able to learn, unlearn and relearn in both school and work.

- Why is it that we reward bankers for taking over a bank with a very risky portfolio or track record but do not reward those teachers who are working with some of our most at risk students in this country? In times of harsh competitive environments it is very difficult for companies to take on and invest in training young people who may have struggled at school. Yet the cost and risk to the wider society of economically inactive or part-active citizens is enormous.

About the authors

Maggie Kalnins is Chief Executive of Inclusion Trust. Throughout her 25 year career in secondary teaching and headship, Maggie worked within urban multi-racial communities serving the most deprived and disadvantaged. She has a strong understanding of the distinctive challenges that many young people face.

Maggie remains a member of the Mossbourne Federation Governing Board in Hackney, where she worked closely with Sir Michael Wilshaw prior to his appointment as HMCI at Ofsted. She currently serves as the Chair of Governors of two Hackney schools: Brook Community Primary and Mossbourne Victoria Park.

Drawing on her experience, Maggie has a clear view of the impact that a bespoke education provision can have on young people, helping them to succeed well beyond the highest of expectations.

Maggie is a member of the DfE Alternative Provision Reference Group that contributes to alternative provision policy development and implementation.

Maggie is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Stephen Carrick-Davies is an independent freelance professional working in the fast-changing field of new communications technology, predominantly where it impacts on the lives of children, parenting, and schools.

Prior to becoming an independent consultant and trainer, in 2008 Stephen worked for and led Childnet International where for 10 years he developed award-winning internet education and awareness programmes for young people, families and schools. During this time as CEO Stephen was a member of the Home Secretary's Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet (2003-2008) and advisor to the Family Online Safety Institute in Washington DC. He also worked closely with the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) on producing advice for Parents on safe use of the internet and on guidance for schools on how to prevent and respond to Cyberbullying.

Stephen has developed a body of work called 'Munch Poke Ping' which has looked at what staff who work with vulnerable and excluded young learners need when it comes to social media training and support. This project has included producing 8 films with students and staff from Pupil Referral Units, and running a national conference, see www.munchpokeping.com to read the report and learn more about this work. He is now focussing on helping many of these young people get into work through a project he has developed called www.facework.today Stephen is a fellow of the School for Social Entrepreneurs and when not working with young people he runs a community café in South London which employs 7 young people and has pioneered a number of community outreach activities.

APPENDIX

Final Conclusion from 'The Alternative Should Not be inferior' report

Part 4



1. Bringing 'pushed out' learners into the mainstream structure

2. Innovating within the mainstream structure

3. Working outside of the mainstream structure

What now for 'pushed out' learners?

Conclusion

Young people have a right to education but schools in their current form do not provide this for everyone. The young people we describe as 'pushed out' learners are characterised by their struggles in adjusting to school, their vulnerability due to personal or family circumstances and the gaps they have in their basic needs and skills.

The experts we spoke to had different views on whether these young people needed more support to adjust to school, whether school should adjust to their needs or whether they should be supported elsewhere. Positions often depended on beliefs about whether schools' priority should be a vulnerable minority or the broader majority.

The three models presented in this report are not mutually exclusive and are right for different pupils depending on their needs. For example, where pupils face a specific barrier to access such as poor literacy or a lack of social skills, they might be supported to learn these and brought into the mainstream. Meanwhile adjustments to the way a school works (perhaps by offering a broader range of pathways) may suit other pupils. On the other hand, for some young people who are unwilling, unable or unsuited to the norm, provision outside of the mainstream may result in the best outcomes. Such provision might be temporary or permanent; full time or part time. Ultimately it is only by engaging with the pupils' needs that the right approach can be found.

We believe that the best approach to supporting 'pushed out' learners brings together these three different approaches, showing flexibility by deploying the approach that best meets the needs of each young person.

Recommendations



Bring 'pushed out' learners into the mainstream structure

1. Schools should ensure that pupils' basic needs are met by working more closely with social and mental health services.
2. Rather than focusing solely on those eligible for the pupil premium or with identified special needs, schools should be sensitive to the full range of factors that might lead to a pupil becoming a 'pushed out' learner.
3. Too often it takes the drastic step of exclusion to secure the resources and support that a 'pushed out learner' needs. Local authorities should be proactive rather than reactive in brokering support and funding.
4. It is easier to focus on pupil needs in a safe, secure environment. Establishing this should be a top priority in all schools and be seen as a route to inclusion.



Innovate within the mainstream structure

5. Pupils who are likely to find it difficult to adjust to the school environment should be carefully supported for example through nurture groups with lower pupil-teacher ratios. These groups should be staffed by the schools' best teachers and should combine a focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills, core academic subjects and social, emotional and behaviour development. They should be highly responsive to pupils' needs and prepare them to transition into the mainstream.
6. Schools should embrace opportunities to 'hook in' 'pushed out' learners through innovative outside-school and extra-curricula activities that appeal to the passions and interests of the learners. These should be 'ways in' rather than alternatives and the emphasis should be on excellence – whether in debating, sport, art or 'real-world' learning.



Work outside of the mainstream structure

7. All schools should develop strong relationships with alternative providers and share, rather than shift responsibility for the pupils they are unable to support. This could happen either through commissioning and accountability arrangements or by building school clusters, for example through federations and multi-academy trusts.
8. Alternative providers should not overlook achievement in their pursuit of engagement. High expectations should be the norm.
9. Alternative providers should be recognised as partners in delivery and valuable sources of expertise rather than a necessary evil.

15 September 2015

Impetus Private Equity Foundation – Written evidence (SMO0066)

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility – Call for Evidence

This submission has been prepared by Impetus – The Private Equity Foundation, a charity which works to transform the lives of 11-24 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds by ensuring they get the support they need to succeed in education, find and keep jobs, and achieve their potential. We find the most promising charities and social enterprises that work with these young people. We help them become highly effective organisations that transform lives; then we help them expand significantly so as to dramatically increase the number of young people they serve. Our previous research publications include: [Make NEETs History](#), [Ready for Work](#), [Ending the NEET Crisis for Good](#), [Out of Sight](#) and the [Missing Million Series](#); a three-year research collaboration with *The Work Foundation* tracking the school-to-work transition of disadvantaged young people.

The enquiry's key questions:

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Economic disadvantage

- Over [two million young people across the country](#) face the daily reality of economic disadvantage. That's one young person in every six living in the UK today
- In some parts of the country, it's especially bleak: [there are 100 local wards](#) across the UK where between **50 and 70** per cent of young people are growing up in poverty
- Poverty is often passed on from one generation to the next – there are, for example, almost [300,000 households in the UK](#) where no adult has ever worked
- By the age of 11, [there is a gap of 13%](#) between these young people and others in their achievement levels in reading, writing and maths
- At 16, there is a gap of 26 per cent between young people from low income homes and others achieving five or more A*-C GCSE passes, or equivalent, including English and maths: 62 per cent of young people eligible for Free School Meals fail to achieve these grades, compared to only 36 per cent of their non-eligible peers

Good numeracy and literacy

- Of those failing to achieve a grade C GCSE or equivalent whilst at school, [government figures](#) (2012/2013) suggest that few are going on to do so even by the age of 19 – a crucial second chance at these qualifications:
 - Of the **211,171** young people who failed to gain grades A* to C in maths by the end of KS4 at age 16, only **106,050** of them entered a qualification when they were aged 16-18, at entry level to GCSE. Of those 106,050, **49,844** of them did not manage to attain a qualification in the level they studied towards.
 - Of the **188,365** young people who failed to gain grades A* to C in English by the end of KS4 at age 16, only **93,986** of them entered a qualification when they were aged 16-18, at entry level to GCSE. Of those 93,986, **45,113** of them did not manage to attain a qualification in the level they studied towards.

Lack of soft skills

- In research published by Impetus-PEF in late 2014 ([Ready for Work](#)), we surveyed employers in the creation of a guide aimed at helping young people transition from school-to-work.
- This report identified six key capabilities required by young people, as desired by employers, at the point of interview and identifies programmes which have proven successful in helping young people attain them. More information about this report can be found later in this document.
- The debate around soft skills has become a topic of wide discussion amongst politicians, employers, teachers and training providers.
- According to [research](#) led by McDonalds, **97%** of employers they surveyed said soft skills were of greater importance than traditional academic qualifications. Not only are these skills seen as a core staff competency, but if missing, [a block](#) on productivity.
- [Yet a 2014 study by](#) McKinsey found that around a **quarter** of employers had left entry-level vacancies unfilled. A **third** had lost out on business opportunities because they could not find recruits with the right skills.
- There is no lack of information about what makes a young person work ready, but rather a lack of a common, evidence-based language across all stakeholders.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-level and higher education route and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

Who they are and where they are coming from

- In an Ofsted report published in 2013, it was reported that young white British children eligible for free school meals were now the lowest-performing children at age 16, [with only 31% of this group](#) achieving five or more GCSEs at A*–C including English and Mathematics.
- [In 2012/13](#), 80% of disadvantaged pupils 16-19 were recorded in a sustained education destination, with 40% ending up in a FE college. This equates to **43,706** of the **165,033** who went into Further Education following completion of KS4. **1 in 4** Further Education students in 2012/13 came from a disadvantaged background.
- With destination data tracking difficult, some poor outcomes being reported by traineeships and apprenticeships (see answers to Q.3) means there is a high level of uncertainty as to where these young people are ending up.
- [From figures related to apprenticeship starts in 2013/14:](#)
 - There was a gap of **40,000** apprenticeship starts between the North East (**30,480** – the lowest) vs the North West (**71,670** – the highest) last year. The South East had the second largest number of starts, **60,220** while there was an even spread ranging from **40,000-50,000** across all other regions.
 - Well over half (**278,680**) of all apprenticeship starts (**440,400**) last year were aged 16-24 with a near even gender split while **89%** of apprenticeship starts defined themselves as white. Only **9%** of apprenticeship starters last year had some form of learning difficulty or disability.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Further Education

- As Alison Wolf described in her [2011 review of Vocational Education](#): “our system has no business tracking and steering 14 year olds, or 16 year olds, into programmes which are effectively dead-end. Any young person’s programme of study, whether ‘academic’ or ‘vocational’, should provide for labour market and educational progress on a wide front, whether immediately or later in life.”

- To put this in context, in [figures relating to 2013/14](#):

- **178,100** 16-18-year-olds failed to complete all or some of the post-16 qualifications they started in 2012/13, including Apprenticeships
- Around **1 in 4** Apprenticeships started by 16-18 year olds were not successfully completed. This represented around **24,000** Apprenticeships
- The cost to the exchequer of post-16 learning aims that were started but not successfully completed to be approximately **£814 million** in 2012/13. This represented around **12%** of the funding allocated to provision for 16-18 year olds

Apprenticeships and Traineeships

- There has been a steady number of apprenticeships started at all levels by 16-24 year olds in the last four years. However, completion rates have remained consistently stagnant.

Apprenticeships can range from 1-4 years dependent on level, so looking at [16-24 year old starts and achievement from 2010-2014](#), we see the following:

- 2010/11 – **275,100** starts Vs **160,300** achievements
- 2011/12 – **290,800** starts Vs **163,500** achievements
- 2012/13 – **279,900** starts Vs **140,100** achievements
- 2013/14 – **278,900** starts Vs **152,300** achievements

It is difficult to know from figures available the duration of course for those achieving, but if achievements were measured against the number of starts annually, the success rate hovers just above the **50%** mark. Meaning each year, at least **100,000** 16-24 year olds are not achieving in their apprenticeship across all levels.

- Traineeships, while still new, are experiencing minimal participation rates and weak outcomes. Outcome data for the first cohort was non-existent as a result of providers not being asked to [record whether learners were moving onto apprenticeships or jobs](#).

Estimated data for [2014/15](#) saw only **6,700** traineeship completions out of **15,100** starts for 16-24 year olds. Of those who completed a traineeship, only a third of original starters - **4,500** – progressed into a job, apprenticeship, further full-time education or training. Given traineeships were designed for young people lacking level 3 qualification and work experience, this is not a good return

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Employer/School engagement

- In Britain, research has demonstrated that young people who experience multiple contacts with employers go on to experience employment benefits later.

- Young adults with higher levels of school-age employer contacts were, on average, up to [20% less likely to be NEET](#) at the time of the survey and, if in full-time employment, to be earning 18% more than comparable peers who had less exposure while at school

- Chances of being in Employment, Education or Training (N = 850)

<i>No employer contacts</i>	<i>2+ contacts</i>
<i>Below level 3 56%</i>	<i>74% (32% more likely to EET)</i>
<i>Level 3 and above 79%</i>	<i>89% (13% more likely to be EET)</i>

- However, [recent research](#) suggests that young people entering work today have never done so more highly qualified and with as many years of education under their belt.
- With employers becoming more demanding of applicants and at the same time, there being more highly qualified young people, [‘underemployment’ is pushing graduates into non-graduate roles](#) which has an adverse impact on young people who have not been down the University or A-Level route.
- Employers and educators need to form long-term partnerships which create work experience opportunities, help deliver high-quality careers guidance and develop an understanding of the types of skills required of young people by employers.
- The current scenario is allowing for qualifications to be developed which aren’t necessarily servicing employers’ needs, for example in maths, where [there exists evidence](#) which suggests that the current provision is too academic and not functional for current and future labour market needs.

Ready for Work

- We have a disconnected system which is not equipping young people with the skills, experiences and capabilities they need to be ready for work.
- There is a plethora of research which states the skills needed by young people to make a successful transition from school-to-work but missing is a robust evidence base which captures the impact of programmes providing young people with these ‘soft skills’.
- We published a report; [Ready for Work](#), late 2014, in which we surveyed employers themselves. Our research identified that employers expect young people to be work ready at the point of interview: they need six vital capabilities to access and succeed in the workplace:
 - Self-aware
 - Receptive
 - Driven
 - Self-assured
 - Resilient
 - Informed
- In our interviews and focus groups, employers made clear they expect young people to possess and display a full set of these capabilities.
- Five out of six of these capabilities are intrinsic factors (sometimes called ‘soft skills’) that primarily have value to the individual (such as a qualification or job). We acknowledge they are hard to cultivate, demonstrate and measure. But they are the lynchpin of future success and the short-term and intermediate outcomes that all work-readiness programmes should commit to achieving.
- These capabilities are requirements to succeed in any form of employment, skilled or unskilled. They are therefore applicable to all young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are entering the workforce at any age.
- Our recommendations focus on children and young people in the early stages of work readiness who will be seeking employment in the short- to medium-term
- The report conclusions are aimed at helping all institutions involved in a young person’s transition from school-to-work, while we continue to help the [charities in our portfolio](#) – as

well as other organisations and stakeholders – to integrate Ready for Work into their programme design and evaluation.

- This is not to take responsibility away from employers. They must do more to engage with young people from an early age through the offering of work experience, by engaging directly through school-based activity and by having better structures of support for young people once in the work place.

- While there is [limited evidence](#) which suggests employer engagement within schools leads to positive outcomes, there is a great level of agreement within various sectors supporting more of it.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

What we think...

- Central Government is best placed to improve the system of support around transitions and has a key role in directing responsibility right across the UK.

- The fractured system of governance which underpins a young person's transition from school-to-work is both confusing and ineffective.

- Divided responsibility between the Departments for Education, BIS and Work and Pensions needs to be united and charged with ensuring positive school-to-work transitions.

- Sweeping top-down reform is not what we are calling for and nor are any changes in the machinery of government, especially not the creation of a new department, needed.

- National leadership is needed to put the school-to-work transition at the heart of a new cross-departmental strategy.

- Additionally, Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships are ideally placed to convene educators and employers. In partnership, each must strive to find solutions to local labour market and educational problems.

- This enquiry maybe focussing on young people not taking the A-Level or higher education route and not NEET, but what must be made clear is that the potential positive impact of the RPA and English and maths catch-up will be nil [if public funding is not redirected to support quality further education](#) and apprenticeships rather than propping up, in many cases, lower-quality provision as is currently the case.

- If greater scrutiny and division of resource is not applied, the young people who form the basis of this enquiry will simply find themselves going from school to being unemployed or NEET.

14 September 2015

Intern Aware – Written evidence (SMO0099)

Select Committee on Social Mobility – response from Intern Aware

About Intern Aware

Intern Aware is an organisation which works to ensure fair access to internships. The organisation was founded in 2010, and works with students, employers and government to promote a fairer system of internships.

We have focused this response on the way that unpaid internships impede social mobility, and our proposal for targeted government intervention to clarify the circumstances in which interns are entitled to the National Minimum wage.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Unpaid internships are a new and important factor which reduce social mobility.

- Social Mobility & Child Poverty Commission: “The professions will need to change how they recruit. The biggest change in the professional labour market over recent years has been the growth in internships. They are a new rung on the professional career ladder – yet all too often they are recruited on the basis of who, not what, you know and many are unpaid. We believe the time has come to end those practices, not least because it is clear to us that the majority of interns are legally due the National Minimum Wage. Internships should be openly advertised and fairly paid.”²⁴⁰
- McKinsey & Company: “Not everyone can afford to take unpaid work in order to build skills or experience. Indeed, there is a risk that, by providing unpaid internships, companies exacerbate socio-economic differences—by ensuring that the best work experience opportunities go to young people from wealthier backgrounds.”²⁴¹

Unpaid internships are a problem because they exclude the vast majority of young people who cannot afford to work for free.

- Sutton Trust research shows that an expenses-only internship in London costs a young person £926 a month²⁴², a substantial cost given that internships typically last about three months.

²⁴⁰

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/365765/State_of_Nation_2014_Main_Report.pdf

²⁴¹ McKinsey, Education to Employment: Getting Europe’s Youth into Work, 2014:

http://mckinseysociety.com/downloads/reports/Education/A4E2e_DOWNLOAD_BOOK_FINAL.pdf

²⁴² <http://www.suttontrust.com/researcharchive/internships/>

- Only 4% of the population believe that they, or someone in a family like theirs, could definitely afford to do an unpaid internship (YouGov, 2014).²⁴³
- Two in five (40%) people who thought about applying for an internship have reconsidered because they couldn't work for free, and two out of five (39%) of people offered an internship have to turn it down for financial reasons.²⁴⁴

The cost of doing an unpaid internship is compounded by the fact that very high numbers are located in London. This leads to a requirement for short term relocations, which disadvantages young people who live outside of the South East of England, those who lack significant parental financial support, or the social capital to receive free accommodation in the capital.

- The vast majority of internships are located in London, e.g. 80% of law internships²⁴⁵, 61% of PR internships (PRCA/Intern Aware).²⁴⁶

Unpaid internships are particularly problematic because the practice has become so important for accessing jobs in a range of industries.

- Two out of five (43%) people aged between 18 and 24 believe that the need to do unpaid internships act or have acted as a major barrier to getting a job (YouGov, 2012).²⁴⁷

4. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

The legality of unpaid internships

Existing government action to tackle unpaid internships has focused on trying to improve enforcement of the minimum wage.

Many interns have set hours and responsibilities and are therefore “workers”, and entitled to the minimum wage. Where young people have taken employers to employment tribunals they have been successful.²⁴⁸ Companies such as Sony and Harrods have been required to pay their former interns unpaid wages.

²⁴³ YouGov polling for Intern Aware, July 2014. Full breakdown available on request.

²⁴⁴ <http://yougov.co.uk/news/2011/03/23/investigating-internships/>

²⁴⁵ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/227102/fair-access.pdf>

²⁴⁶ <http://www.prca.org.uk/%5COver7pcofPRInternshipsareunpaidrevealsjointPRCAInternAwarestudy>

²⁴⁷ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2012/dec/01/interns-rebel-against-unpaid-placements>

²⁴⁸ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2011/may/23/unpaid-website-intern-court-victory>

However, the law on the issue is “notoriously complex”.²⁴⁹ Advisers at HMRC are inconsistent in their advice about when pay is due and when it is not. This leads to businesses facing prosecution from HMRC without having clarity about the law, and is particularly likely to penalise SMEs.

Moreover, securing a good job reference is a key motivation for interns. Few will sacrifice this by contacting HMRC or taking legal action against employers. This means that better enforcement of the existing law is not a sufficient response.

A four week limit to unpaid internships

Intern Aware has proposed that the government should require interns to be paid after four weeks. This would offer fairness to young people, and provide employers with legal clarity.

- 85% of people believe that interns should be paid at least the National Minimum Wage. Only 2% think interns should not be paid. (Ipsos MORI, 2014)²⁵⁰
- Fair internship schemes are better for employers as they allow them to access a wider and more diverse pool of talent. A four week limit is supported by two-thirds (65%) of businesses, with only one-in-eight (12%) opposing the legislation. There are consistently high levels of support from across a range of industries, and from businesses of all sizes. (YouGov, 2014)²⁵¹
- Leading businesses including KPMG, PwC, Ernst & Young, AXA UK, Pimlico Plumbers and the PR industry trade association (PRCA) support a four week limit. Employer representatives including the Arts Council, UK Music, Creative Skillset and the Royal Institute of British Architects all oppose long term unpaid internships.
- The Government’s Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, the Sutton Trust and the Social Mobility Foundation all support the introduction of a four week limit.
- A four week limit wouldn’t reduce the number of internships. 62% of businesses say it wouldn’t affect the number of interns they hire. 10% say they would hire more interns. 10% say they would hire fewer interns (YouGov, 2015).
- Conservative MP Alec Shelbrooke tabled a 10 Minute Rule Bill in support of this proposal. It passed its first reading 181-19, with cross party support.

14 September 2015

²⁴⁹ National Minimum Wage: volunteers and interns - Commons Library Standard Note: <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/research/briefing-papers/SN00697/national-minimum-wage-volunteers-and-interns>

²⁵⁰ Ipsos MORI/Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust, August 2014. Data available on request

²⁵¹ YouGov polling for Intern Aware, July 2014. Full breakdown available on request.

Response to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee’s call for evidence:

How can young people be best prepared for the world of work?

Submission by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation

September 2015

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation is an independent organisation working to inspire social change through research, policy and practice. We want to see a prosperous UK where everyone can play their part. We work in partnership with individuals, communities and a range of organisations to achieve our goals. We use evidence and experience, and we search for the underlying causes of social issues so we can demonstrate practical solutions that bring about lasting change.

Introduction

The evidence presented in this submission has been developed as part of three JRF programmes:

- *Poverty and ethnicity*. This is a four-year programme, which has examined the ways in which ethnicity and poverty are linked and set out recommendations for reducing poverty more effectively across all ethnic groups in the UK. Two *Solutions* papers will be published in October, focusing on improving youth transitions into the labour market.
- *An anti-poverty strategy for the UK*. This is a major programme in which JRF is developing evidence-based recommendations for a UK anti-poverty strategy to achieve a poverty-free UK. The strategy includes all age groups and all parts of the UK. It will be published in spring 2016.
- *The First Job Opportunities Programme*. First job opportunities are jobs with training for people in poverty who have never had a job. The goal of the programme is to deliver 10,000 of these jobs by 2020. Wrexham and Flintshire Councils are currently piloting a procurement model – which requires the creation of one first job opportunity for every £1m spent on public procurement – on a £300m project.

All of the research published as part of these programmes is available on the JRF website.

1. **What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?**

A central goal for the UK's education and employment systems should be for all young people to achieve an education that leads to decent, secure jobs which pay enough for them to live as adults free from poverty. We therefore need to consider not only whether young people get a job after they leave education, but also whether they are on a pathway that will take them to decently paid and secure work.

The biggest factor affecting young people's future job and income prospects is their attainment at school. Those with a low level of education are almost five times as likely to live in poverty as an adult (Raffo, 2015). Adults with low qualifications are much more likely to be unemployed. While in work they are more likely to be low paid. This also means that they are likely to have less access to training and development (Schmuecker, 2014) and are more likely to have insecure jobs (Thompson, 2015).

The focus of this Inquiry is not on raising attainment, however, therefore the remainder of this submission focuses on the other factors that affect young people's chances of gaining good work and a decent standard of living in adulthood. There is very good evidence, in fact, that attainment at school is not sufficient alone to achieve this. This is illustrated by the situation of young people across a range of ethnic minority groups (Griffiths and Morris, forthcoming).

Young people from many ethnic minority groups have achieved greatly improved educational outcomes over the last few years. For example, in 2005/06 only 33.6 per cent of Black pupils in England achieved five or more A*-Cs (including English and Maths) at GCSE; in 2012/13 this had improved to 58.1 per cent. Over the same period, the proportion of Bangladeshi pupils receiving five or more A*-Cs (including English and Maths) rose from 39 per cent to 64 per cent. Children from the Indian and Chinese groups have outperformed those from other ethnicities for the last decade. In higher education, all ethnic minority groups other than Black Caribbean people are on average more likely to have degrees than White groups (Brynin and Longhi, 2015). However, these improvements in education have not been followed by a similar change in employment outcomes. In 2014, the unemployment rate for ethnic minority young people (aged 16–24) was 28.6 per cent, compared to 15.5 per cent for majority White young people. This gap has barely changed since 2009. Unemployment rates are particularly high for young Pakistani and Bangladeshi (31.4 per cent) and Black people (36 per cent). When ethnic minority young people are in work they are more likely to be paid below the voluntary Living Wage (ibid).

We believe that the Committee is right to focus on labour market transitions for young people, as there is very strong evidence that people's early experiences in the labour market can shape their working lives (Hughes, forthcoming). Young people who experience unemployment have a higher risk of unemployment and lower wages over the long term. People who start work in low-skilled, low-paid work often struggle to progress to better jobs. Our research points towards a range of factors that lead to reduced opportunities for

young people from low-income backgrounds and from some ethnic minority groups. The forthcoming *Solutions* paper from the Work Foundation (Hughes, forthcoming) highlights:

- Social connections and networks that are important in connecting young people to both training and jobs but are stratified along class lines. Parents, friends and family help young people with advice on study and career options, ways to negotiate the skills and education system, and by passing on information about job vacancies and the application process. Studies have found that, controlling for other factors, having friends who are in employment tends to reduce the risk of being poor and social integration is associated with improved employment opportunities for immigrant and ethnic minority groups.
- Employers' use of informal recruitment channels has a strong effect on which young people hear about which jobs. According to one survey, 30 per cent of recruiting employers used word-of-mouth recruitment in 2014, and 23 per cent of employers who had recruited a young person in the previous 12 months had used word-of-mouth or personal recommendations. The use of these informal channels is likely to disadvantage young people in general – since they are less likely to have contacts in employment – and young people from poor backgrounds in particular, whose parents and other contacts are less likely to have links to well-paid work.
- For ethnic minority young people, discrimination and racism can reinforce this disadvantage, in education by affecting teachers' expectations of them, and in employment. There is clear evidence of discrimination in the UK labour market. One experiment funded by the Department for Work and Pensions found that people with names associated with an ethnic minority background would have to make 16 job applications before they got a positive response, compared to 9 applications for 'white' applicants.

Addressing the type of jobs that young people go into – and the training that leads them there – is particularly important. Our research has found clustering into particular occupations is the biggest factor driving increased risk of low pay for people from ethnic minority groups (Brynin and Longhi, 2015).

2. How can the transition from school to work be improved?

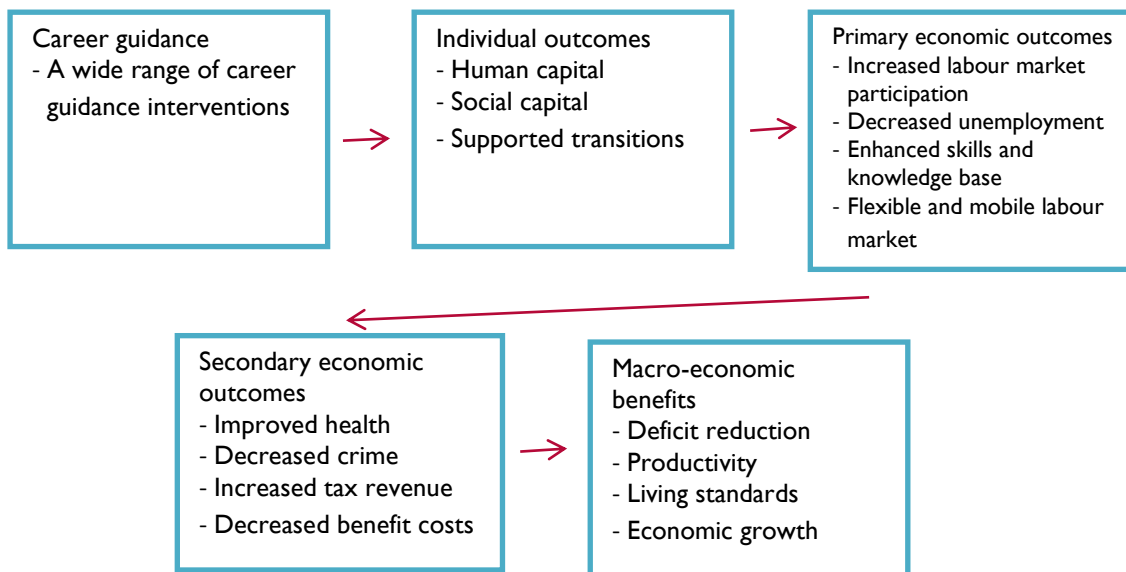
Our research suggests that there are three key ways in which youth transitions into the labour market can be improved:

- invest in good-quality careers advice in schools and colleges;
- improve the quality of apprenticeships and access to them, as well as the quantity, and use central and local government procurement power to encourage employers to offer good-quality apprenticeships and other first job opportunities, targeted at disadvantaged groups;

- local authorities leading work with employers to link young people to good jobs in their areas. This can be done by inserting social clauses into procurement contracts, which stipulate the need to create jobs for target beneficiaries as shown by the First Job Opportunities programme.

Invest in good-quality careers advice

Good-quality careers advice is important for all young people, helping to shape their choices and to motivate them to achieve. It can be especially important for young people from low-income backgrounds and some ethnic minority groups who are less likely to have informal social networks that provide equivalent advice and opportunities. Evidence published by Careers England (Hooley and Dodd, 2015) summarises the economic benefits of careers guidance, including an earlier OECD Review. Careers England summarises the ways in which good-quality careers advice contributes to better individual outcomes with direct and wider economic benefits for both the individual and wider society, in the model below:



The paper provides some illustrations of the benefits that can accrue from a well-functioning careers guidance system, arising from its contribution to a better-functioning education system and labour market.

One study quoted in the Careers England paper suggests that investing £200 per pupil in careers advice would lead to the following savings:

- If one more pupil gained an undergraduate degree it would offset the cost of providing good-quality careers guidance for 985 pupils.

- If one more pupil attained a Level 2 Apprenticeship it would offset the cost for between 395 and 610 pupils.
- If one more pupil attained a Level 3 Apprenticeship it would offset the cost for between 665 and 990 pupils.
- If one more pupil was prevented from becoming NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) it would offset the cost for 280 pupils.

Another study analysed the potential economic impact of improving productivity through better matching of supply and demand in the labour market. The paper argues that good-quality careers advice can support this by raising individuals' 'human capital' in terms of skills and qualifications, and by helping people find work where their skills are better used. The study estimates that every one percentage point improvement in productivity through this improved matching of labour supply and demand could generate 'as much as £10.6 billion annually in increased production'.

Numerous reports have detailed the poor quality and patchy provision of careers advice in secondary schools in the UK (SMCP, 2014). Only 21 per cent of schools take young people on two or more university open days; only 39 per cent of schools enable young people to have a 'meaningful engagement' with an employer by age 16; less than half of British young people have access to a high-quality work experience placement (SMCP 2014). The Gatsby Foundation has developed eight benchmarks that represent high-quality careers advice. Only 2 per cent of schools meet this standard. We recommend that the Government provides dedicated funding to enable schools to deliver good-quality careers advice for all young people, along with a programme ensuring that this funding delivers access to trained advisers and takes account of diversity. It is estimated that this would cost £207 million in the first year, and less thereafter (Hughes, forthcoming). There also needs to be a much clearer accountability framework around careers advice, with ministerial accountability in central government and greater attention paid to it by Ofsted.

Alongside this programme of careers advice, progress should continue to be made in linking employers with schools. The new Careers and Enterprise Company has been set up to broker relationships between schools and employers. Schools should also actively seek to involve employers in their governing bodies, and employers should increase their links to schools, offering work experience, mentoring and talks.

Apprenticeships and first job opportunities

Apprenticeships are one of the Government's most important policies to help young people move into good-quality jobs and career paths. We support the Government's prioritisation of apprenticeships and recent expansions of their ambition in this area. However, there are concerns about the quality of some apprenticeships (Connolly 2014), and their providers – 46 per cent of apprenticeship providers were rated by Ofsted as 'inadequate' or 'requiring improvement' (SMCP 2014).

There are also problems with access to apprenticeships, with ethnic minority young people particularly under-represented (Hughes, forthcoming). In 2011 young people from ethnic minorities made up 19 per cent of the youth population in England, 24 per cent of applications for apprenticeships but only 8 per cent of the apprenticeships started by people aged under 25. Young people from ethnic minorities are also under-represented in some high-quality apprenticeship frameworks, with just 3.2 per cent of learners on engineering apprenticeships from ethnic minority groups. Success rates for apprenticeships also vary across ethnic groups. Chinese apprentices aged 19–24 had the highest success rate for that age group in 2012/13 at 80 per cent, compared to 73 per cent for White, 66 per cent for Bangladeshi and 64 per cent for Black African apprentices.

There is some emerging good practice in this area, including from the Diversity in Apprenticeships Pilots, for instance in establishing close links between schools and employers and offering taster days and mentoring. However, this targeted support needs to be matched by good-quality careers advice (discussed above) and by more action from the National Apprenticeship Service to raise the quality of apprenticeships and awareness of their benefits. Local steps such as reducing transport costs can also help young people from low-income backgrounds to take up apprenticeships and other employment opportunities. We also support the new traineeships scheme as it has the potential to help young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and from ethnic minority groups to overcome barriers to getting an apprenticeship. Co-ordinated action at a local level to reach young people not currently accessing these opportunities and to match them with the right placements is a vital part of getting the best value from these policies. Recommendations of how to do this are discussed further below under ‘Local authorities leading work with employers’.

JRF has funded the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education to develop detailed proposals to reform the UK’s learning and skills system in order to better tackle poverty (Evans, forthcoming). Based on this work we suggest two main changes in relation to apprenticeships. First, the Government should make a proportion of apprenticeship funding contingent on whether apprentices are employed, with the same or a different employer, and/or have higher earnings six months after they complete their apprenticeship. Second, it should develop an Apprentice Charter, co-designed by employers and learners. This would set out what high quality means. It could include employment and pay six months after completing the apprenticeship, whether someone is given a mentor and how much experience they gain in different parts of the business. Currently the quality of apprenticeships is regulated by Ofsted, an Apprentice Agreement for each apprentice, and minimum duration requirements. But this does not get at the wider apprentice experience or the relative rights and responsibilities of individuals, employers and the state. An Apprentice Charter would be co-designed by apprentices and employers in an area or sector. It would act as a quality mark for apprenticeships, including elements such as whether people get work shadowing opportunities outside their direct role, a mentor who isn’t their line manager, and a job at the end of their training (whether with the same or a

different employer). Over time, take-up could be encouraged by requiring its use in public procurement.

Case study: First Job Opportunities – using procurement powers to tackle unemployment

In August 2015, David Cameron announced a new policy that aims to better use the power of public procurement by requiring all bids for Government contracts worth more than £10m to drive increased investment in training and apprenticeships. All new procurement will now include a requirement for suppliers to provide proposals for the creation of apprenticeships. This widens the scope of the Government’s procurement policy, which was previously reserved for construction and infrastructure projects with a capital value over £50m. We know that this is valuable to young people as it gives them a helpful start to their career. JRF suggests that the Government can make further use of the £200 billion spent on public procurement to create 200,000 First Job Opportunities.

In 2002, JRF published *Achieving community benefits through contracts: law, policy and practice* (Richard Macfarlane and Mark Cook), setting out for the first time a methodology for including community benefits – including targeted recruitment and training – in public contracts, within the UK and EU legal and policy frameworks. In 2014, JRF published a follow-up report, *Tackling poverty through public procurement*, which updated the legal and policy position and highlighted good practice based substantially on case studies.

The 2014 report showed how targeted recruitment and training ‘First Job Opportunities’ can be included in public contracts to drive social mobility. It concluded that if the UK public sector was committed to generating a year’s work for a person from a target disadvantaged community for each £1m in contract value spent on works and services, this would drive significant opportunities for young people struggling to access the labour market.

Under the First Job Opportunities model, target beneficiaries are people in poverty who have never had a job and are furthest away from the labour market, including those who have left care, those with criminal records, mental health issues, and/or disabilities.

It is intended that the commissioning and procurement process and contract conditions would seek to ensure that a certain percentage of the workforce or a certain percentage of the work time required to deliver a contract will be delivered by First Job Opportunity beneficiaries.

To date, JRF has further supported the Strategic Investment Board for Northern Ireland that is producing a ‘buysocialNI’ approach to procurement that prioritises opportunities for young people. JRF has also begun conversations with Birmingham City Council, Leeds City Region, the political parties in Northern Ireland, and the Cabinet Office. Off the back of conversations with JRF, Haringey Council is now conducting an internal review of its procurement practices and data with the view to potentially piloting the First Job Opportunities model.

In July 2015, Wrexham and Flintshire Councils became the first to agree to pilot the model on their £300m 'decent homes standards' contracts and project. Other housing associations and local authorities in Wales are agreeing to pilot the approach and the Welsh Government is indicating support for a wider programme of pioneer projects.

George Osborne recently introduced an apprenticeship levy on employers, which they would get back when they engaged apprentices. This will help support initiatives such as the First Job Opportunities programme by ensuring that all contractors to the public sector do in fact implement apprenticeship programmes. This is in a context where we know from the construction sector (where a levy currently exists) that many employers pay the levy as their contribution to training, but do not necessarily engage apprentices and trainees themselves.

The First Job Opportunities model would support the Government's ambition to create 3 million apprenticeships and would also apply to smaller value contracts, which vary by industry (£500k for services, £2m for buildings, £4m for civil engineering) and provide a wider range of new entrant opportunities.

If the Government wants to reach its target of full employment partly by using the £200 billion public procurement spend, it could learn from good practice happening across the United Kingdom, such as a 5 per cent apprentice requirement that has been included in Northern Ireland Civil Service contracts. It should consider how policy changes will help deliver jobs for those in poverty and those furthest away from the labour market. We recommend that the Government considers working with JRF and supports the First Job Opportunities programme, which seeks to deliver 10,000 jobs-with-training by 2020 for people in poverty who may be overlooked.

Local authorities leading work with employers

Our forthcoming *Solutions* report from IPPR (Griffiths and Morris) argues that local authorities and combined authorities should play a leading role in improving transitions into work for young people in their areas. They should work alongside education providers, local business, employment support organisations and Jobcentre Plus offices. Each local authority or group of authorities should develop a strategy to improve transitions to work, linked to their growth strategy, addressing both unemployment and over-qualification, and informed by local-level analysis of patterns of advantage and disadvantage among men and women, and people from different areas and ethnicities. This analysis should inform the setting of local targets for training, employment and earnings.

The three main areas highlighted for action by local authorities are:

- shaping the demand side of the local economy: local authorities should ensure transparency about the representativeness of their own workforces and run their own internal placement schemes for young people looking for work, targeting ethnic minority groups where there is a local need. Local authorities should use their planning, procurement, and commissioning powers to require employers to recruit apprenticeships from disadvantaged groups, to create first job opportunities for those furthest away from the labour market who have never had a job, and to increase transparency about the diversity of their workforces. They can do so by identifying local recruitment agencies that work with target beneficiaries;
 - coordination: local authorities should set up local employer and apprenticeship hubs to connect young people to local employment opportunities and coordinate apprenticeship placements. These hubs should set annual targets for the proportion of apprenticeship starts from specific ethnic minority groups in order to reflect the population of the local area. The teams responsible for procurement and jobs and skills (councillors and officers) should work together to create First Job Opportunities where youth unemployment and skills gaps are corporate priorities;
 - improving supply-side support: many local authorities support tailored schemes designed to support disadvantaged young people into work. These need to be driven by good data about the labour market position of different groups of men and women in the local area. Local authorities should require providers to gather and share data on breakdowns of participants by ethnicity and longitudinal data on the employment outcomes of programme participants, including length of time in work, job level, and workplace progression.
3. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

As the previous sections demonstrate, there are a number of people and organisations who need to take responsibility for improving support for young people moving into work.

Central Government has a responsibility to provide leadership and accountability for many of our recommendations, and funding for some. Clear lines of ministerial responsibility should be established, with monitoring of outcomes by both poverty status and ethnicity carried out rigorously and published. Central Government can also play a major role in using its own procurement powers to create better opportunities for young people, and taking action to encourage local government and the NHS to do the same.

Other bodies with responsibility for specific elements of our recommendations include:

- the National Apprenticeship Service;
- schools, FE colleges and Ofsted;
- local authorities;

- employers.

Businesses, for example, have a role to play as employers. For instance, HR practices can be adapted to enable young people from the ‘missing middle’ to have the opportunity to interview. This can be done by not focusing on certain academic grades or by placing less weight on the educational institution a young person has attended and more weight on a young person’s drive, passion, and dedication.

Central Government should set expectations for these organisations where it has the power to do so. However, there should also be a concerted drive to raise awareness of the responsibility of these organisations, to engage their sector representatives as leaders and to build coalitions of the willing to promote the benefits of taking these actions.

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Skills and poverty; Building an anti-poverty learning and skills system, Evans S.
(forthcoming), National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England and Wales)

8 September 2015

Learning Revolution Trust – Written evidence (SMO0022)

Report to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility by the Learning Revolution Trust

The Learning Revolution Trust was set up as a registered charity in 2012 with a remit to promote the social and economic inclusion of disadvantaged individuals and communities in East London by widening the participation of young people and adults in further and higher education and supporting their progression and achievement.

Our responses to the questions posed by the Select Committee are as follows;

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school to the work place?

- 1.1 The East End Boroughs served by our trust include some of the most socio economically deprived in the country and include high proportions of individuals and groups facing significant barriers to employment and social mobility. A report by Oxford Economics for the 6 former Olympic Growth Boroughs (Feb. 2014) found that employment rates in the boroughs were significantly below the average for the city as a whole (below 60% compared to over 70%) whilst unemployment rates were significantly above the average. They also had high proportions of disadvantaged groups including Black and Minority Ethnic Groups including recent migrants with English language needs, unemployed young people aged 16 – 24, people with disabilities and people with low or no qualifications. “London : A Tale of Two Cities” (Work Foundation April 2014) found that youth unemployment in London grew from 19% to 25% in 2014 with particularly high rates for young people from ethnic minorities, and that the high competition for jobs made it harder for many young people in London to find work than elsewhere, due to higher skilled workers taking lower skilled jobs, “Meeting the London Skills Gap” (London Councils 2013) argued that the high skills requirements of the London labour market, with 55% of new jobs requiring Level 4 qualifications compared to 40% in the UK as a whole, meant that those with few qualifications are increasingly likely to be left behind.

Despite low employment and high unemployment rates, employers in London report serious skills shortages and gaps; the London Business Survey (CBI / KPMG Sept. 2014) found that 23% of vacancies couldn't be filled due to skill shortages and 45% of employers reported skills gaps in their existing workforces with the highest proportions in manufacturing, skilled trades and service sectors such as hotels and catering.

- 1.2 There is a clear correlation between high levels of deprivation and the relatively high numbers of young people in the sub region who do not achieve level 2 (i.e. 5 GCSEs grades A-C including English and Maths) qualifications by age 16. The priority for this group is to achieve full levels 2 and 3 as soon as possible but their progression is

often not a smooth or linear process. Many cannot rely on financial support from their parents and have to work part time as well as study, whilst others face literacy, numeracy and English language barriers to progression. This means that substantial numbers do not achieve the required levels by age 18 or 19; also many young people leave school with limited qualifications at age 16 and return to college at 18 or 19 or older after a period of work or unemployment.

- 1.3 National policy has tended to define the majority of young people who do not progress to higher education as a problem which has consequently been subject to a series of inconsistent and ill thought out policy initiatives. Over the last 5 years the number of learning opportunities has been drastically reduced particularly for the 19+ age group. The reduction of 24% in non-apprenticeship adult skills funding for 2015 / 16 will result in the loss of up to 400,000 learning places for this age group in addition to the million previously lost during the last parliament. The recent decision to axe the budget for ESOL or English language skills training mandated by the Job Centre Plus will result in many thousands more people being denied the opportunity to gain access to skills critical to their future progression and employability, Levels of funding for specific age groups have also been reduced; 16 – 19 year olds studying for the same qualifications as their peers in school are supported by lower levels of funding (as a result of VAT being levied on Further Education Colleges), funding for 18 year olds has been reduced compared to 16 and 17 year olds, and funding for 19 – 24 year olds is lower again than for 18 year olds. Those who leave school with limited qualifications often face challenges which cannot be fully addressed in 1 year, so current arrangements undermine progression and narrow opportunity.
- 1.4 The first steps in building a coherent and relevant education and skills policy for the 14 – 24 age group which will promote social mobility should include the following;
- Establishing a ‘Parity of Esteem’ between vocational and academic pathways as a core component of future strategy. This will involve maximising participation in learning and tailoring learning plans to the specific needs of the individual learner with an appropriate mix of vocational and academic subjects. It will also be important for practical skills to be valued equally with academic achievements; currently national policies to develop vocational qualifications tend to ape academic criteria and under value high level practical skills eg. the ability to design and construct items using various materials and media, or the ability to act, dance or play sport all require high level competencies that are at least the equal of academic skills.
 - Recognising and building the value and effectiveness of vocational qualifications studied by young people in schools and colleges as a coherent and core component of the post 14 education system. This should include a strong focus on supporting the high proportion who have not achieved level 2 by the age of 16, to achieve levels 2 and 3 as quickly as possible. This should not be an age related race to achieve this by age 18 or else! To do so will perpetuate the social exclusion inherent in the current system. Young people who do not achieve Level 2 by 16 or Level 3 by 18 should still be able to progress to academic routes at a later stage if they find post 16

programmes that offer them better or more relevant learning opportunities than those at school. Also, vocational qualifications are not necessarily a direct route into employment any more than academic qualifications are.

- Ensuring that vocational education for these groups is adequately funded and that achieving 'Parity of Funding' between vocational and higher education is adopted as a policy goal. In 2013 / 14 2.9 million people attended further education colleges compared to 1.9 million at UK universities, but colleges were run on an annual budget of £4 billion, less than a seventh of universities annual budget of £30 billion.
 - Recognising that apprenticeships can only fill a segment of the needs of young people, not the needs of the whole post 16 population who fail to achieve level 2 by age 16. There is a danger that the current political emphasis on expanding apprenticeship provision will be used as a cover for a major reduction in choices and opportunities for young people. There are also growing question marks over the extent to which many apprenticeships are offering genuinely new opportunities or are being used by many employers to 'rebadge' existing jobs at below the minimum wage.
 - Recognising that the attainment of English and Maths at GCSE grades A-C (or its equivalent) is not required for most routes of progression whether to employment or higher education. What is required is an appropriate level of attainment in the application of numbers and English Language. This would gain application and buy – in by young people and employers in a way that current national policy does not.
 - Encouraging flexibility and choice and giving all young people time to find the most appropriate context for learning, achievement and progression. It is perfectly possible, for instance, for a 17 or 18 year old who has got his or her achievement back on track to switch to an academic route.
- 2. There is a group of young people aged 14 – 24 who do not follow the A level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**
- 2.1 There are a range of national bodies and organisations (such as the Association of Colleges) who can provide detailed statistical responses to this question.
- 2.2 The majority of young people who leave school do not go directly into higher education. Apart from those classified as NEET, the great majority enter vocational education, undertaking college based courses studying at NVQ levels 1, 2, 3 or equivalent. The average profile of the young people concerned within East London closely reflects the profile of the population as a whole within the sub region, with high proportions with a working class background, from communities characterised by high levels of deprivation and low incomes, representing a wide range of ethnic

minority communities (over 60% in some boroughs) and substantial numbers leaving school without having achieved qualifications at level 2 (i.e. 5 GCSEs grades A – C). Young people with physical and learning disabilities are also strongly represented in further education.

- 2.3 As indicated above, many of the young people concerned face significant financial and other barriers to learning which mean that they can take time to achieve qualifications at levels 2, 3 and above. In the context of a labour market in London in which there is relatively strong competition for jobs requiring less than a degree qualification, the priority for many of these young people is to achieve progression into higher level learning e.g. level 2 to level 3 and above rather than to make a direct transition into employment.
- 2.4 The government's overwhelming emphasis on an expanded apprenticeship programme whilst it is simultaneously reducing existing further education learning opportunities at levels 1 to 3 is likely to result overall in a dramatic reduction in choices and opportunities for young people who leave school without the qualifications required to enter higher education. There is strong evidence of a lack of demand for apprenticeships among many employers, with 90% not currently offering apprenticeships and in this context the imposition of a crash programme from above could be a recipe for failure. There is already growing concern at the quality of many apprenticeships ("Mad' apprenticeship targets have consigned a generation to a low skill low paid duties' Independent 31st August 2015) and the 'rebadging' of existing low skilled jobs by employers.

The practical result for many young people could soon be that by the age of 19 the only vocational education options available to them will be to persuade an employer to take them on as an apprentice for a low paid job or to pay for further education and training, which most will be unable to afford.

Paradoxically, forcing young people down the apprenticeship route in these circumstances, could lead to many being trapped in low skilled occupations and their achieving lower levels of qualifications than they would have achieved if they had remained in further education and been supported in progressing to higher level learning.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully to the workplace?

- 3.1 One of the key problems here is actually embedded in the question itself. A much better question would be 'Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of progression? By focussing solely on employment as the inevitable and necessary

outcome for this group of young people, this assumption replicates the problems outlined in our answer to the first question, viz, why must those who are not an A level / higher education route be automatically channelled into an immediate employment route? To repeat, not all young people can achieve their potential as measured by national standards by the age of 16. Many young people who study vocational qualifications at 16 and beyond are looking to make up the deficit in their skills and achievement (often including serious deficits in language and maths skills), so that they can progress to higher level qualifications (including higher education). To demand that there must be an immediate goal of quickly progressing to employment is discriminatory, social exclusive, reduces choice and artificially ‘caps’ skills development and progression. No such demands are made upon A level students or HE graduates, so why should they be made of this group?

- 3.2 There is little transparency in the masses of data on transitions that are held on these young people. Data tends to be used for funding, quality and accountability purposes, and there is very little use made of it to intelligently analyse the patterns of study and progression undertaken by the full range of young people. For example, many young people (including the highest achievers and those who progress to high level professional employment) do not take straight forward routes in getting there, and many people (including the majority in higher education) study subjects which they do not pursue directly in their subsequent career paths. For most, educational and career progression is not linear, and yet policy initiatives usually assume that linear routes are the most common and desirable. The data needs to be mined to extract the real patterns.
- 3.3 We have indicated above the basic outline of what the bulk of further education provision currently consists of for young people in the 14 – 24 age group. For most of those concerned, this provision is a choice that they make and is not a ‘second best’ option which the question implies that they have to accept because they have been unable to access an apprenticeship (which caters for only a small percentage of young people). Internationally, the low status accorded to vocational pathways for this age group compared to academic pathways through schools and universities is a distinctive feature of this country compared to other advanced economies for Europe. Vince Cable, former Secretary of State for Business and Skills pointed this out in his Cambridge Public Policy lecture (23rd April 2014) on the future of further and higher education when he referred to “*the continuing gulf between the two systems in terms of funding or perceived esteem*” and stated that “*we shall not survive in this world if we in Britain alone downgrade the non university professional and technical sector. No other country in the Western World does so. Let us now move away from our snobbish caste ridden hierarchal obsession with university status*”.
- 4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?**

- 4.1 There is growing evidence that the overall scale and quality of careers guidance provision in recent years has suffered considerably as a result of cuts in the public funding particularly in schools where it was effectively withdrawn. There should be a requirement on all education and training providers, backed up by appropriate levels of funding, to offer all young people impartial information, guidance and advice on progression. As indicated this advice should focus on the specific needs of the individual and how to best support their progression to further learning and / or employment rather than purely the narrow focus on immediate progression to employment implied by this question.
- 4.2 In addition the transition from education to employment would be better supported by:
- Demonstrating the equal value of vocational qualifications (and within that of practical skills and therefore enhancing their status)
 - Allowing all young people (not just those on A level / HE route) to progress educationally up to the age of at least 21 (as HE students are allowed to do). The national standard should be for all young people to reach at least level 3 by age 21 with sub-targets for higher levels of achievement . Those not on the higher education route should not be forced into employment or apprenticeship schemes but allowed to pursue their progression through vocational routes.
 - Employers who do not directly support the acquisition of higher level qualifications (as well as English and Maths competencies) should be sanctioned. For example, they should be barred from being involved in apprenticeship or work experience schemes.
- 4.3 It is the general practice of further education colleges to work closely with employers in the planning of course development, apprenticeships and other career development activities. There is a lot of evidence of innovation in this area. Within East London for instance Newham College of Further Education has worked closely with the borough council on Newham Workplace which provides a job brokerage service matching the skills and recruitment needs of local employers with the employment needs of the young people. The college has also established a partnership with Samsung to establish the Samsung Digital Skills Academy and works closely with the fashion and textile design sector through its Fashion and Textile Museum.

The level of engagement of employers in vocational education tends to be more uneven in the UK than in countries such as Germany or Sweden, particularly among SMEs but could be strengthened through the development of more local and sub-regional partnerships involving vocational education providers, local authorities and employers.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

5.1 Again, the focus of the question is far too narrow and needs to focus on how we can best support progression and achievement in learning and employment. The current direction of travel is the product of a centralised system which is based on a discriminatory approach to the status and funding of vocational education, and results in a series of erratic policy initiatives, the latest of which is the top down imposition of mass apprenticeships of questionable quality. The overall impact is that learning opportunities including opportunities for transition to employment are being radically reduced.

5.2 The Learning Revolution Trust strongly supports current moves towards a devolution of responsibility for vocational education together with skills development / economic development to regional, sub regional and local levels.

We believe that this would enable local stakeholders, including vocational education providers, local authorities and employers to build effective partnerships which can use local knowledge to anticipate future skills and employment needs more effectively, plan provision accordingly, and engage employers in the provision of work placements, apprenticeships, the identification of recruitment needs and matching these to the employment aspirations of young people entering the labour market.

8 September 2015

**The London Chamber of Commerce and Industry Commercial Education Trust (CET) –
Written evidence (SMO0059)**

Select Committee on Social Mobility
Inquiry into the Transition from School to work for 14-24 year olds

EVIDENCE

LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY COMMERCIAL EDUCATION TRUST

The Select Committee on Social Mobility is conducting an inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds, and particularly those who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route and are not classified as NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training).

1. The London Chamber of Commerce Commercial Education Trust (CET)

- 1.1 CET is a grant-making charity which has made grants totalling £2.6M in support of charitable projects promoting commercial education. This has placed CET's Trustees and advisors in a privileged position to learn from practitioners about the issues affecting young people and their transition from school into the world of work.
- 1.2 We fund practical projects, commission research and support dissemination of best practices in helping people (particularly young people) into employment and enterprise. We work with a range of charities and organisations, encouraging the development of commercial education from primary school level through to higher education.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 You have called for written evidence *'to consider social mobility in the transition from school to work'* and posed 5 key questions. We respond primarily to Questions 1, 2 and 4.

3. Question 1: Factors and challenges that affect social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school to the work place: e.g. Government policy, the qualifications system, the expectations of employers.

- 3.1 As a funder of commercial education projects (many of which take place within the school system), we have found that at all levels, education is not properly geared to

the need of employment and self-employment. The concentration on an academic approach, even in the core subjects of English and Maths, does not prepare young people sufficiently for work and in many cases does not motivate those who may become the most successful in business and enterprise. OFSTED has indicated that there are real weaknesses in the teaching of business studies in particular to the extent that it may prove a disincentive to careers in business.

- 3.2 Many of the qualities most valued by employers (team working, communication, problem solving, initiative) are rarely encouraged in the education system. This may matter less for the academically able (at least until later) but can be a real disadvantage for those seeking employment or training at 16 or 18.
- 3.3 There are a number of charitable initiatives that nonetheless try to support the transition from school into work and enterprise. Many of however remain *extrinsic* to the curriculum and do not involve teachers significantly.
 - a) Example: recent CET funded research on an enterprise-in-schools project run by a national charity confirms the significant and positive learning outcomes for schoolchildren at a primary school level - but also notes the challenge of *embedding* enterprise in the wider school curriculum. This is common to other charities who partner with CET. Even if there are real benefits for schools in terms of developing relationships with parents, external business partners and others, affordability for such 'enrichment' programmes is an issue.
- 3.4 Many of the initiatives in schools which prepare young people for the world or work are not properly evaluated, particularly in relation to their long-term effect on young people and schools.
 - a) Example: we know from reports submitted CET by charity partners that they have the additional challenge of finding funding to secure comprehensive data evaluation of their programmes, to track success and feed development. Charity partners also cite difficulty in finding good evaluators for their programmes.

4. Question 2: The career trajectories for young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET

- 4.1 Young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route and are not classified as NEET are prime targets for apprenticeships. However, recent reforms have made apprenticeships less attractive to young people because they no longer require them to take recognised qualifications (essential for progression and

reputation) and may be too closely aligned to the needs of individual employers rather than the occupation in general.

4.2 The Government's target of 3 million apprentices may be counterproductive if it leads to reductions in quality and concentration on apprenticeships that are cheap to deliver. Against this background, apprenticeships are seen as less worthwhile than higher education by parents, teachers and young people.

5. **Question 4: How can transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?**

5.1 CET partner charities often highlight some key characteristics for successful projects which work with young people on their transition into work: clear learning objectives; a safe environment for invention, with authentic, real-life experiences; active learning methods; experiential learning; self-assessment by participants; and support for teachers.

6. **In summary**: we believe that to support the successful transition from school into work requires sustained effort to embed employability and enterprise initiatives into curriculum and at all levels of education, from primary school upwards. We are concerned about the quality and status of apprenticeships. We support the initiatives of many charities who try to operate in this field but note the lack of funding to take them to scale and to evaluate their work.

David Coughtrie
Chairman
Commercial Education Trust

14 September 2015

MiddletonMurray – Written evidence (SMO0013)

House of Lords response

In response to the House of Lords call for evidence we had successful engaged with 60 young learners to respond to your call for evidence through your online survey.

Introduction

MiddletonMurray are an awarding winning recruitment and training provider.

MiddletonMurray have extensive experience of delivering innovative and dynamic provision to a variety of clients, including programmes for the unemployed, 16-18 and 19-24 Intermediate and 25+ Advanced Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships, ESF and local authority funded provision for young people who are NEET, those furthest from the labour market and those in employment, across numerous geographic areas in London including the South East. Our provision covers a broad range of sectors, and our tutors have extensive industry experience in their subject specialisms.

MiddletonMurray holds several contracts delivering Traineeships, Study Programmes, 16-18 and 19+ Apprenticeship Training. Clients include: - Direct SFA and EFA Contracts, Chichester College, Havering College and Havering council, Prospects, Totton College, North Hertfordshire College, Rinova and Bexley College. Currently of all 16-24 learners that have joined MiddletonMurray, 96% are either in an Apprenticeship or Full Time Work with 100% achievement on our 19+ employability programmes, both of which are significantly above SFA minimum performance levels.

We currently have 500+ learners on our Level 2-3 Apprenticeship programmes, all of whom are on target to complete their frameworks. We have delivered careers advice in schools to more than 600 students, and have supported 100 unemployed learners through to secured employment via our CSCS course and have actively engaged with over 2000 young learners. We are in contact with over 1000 employers locally and nationally, and our Recruitment Division allows us to provide a seamless service for clients undertaking training by offering and securing work opportunities and sustainable employment. Through our strong commercial and recruitment skills we have an in-depth knowledge of our employers' requirements including localised priorities, which places local employer needs at the core of our Employer Engagement activity.

Q1

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1. Schools don't prepare students for the work place for a number of reasons:
 - they are focusing purely on qualifications as Ofsted steer them that way
 - Shortage of time
 - Lack of expertise in dispensing careers advice
 - Lack of stakeholder engagement (parents expect qualifications and not work preparation)

2. Sadly families that do not work will not be discussing work options and employability with their children and actually may be discouraging them from taking entry level jobs because of pay rates not being as large as benefits.
3. Families may discourage their children to go to University because of the debt they may encounter and often families will not have sufficient understanding of the loan repayment system and the fact that it is only payable after a certain earning level is achieved.
4. Families may not believe they can afford to subsidise their children in order to give them time to take apprenticeships or go to university so may encourage them into dead-end jobs.
5. Employers often believe 16 year olds are not ready and are unreliable until they meet them via organisations such as MiddletonMurray. Employers need to transition and gain a new understanding of the educational landscape i.e. that you don't need university degrees in order to be able to follow various career paths, also a young learner will bring different skills if they are supported.
6. This young group do not understand what is expected of them in the workplace so have a shock when they have to travel to work, attend on time, not have 3 break times in a day and only get 5 weeks holiday a year. They just don't realise what work entails. We need to teach this earlier in their schooling.
7. Those who choose University are more inclined to be planning a career from the last two years of schooling, whereas this middle group are often only thinking as far as a job when they receive their results.
8. Most of this group have never left home so will not have had the benefit of outside views and influences opening up options for them to consider. Early industry knowledge would support this process.
9. The current Government policy offers a very viable alternative to university in the form of apprenticeships and many large and prestigious employers have embraced this (PWC, Barclays) although the previous coalition Government did not. However all Governments do not see employment and careers as a curriculum topic from the age of 14 which is a mistake. The message to employers is they must support this group into starting careers.

Q2

There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

Our own South East and North East London, North West Kent and East Kent data

By Gender

Male	36%
Female	64%

By Ethnicity

White British	88%
BME	7%

By Disability

No Disability	87%
Has Disability	0%

By Learning Difficulty

No Learning Difficulty	91%
Has Learning Difficulty	9%

1. Young females are a large proportion of this group
2. They are mainly white British
3. They do not have learning difficulties
4. They are from working class backgrounds in the main.
5. They tend to enter the jobs market within the service sector
6. They generally have good grades, but don't know what they want to do.
7. They want to work but are unclear on a career path.
8. They often have started college and fallen out because they have accepted the first offer and in fact are encouraged by schools to take the first offer so that the school reduces their NEET figures. There is a lack of career planning for reasons stated in Q1 within the schools which perpetuates this.
9. They tend to have a lack of discipline and have an expectation to be entertained and that they need to enjoy everything they do in order to do it. We train them that sometimes they need to ignore the fact they are not enjoying things all the time.
10. They are not compelled to learn because they don't see the relevance of what they are learning to their career. We get them to create life plans first and foremost in

our organisation and only after that do we get them to learn subjects such as Maths and English – once they are compelled to do so.

11. They are sitting exams because everyone has to do them rather than because they see the relevance and importance of them to their future career – unlike those who are already planning to go to university.
12. This group tends to be very 'localist' ie they are unaware of the opportunities in the UK and certainly unaware of Global opportunities and have a pre-conceived limit of what they are going to earn and what their life is going to be like.
13. This group doesn't have exposure to what the opportunities are. They don't mix with people who tell them about opportunities so their lack of progress stems from a lack of knowledge not ability.
14. They have less fear of failure; they see that there is a cushion for them in the form of welfare or parents who are wealthy even though they are working class.
15. They often don't have role models in the form of parents or siblings who have built a career as opposed to a job.
16. Their career trajectory tends to be limited, because of all the above. If only they knew that they could succeed in whatever they chose, but it's a journey.
17. The majority of this group will have stagnated income throughout their life time due to no clear career path.

Q3

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

We don't believe the transition system is clear at all – every school has a different understanding of what options are preferable and viable.

There is a lack of clarity regarding options and we see all the time that schools and employers do not know anywhere near enough about Apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships are still seen as the trades (brick laying, carpentry, etc). However we need to educate society that the quality of an Apprenticeship is the gaining of knowledge and skills within a classroom and work environment and this can range from the trades to the service sector. Apprentices get the theory and put it into practice. There is still a perception that A-level failure is the reason for doing an Apprenticeship and that this is a second class option – we most definitely have seen this changing over the past couple of years. In the trades, Apprenticeships were always seen as the go to route. They don't have this same perception and value in the academic route. Most schools and students need a lot more convincing that an Apprenticeship is a viable alternative.

When young people leave school at 16, they want to get into the work place quickly and do the minimum amount of training. Sometimes they see the Apprenticeship (studying

side) of the job a necessary evil, i.e. they want a job but not to study because they are 'fed up' with studying. There should be a clear incentive here. Apprenticeships still don't carry the kudos that a degree does whereas in Germany an Apprenticeship is the go to qualification because of its status.

Q4

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

The transition options need to be more clearly defined and understood by society in general.

Employers, hopefully through the new levy, will start to really engage with schools to support this transition and offer more Apprenticeships due to the incentives.

Incentives for schools need to be considered i.e. if the school is incentivised more to send them to do A- levels rather than direct them into work (Apprenticeships) then of course they will continue to send them down the academic route. However we are seeing that even Graduates are struggling to find employment as the career paths for them were not necessarily explained.

Labour market intelligence needs to be filtered into schools, so they can, from age 14, start to talk about the future career prospects of young learners.

We need to give schools a template to prepare their students for their career – to underpin the academic study. I have recently published a book in my 1stjobseries called '*How to get your first job...and build the career you want*' to support this, with a further book due later this year aimed specifically at schools. www.1stjobseries.com

To start this with youngsters at year 7 and for all teachers to know what each student wants to do with their career right from an early age. This may change, but they have a pathway, and will see the benefits of studying.

There is an incentive for schools to keep students in education so that they maintain their revenue streams - which works against the young people's options.

We feel that employer will only be encouraged to develop work placements if there are incentives. This could be done through the levy and would bring educational establishment and employers closer together.

We need to ensure that funding is available for the long term. Not 1 year, 2 years or 3, but 5 year contracts to deliver and develop this much needed service - which we currently deliver for free at MiddletonMurray.

Q5

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

The Government and its departments – DfE and BIS have a large responsibility to dictate policy to Schools and colleges and provider and employer networks.

It should be mandatory that every employer has to offer 2 weeks work experience which is funded through the levy.

All schools should introduce industry as part of the wider curriculum from 14 years old. They should have a legal obligation to provide independent careers advice through funded services.

Society, Parents and siblings must be better informed and encouraged to support their children to undertake a career path or Life plan that they all subscribe to.

The media needs to back the campaign for real career paths and alternative educational routes that hold the same value as other academic routes. The problem is most of the media took the academic route. But a great question to ask them all is *'how did you put the academic theory into practice'?*

Schools need to understand that you need to start somewhere to have a career route – understanding the four pillars of industry would be a start.

Employers need to understand that for the economy and prosperity to continue we need a skilled workforce that can compete with emerging nations

We feel that Local Authorities have had many years to manage this and they have not done so. Enterprise partnerships are the same as the old Training and Enterprise Councils and they failed. We suggest we go through the college and provider route that have closer links with employers and schools to really support a change in attitude. This could be overseen by Ofsted, EFA and SFA reporting directly back to BIS and Dfe.

Conclusion

The missing middle needs support from professional recruiters who have their best interest at heart (independent). Young people can then be given the plans and pathways to successful careers.

Careers advisors and training providers need to become job placement and recruitment experts like MiddletonMurray and facilitate the placement into their first job rather than just training in CV preparation and interview skills.

The past has shown us that for many years careers advice has not worked. National Careers Service, prospects, Careers in schools, the problem with every careers service is that it doesn't involve placement into jobs.

We currently go into schools, prepare the students for careers and then have them all placed into their first job before they leave. We then transition them onto an Apprenticeship and into full time employment within 16 months. We Train, Teach, Assess and Mentor throughout this time

We would very much welcome a meeting to share our knowledge and understanding of this group of learners and the barriers they face. The 'missing middle' is the largest proportion of this young age group, who become very disillusioned when they do not see a way out from their daily grind. However with the right advice and plans we at MiddletonMurray have seen many succeed and flourish.

Submitted by Angela Middleton, Founder and CEO of MiddletonMurray

2 September 2015

National Foundation for Educational Research – Written evidence (SMO0082)

House of Lords: Select Committee on Social Mobility.

Inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds.

Submission of evidence by the National Foundation for Educational Research

14th September 2015

Introduction

- 1 The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds. In doing this, we are pleased to contribute to thinking in this priority policy area which seeks to enable and support young people to make successful transitions from education to employment. In addressing three of the questions listed in the Call for Evidence, this submission draws on available evidence including key publications from NFER's Research Programme and education-to-employment portfolio: [assertshttp://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-programme/](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-programme/) .

Summary

- 2 NFER maintains that important current factors that would positively affect social mobility and transitions are: improving the quality of careers guidance; raising expectations of young people; and taking steps to improve awareness and understanding of current vocational qualifications and routes to employment. These would contribute positively towards greater social mobility and improved transitions from education to employment.
3. The evidence available suggests that socio-economic factors, prior academic success and engagement with school are predictors of the route taken by young people and their post-16 destinations.
4. Research has identified the need for more flexible and appropriate post-16 provision suitable for all young people aged 16 and 17 years of age in terms of content, delivery and timing. This will help to engage them, keep them motivated, support their development of skills and prevent them dropping out of education. Furthermore evidence has confirmed that improved strategies to re-engage young people at risk of disengagement from learning are needed.
5. The provision of high-quality careers guidance is significant in improving the transition from school to work for all young people. High-quality guidance provides independent and impartial information and advice on career options. It is increasingly important given the complex decision-making context facing a young person which includes the raising of the participation age to 18, the diversification of education and training opportunities, the increase in higher education tuition fees, and the changing labour market which has shed many jobs traditionally filled by young people. There is evidence that many young people in England are not receiving high-quality careers guidance.
6. Increasing employer engagement with schools and colleges is a way of improving provision of careers guidance and assisting transition from education to employment. There is evidence that employer engagement can help young people to develop the

skills necessary for employment such as team working, communication and interpersonal skills, enabling students to be more work-ready. Employers are likely to employ more young people if they have played a role in helping them to understand the requirements of the world of work including expected attitudes and behaviour.

Q1: What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace?

7. NFER considers that the most important current factors in terms of improving social mobility are:
 - Careers guidance
 - Expectations of young people
 - Attitudes to vocational education.
8. One of the key factors that affect young people's social mobility and employment outcomes is access to effective careers guidance. This represents a considerable current challenge as changes in the responsibility for careers guidance (to schools in 2012) have brought into sharp focus the importance of effective careers guidance for all young people, but perhaps most significantly those young people *not* intending to take the A level route. In the UK there has been little detailed work on the relationship between careers guidance provision and educational outcomes. Recently, Hooley *et al.* (2014) conducted a quantitative analysis of destination data (currently a school-level database) which compared outcomes for those schools that have a nationally validated career education and guidance quality award and those that do not. This school-level quantitative analysis suggests that, at GCSE, Career Quality Awards are associated with a 1.8 per cent increase in GCSE performance and a 0.48 per cent decrease in persistent absences *and, at A-level*, Career Quality Awards are associated with a 0.54 per cent decrease in persistent unexplained absences. The authors suggest that more systematic research should be commissioned which captures the extent of career provision in schools and examines impact at *pupil* level as well as at school level.
9. To appreciate the huge importance of career guidance it is worth considering that young people make decisions in different ways, depending on their individual characteristics and therefore need varying types and formats of career guidance. Furthermore, when young people feel supported in their decision-making by their school, they are more influenced by school factors and less reliant on external factors such as friends and family. (Blenkinsop *et al.* 2006). Blenkinsop *et al.* 2006, the authors of '[How do Young People make choices at 14 and 16?](#)' highlight that young people's decisions vary '*according to context (including the curriculum offer and support mechanisms in place to support them in decision-making), the ways in which information and advice was being mediated to them, and their own individual approach to and skills of decision-making*' (p2). In examining how young people make decisions about their futures and routes to take from education to employment, the report revealed that they have different mindsets and make decisions in very different ways. Furthermore, their decisions change over time as they mature and become aware of other opportunities. The authors suggest that this indicates that any single approach to

support 'will not work for all young people and that all individuals need varying levels and type of support at different stages in their school careers' (p 2).

10. We note that evidence shows (for example, the evaluation of the [Implementation and Impact of Diplomas: Information Advice and Guidance](#)) that young people want to understand the value of qualifications and whether they are going to enable them to progress in their transition from school into the workplace (Wade *et al.* 2011). They seek information, advice and guidance from a range of sources, particularly from their teachers, their parents and careers advisers.
11. Evidence from the Sutton Trust [Higher Ambitions report](#) highlights the importance of keeping teachers (and parents) informed about the current routes to careers (Nash, 2014). The authors included data from the NFER Teacher Voice panel that indicated that 65 per cent of teachers said they would rarely or never advise a student to take an apprenticeship if they had the grades to attend university.
12. Evidence suggests that low expectations affect social mobility and the employment outcomes of young people. The report, [NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus – Research report for the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission](#), revealed that respondents considered that the main impact on shaping students' hopes for the future are teachers' and parents'/carers' expectations (White *et al.* 2014). A majority of respondents agreed that colleagues' lower expectations of students from disadvantaged backgrounds adversely affect their outcomes: *'A majority of secondary school respondents (76 per cent) considered that their schools' current Year 11 top set(s) will be doing professional or higher managerial or administrative jobs in ten years' time. In contrast, a majority (60 per cent) thought that their schools' current Year 11 bottom set(s) will be doing skilled manual work or semi-skilled or unskilled manual work in ten years' time. Around one in ten respondents also considered that some of their Year 11 bottom set(s) students will be not in employment or training in ten years' time'* (p2). Other important influences on shaping students' hopes for the future were reported to be family background factors, students' ability and the local economy and other local factors.
13. An NFER paper, [Changing attitudes to vocational education](#), argues for a fundamental change to the way we view vocational education (McCrone, 2014). The author presents evidence to suggest that attitudes to vocational education have not kept up with the pace of structural change, it remains the poor relation of academic attainment and we need to address entrenched views that academic routes are in some way 'better'. This is particularly important in terms of social mobility as young people from families with lower social capital (that is they have fewer social contacts and networks that give them access to opportunities) benefit from advice to ensure they follow the best route for them ([Haynes, G et al., 2012](#)).
14. The paper concludes by advising that all teachers need to be better equipped with a basic knowledge of the ranges of options open to young people and where to direct them for impartial information and suggests this should be part of teachers' professional standards. Further, the author suggests that parents also need a greater awareness and understanding of current vocational qualifications and routes to employment. The introduction of an integrated application system for vocational and

academic qualifications similar to that currently used for university entrance would help support this. Additionally, schools, colleges and employers, including corporate, small and medium-sized enterprises and micro-businesses need to engage with each other to provide young people with information on academic and vocational routes to employment.

Q2: There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

15. The evidence available suggests that socio-economic factors, prior academic success and engagement with school are predictors of the route taken by young people and their post-16 destinations.
16. Researching a group of young people of whom approximately two-fifths were taking four or more AS/A-levels, a similar proportion were taking a vocational route, and the remainder were taking three or fewer AS/A-levels, Taggart *et al.* (2014) [study of post-16 destinations](#)) found that:
 - Parents' highest qualification levels strongly predicted young people's post-16 destinations, especially following a higher academic route.
 - Students from higher income families were more likely to choose a higher academic route. Students whose parents were in lower socio-economic status groups were almost four times more likely to follow a lower academic route compared to those from the highest SES families (Taggart *et al.* (2014) [study of post-16 destinations](#)).
 - Pre-school attendance and attending an academically effective primary and secondary school also predicted the likelihood of young people going on to the higher academic route (Taggart *et al.* (2014) [study of post-16 destinations](#)).
 - GCSE results were extremely important in determining which full-time education route young people followed beyond Year 11. GCSE results in English and mathematics were significant predictors of post-16 destinations. This was reported by Taggart *et al.* (2014) from their major longitudinal study which tracked 3,000 children from early years to their early post-16 destinations.
17. Taggart's findings are supported by the evidence reported in [The Wolf Report](#) (2011) which found that:
 - Of the 16-18 cohort England, 20 per cent finish Key Stage 4 at too low a level to start post-16 Level 2 courses; and a further 20 per cent experience periods of 'churn' between education and the labour market.
 - At post-16, around 18 per cent achieve a Level 2 award but no higher.
18. The Wolf Report concluded that '*it seems clear that at least one in five of each cohort is getting very little benefit from the post-16 secondary education system. Put simply, as a society we are failing at least 350,000 of our 16-18 year olds, year on year*' (p.52).

19. Spours *et al.* (2012) refer to this group as the 'overlooked middle' in 14-19 education and training, observing that they lie 'between those on the 'royal route' of GCSEs and A levels, those on Apprenticeships with jobs and those classified as NEET' (p.3). They estimate that the middle group accounts for approximately 50 per cent of the cohort.
20. We recognise that Question 2 in the Call for Evidence does not include young people who are NEET but insight can be gained by considering analysis of the experience of the NEET young people. For example, [research](#) by Spielhofer *et al.* (2009) may contribute to understanding that the segmentation analysis applied to young people who are NEET, and those that held jobs without training (JWT) in the 2009 research, can be applied to the young people described above.
21. Statistical segmentation analysis confirms there are segments within the larger groups of young people who are NEET and in JWT, and there are distinct differences between these segments (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009) and the factors that influence whether they become and remain NEET. These factors may also influence the group of interest to the Committee and their career trajectories and include: attitudes to learning, personal and structural barriers to learning, satisfaction with the available opportunities, whether JWT taken are viewed as temporary or permanent.
22. Spielhofer *et al.* 2009 used latent class analysis of the Youth Cohort Study (YCS) data to segment young people aged 16 or 17 categorised as NEET or in jobs without training (JWT):
 - Greater than two-fifths of young people who are NEET are generally positive about learning and are very likely to participate in education or training in the short-term. A similar proportion face a lot of personal and structural barriers, and are likely to remain NEET in the medium-term. These young people were characterized by their negative experience of school, higher levels of truancy and exclusion and lack of educational attainment (most said that they did not have the qualifications needed for the course or job they wanted (79 per cent), while 58 per cent said that they needed more qualifications).
 - A fifth of young people in the study were classified as 'undecided NEET' - they do not face significant personal barriers to participating in education or training, but are dissatisfied with the available opportunities.
 - Within the JWT group, almost half are very content with their work and likely to remain in a JWT in the long-term. A third of young people in this group were found to be at risk of becoming NEET in the future, while 17 per cent had taken a JWT as a stop-gap solution before reengaging in education or training (Spielhofer *et al.* 2009).
23. The Spielhofer research:
 - found that in order to increase participation, young people need better information, advice and guidance before leaving learning or while in jobs without training to increase their awareness of the learning options available to them and enable them to make more informed choices (Spielhofer *et al.* 2009)
 - identified a need for more flexible and appropriate post-16 education and training provision suitable for all young people aged 16 and 17 in terms of content, delivery

and timing, and that different policy solutions are needed to engage or re-engage the different segments of young people (Spielhofer *et al.* 2009)

- established that improved strategies to re-engage young people at risk of disengagement from learning are needed. For example, approaches related to teaching (such as teachers having knowledge, skills and expertise in their subject area, particularly important for vocational subjects) as well as expertise in pedagogical approaches; the learning environment (such as creating a work environment based on mutual respect where learners can develop an independent approach to learning); the provision of well-informed careers information, advice and guidance including course taster sessions; and curriculum and qualifications' content that ensures that there are good quality vocational, applied and practical qualifications and pathways open to young people need further developing (Bielby *et al.*'s (2012) [review of strategies](#)).
24. Further research needs to be conducted to improve our [understanding of young people's decision-making](#), what informs it and what their destinations are. This should include research on young people's knowledge and understanding of the exchange value of vocational qualifications (Lynch *et al.* 2015).

Q4: How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

25. Young people's transitions are instrumental in shaping their future prospects, lifetime earning capacity, wellbeing and social mobility. The transition from school to work can be improved by providing young people in this group with a curriculum that engages them, high-quality careers guidance and access to work-related learning opportunities. This provision will help to motivate young people and give them insights into the world of work and different careers. This will assist them to make informed decisions about their future education, training and employment. **Engaging young people aged 14-16 in education at Key Stage 4** when some lack motivation to learn is important for two main reasons: first, it helps them to develop the attitudes, attributes and skills which employers look for and value; and, second, it helps to prevent them slipping into the not in education, employment or training (NEET) category of young people. NFER's research on NEET prevention identified a range of effective practice in keeping young people engaged at Key Stage 4. This includes:
- Flexibility within learning programmes, ensuring that as much as is practical, programmes can be tailored to the needs, and interests, of the individual young person.
 - Developing open and supportive relationships between staff and students. This is particularly relevant for one-to-one support and mentoring.
 - Opening up the young people's horizons on future possibilities, providing them with the knowledge to feel confident in making decisions in the future.

- Recognising the extra value an external partner brings to schools including expertise, support and training (Stevens *et al.* 2014, p.3).
26. **The provision of high-quality careers guidance** is increasingly important given the complex decision-making context facing young people which includes the raising of the participation age in learning to 18; the diversification of education and training opportunities, including the growth in apprenticeships; the increase in higher and further education tuition fees; and the changing labour market which has shed many jobs traditionally filled by young people. High-quality careers guidance provides young people with independent and impartial information and advice on career options (an outline of options is provided in McCrone, 2015). This means that young people are offered guidance on the full range of academic and vocational options which is not constrained by the vested interests of individual education and training providers.
 27. There is evidence that many young people in England are not receiving this type of support. Responsibility for delivering careers guidance was devolved to secondary schools in England in 2012, giving them a statutory duty to secure access for their pupils to independent and impartial career guidance but with no dedicated government funding to commission such services. The House of Commons Education Committee's inquiry into the provision of careers advice concluded that the skills, incentives and capacity to fulfil this duty, recommending that *'schools must be enabled and empowered to, and held accountable for, the provision of high quality, focused careers guidance required by all their students to help them meet the challenges of today's world of work'*. (GB. Parliament. HoC. Education Committee, 2013, paras 122-124). Ofsted's (2013) [survey](#) also found that careers guidance in schools is not working well enough and highlighted the importance of providing information on the full range of career pathways. A recent [education and skills survey](#) by the CBI found that 80 per cent of businesses across the UK *'feel the quality of careers advice young people receive is not good enough to help them make informed decisions about future career options'* (CBI, 2015, p.63).
 28. There is [evidence](#) that there is a lack of careers guidance on vocational options. Research by the Boston Consulting Group (2013) reported that 80 per cent of teachers surveyed claim they do not have enough knowledge to give advice and about half admit they have given poor advice. Furthermore, 57 per cent of teachers said that they feel pressured into advising students to stay at school post-16 in order to gain funding, even though more appropriate options may be available elsewhere, such as in a further education college or an apprenticeship scheme. Lack of apprenticeship-related careers advice was highlighted by the Industry Apprentice Council (2014) [survey of apprentices](#): less than nine per cent of respondents said that they had found out about their apprenticeship through either their teacher or careers adviser and six per cent had found out from careers fairs or the National Apprenticeship Service. The main ways that young people found out about apprenticeships was by doing online searches and from suggestions from family and friends.
 29. NFER has contributed to the policy and practice discourse on improving careers guidance. In our [think piece](#), McCrone (2013) argues that there is an urgent need to significantly enhance the quality and consistency of careers guidance for all young

people and to have a clear method in place for ensuring that this goal is achieved. She calls on the Government, careers professionals schools and employers to work together to find an effective and workable solution. NFER worked with the Association of School and College Leaders, Association of Teachers and Lecturers and 157 Group to produce [Careers Engagement: a Good Practice Brief for Leaders of Schools and Colleges \(2014\)](#). This outlines the principles of effective careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools and colleges as evidenced and agreed by the four organisations. It provides practical advice on putting CEIAG plans into action, how to engage employers, and offers guidance to schools and colleges in assessing their careers provision in an easy-to-use format providing a workable approach for this important area.

30. **Increasing employer engagement with schools and colleges** is a way of improving the provision of careers guidance and assisting transition from education to employment. Mann and Virk (n.d) [reported](#) that employer engagement had a positive impact on some pupils' attainment and their transitions from full-time education to sustained employment. They concluded that: *'Research suggests that young people who experience a wider range of employer engagement activities are likely to secure a wider range of outcomes than peers with narrower experiences'* (p.11). In its evaluation of post-16 work experience placement trials, [NFER found](#) that placement experience was perceived by students, colleges and employers to have helped develop the skills necessary for employment, including team work, communication and interpersonal skills, enabling students to be more work-ready (Sims *et al.*, 2013).
31. [NFER's research](#) on how to provide meaningful experience of the world of work for young people as part of 16-19 study programmes produced a top tips guide for senior leaders in schools and colleges drawn from six institutional case studies (McCrone *et al.*, 2015). [The top tips guide](#) (NFER, 2015) highlights the importance of schools and colleges proactively engaging with the needs of local employers, working in partnership with them, and actively involving employers to prepare young people prior to a work experience placement.
32. It is important that attempts to increase employer engagement with schools and colleges does not overlook the potential contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which represent over 99 per cent of all private sector businesses and account for around 59 per cent of private sector employment. Recently NFER partnered with South East Strategic Leaders, London Councils and the London Enterprise Panel to identify the range of current practice and experience of SME-education engagement in order to improve young people's employability skills and support their transition into work. The research findings (NFER, 2015) informed the development of a bespoke ['connect card'](#) designed to help education organisations and SMEs to engage with each other more effectively.
33. Employers are likely to employ more young people from this group if they have played a role in helping to them to understand the requirements of the world of work (e.g. behaviours, communication, team working and problem-solving skills) which will develop employability skills. [The CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2015](#) reported that nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of employer respondents had some links with

schools or colleges and nearly two thirds of them indicated that they are willing to play a greater role in supporting careers provision in schools and colleges. Business involvement is a central part of [London Ambitions](#), which aims to achieve a culture change in careers, enterprise and employability education across the capital. The London Ambitions strategy states that collaboration between stakeholders is required in order *'to narrow the gap between the education and employment sectors in a way that enables educators to contribute more effectively to equipping their students with the knowledge and skills employers seek, and reciprocally employers getting more involved in supporting and helping those educators in shaping and defining what they are looking for in their workforce of the future'* ((London Councils, 2015, p.7).

34. In their [mapping of careers provision in schools and colleges in England](#), Gibson *et al.* (2015) advocated that employer involvement *'should be further explored to identify good practice in engaging with employers, how institutions could be better supported to work with employers in their local area and how networking and partnering might support employer engagement to make this engagement more efficient'* (p.38). The new Careers and Enterprise Company aims to identify and build on good practice. The Company's purpose is to strengthen the links between schools and colleges and the world of work. The Company will work with Local Enterprise Partnerships to broker active school/college-employer engagement where employers get involved in a range of activities (e.g. project work, CV writing, mentoring and work experience) to help increase students' employability skills. It will be interesting to see what insights the Company's planned impact tracking can provide to inform future employer engagement with schools and colleges.

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14 September 2015

Nacro – Written evidence (SMO0123)

About Nacro

At Nacro, the crime reduction charity, we are dedicated to reducing crime and reoffending in communities across England and Wales. We design and deliver programmes that equip people with the skills, advice, attitude and support they need to move their lives on and move away from crime.

Our services include:

Education: We provide young people with the skills they need to get back into education, training or employment through specialised courses such as pre-vocational and vocational programmes, problem-solving and employment preparation programmes that are designed for people who are stuck and can't see a way forward.

Housing: We help people, often with complex needs, including young people, to find somewhere to live and to give them the stability and support they need to acquire new skills and patterns of behaviour to turn their lives around.

Substance misuse: Our services combine a dual focus on the individual and the community, offering people interventions, information, advice and guidance programmes so they can not only recover from drug or alcohol dependence but also start to contribute actively and positively to the community.

Offender management: We work with offenders in the courts, in prisons and in the community, managing the offender journey in a way designed to minimise the risk of reoffending. We also work at the heart of communities to give people the best possible chance of reintegrating into society successfully.

Resettlement Advice Service: Our dedicated national phone and online service provides advice and support on resettlement matters to offenders, their families and practitioners such as finding somewhere to live, getting a job and dealing with the disclosure of a criminal record.

Working in partnership to develop policy: We use our knowledge of “what works” to reduce crime to help inform policy and shape practice. In line with this, we work closely with government and public and private sector partners, using our experience on the ground to establish and pilot the best ways of reducing crime in local neighbourhoods. Nacro is also a regular contributor to government consultations and important debates on key subjects in the criminal justice sector.

BACKGROUND

Social mobility is at the centre of what Nacro does. We work with people at different stages in their lives to help access education, training and work, provide people with stable housing and support and help people to move on from drug and alcohol addiction.

In education we work with people for whom mainstream provision isn't working. Our education offer is centred on providing quality vocational education that harnesses talent, engages young people back into learning and leads to tangible employment or further education opportunities. Much of our work is providing workplace skills and traineeships to facilitate the transition from education/training into the workplace. Nacro's provision covers 14-16 year olds, 16-19 year olds and adults.

Vocational education is vital to economic growth and social mobility. Quality provision that provides choice, realistic job opportunities and career development enables local economies to grow and individuals to progress.

In Nacro's experience, young people who join us after leaving school at 16 with little in the way of qualifications, confidence and who are disengaged from education need a different approach. Nacro provides individually tailored education where young people, supported by our IAG (information, advice and guidance) accredited staff, choose their own path and take control of their learning. Combined with quality teaching, employer engagement, pastoral support and life skills, Nacro learners leave our centres having achieved in their education for the first time. Our approach is an honest one; we provide our learners with realistic advice and informed options regarding jobs and career progression, for a sustainable route and social mobility well into adulthood.

For example, Kelly is a Nacro learner from a travelling background. Although she is from a settled family she did not attend school from the age of 11 and has no previous qualifications.

Kelly enrolled on the Certificate for Introduction to Customer Service which also gave her a Certificate in skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development functional skills, English at Level 1 and Maths at entry Level 3.

When Kelly first enrolled she was worried that she wouldn't be able to cope with the level of work expected as she had previously left school at the age of eleven, but she soon proved to us and herself that she had nothing to worry about. This started with her diagnostics, scoring Level 2 in English and Level 3 in maths.

Kelly's work was exemplary – she gained confidence in our centre environment and from seeing clear progress in her learning on a daily basis. She worked hard and she was intent on achieving a good qualification.

Kelly is now coming back to Nacro Chatham to complete her Level 2 VRQ in Creative Hair and Make-up, and hopefully her Level 2 Functional Skills in English and Level 1 Functional Skills in Maths. This will provide her a good foundation and the confidence to proceed into a job or build a business for herself.

Crucial to addressing the skills gap is communicating choice. Young people and their parents need to have correct and accurate information regarding career and development options, highlighting non-traditional academic routes available. Historically, mainstream education and academic achievement have been regarded as the preferred career trajectory. While some young people excel in this environment, for many it is not suitable –almost a third of young people do not get A*-C at GCSEs – and alternative careers are preferred.

Currently, the way mainstream education is structured means it does not cater for these young people early on enough. Vocational education options need to be introduced as early as possible and recognised on a par with more traditional academic routes. Until then, young people who fail to meet unrealistic expectations will become disengaged and demotivated by the time they reach 16, affecting their career prospects and career progression throughout their life.

When considering social mobility, it is also important to examine longer term skills and career progression beyond 16-19. Creating a system that supports and funds individuals to progress past certain skills levels in their adult years is equally as important as those transitioning to work or training from school.

There have been a number of vocational education reviews in recent years, one of the most prominent being the Wolf Report (2011). The report set out comprehensive recommendations, of which only some have been implemented since being accepted by government. There has also been a significant reduction in funding in this area, resulting in a system that has not been equipped to address the ongoing problems of filling increasing skills gaps and social mobility more widely.

The Wolf recommendations are central to any review into the transition to work from school for 16-19 year olds. Failure to implement this widely accepted direction will mean the system stagnates and result in continued failure to educate and train this cohort of young people.

We welcome the upcoming sector area reviews as an important opportunity to review and streamline the vocational education landscape. By identifying the most appropriate and relevant providers, this should make options clearer for learners assessing their choices post-16. These reviews need to join up local skills and employment needs and thoroughly assess how the provider landscape can offer tangible progression for school leavers.

For example, as industry and business moves forward, there are a number of skillsets and roles that will become technologized and replaced by machinery in the future. For people that currently work in these jobs, the ability to move into alternative career paths and gain new skills needs to be available. Similarly, for those that may have drifted into casual or unskilled employment, the ability to gain skills and progress at age 21 or 22 is crucial. This means providing funding for ongoing vocational courses and continuous learning as well as encouraging employers to invest more in transferrable skills. Improving social mobility through education needs to be considered as an issue affecting people throughout their careers, as opposed to something that stops at age 20. It is also crucial that business play its role. Addressing the skills gap will not be achieved through the education sector alone. Investment in training, skills development and support for young employees is vital. It can only be achieved through a partnership approach across the whole community.

1. *What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?*

There are a number of significant factors affecting transitions to the work place for young people. Regardless of which educational path they choose, for many young people mainstream schooling fails to provide them with the skills they need to enter sustainable employment.

Some young people leave school, where they have been disengaged, detached or absent, lacking work-readiness skills and a vision for their future. As a consequence they enter unskilled and unstable employment with very few prospects for progression into a stable career trajectory. Some move into vocational education, provided through traditional FE routes, but continue to feel disconnected and fail to progress and recognise their potential.

At this point many feel disenchanting with learning and without specialist support either leave education altogether, or remain at low entry levels.

Low level vocational education provides important entry into qualifications and can reconnect young learners to education and training. Quality provision will also make appropriate connections to employment and help people proceed to the next level with a focus on a personal career plan. However, in our experience, the value of entry level and progression routes into higher level vocational training reaches young people far too late, if at all. Failure to address vocational education needs in mainstream schools either pre-16 or during post-16 career planning demotivates individuals, reduces confidence and self-esteem and therefore makes the transition to work and further education and training difficult.

Specialist education centres like Nacro are experts at turning this negative experience around. As our Ofsted report states, our learners gain greater confidence and self-esteem while they study with us. They improve their personal and social skills and increase their chances of getting a job or continuing in education as well as receiving very good support and care. We enable people who face significant barriers to participate effectively and progress, taking them through entry levels and skilling them up to progress.

However, it is crucial that young people have access to this type of learning earlier in their life. Engaging young people at an earlier age is much more effective. It enables young people to progress beyond entry levels at 16 whilst inspiring them back into learning, building ambition and a vision for a skilled, stable and a prosperous career.

In addition, young people leaving school with a few GCSEs and without a clear idea of what they want to do next require high quality advice and guidance. Since the withdrawal of funding for the Careers Service (subsequently Connexions) and responsibility for this being given to schools, there has been a significant decline in quality and investment in advice. This means young people leaving school with no clear path will often follow the same route as family or peers, and may not consider alternative education or skills.

2. *There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the*

young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

It is important to acknowledge that although academic education has historically been regarded as superior to alternative vocational education and related career trajectories, for a variety of people this is not suitable or appropriate. Ensuring choice to pursue a non-academic route earlier on in a person's education is critical to ensuring young people can build solid careers. Shoehorning all young people in to academic mainstream schooling until they are at least 16 means a significant amount become disengaged with a system that does not cater for alternative talents.

As detailed above, in the current system there are a significant number of young people who have been disengaged with academic education. They may have gone to school and sat GCSEs but been absent, disengaged or felt they were underachieving; resulting in low self-esteem and little motivation. They are not known to the local authorities and often slip through the net; taking on casual, low skilled temporary employment with limited future prospects.

The way mainstream education is structured means vocational education at age 16 becomes an afterthought for many young people who would have engaged earlier on, not just with specific vocational endeavours but also with the softer employment and work ready skills, as well as basic maths and English skills.

From our experience of working with this cohort of young people, although not classified as NEET, there is an increased chance of a combination of complex needs and vulnerabilities that can significantly hinder the transition from school to work, e.g. behavioural and sub threshold mental health issues. Mainstream education does not effectively support these needs (falling outside SEN provision) and therefore for many young people, entering work is a considerably harder transition.

For some young people, a transition from school into insecure employment provides little stability or progression, often exacerbating an already chaotic lifestyle. Insecure employment and unstable career prospects can have a knock on effect on housing, relationships and health. It is therefore critical that an effective education structure is put in place to support every young person, academic or otherwise, to build a stable future.

3. *Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?*

The current system in place to support young people who do not follow a traditional academic route into work is scarce and inconsistent. As detailed above, some young

people move straight into insecure and low paid employment having left school with little in the way of work readiness skills, training or advice on their future options.

Moreover, lower level vocational education is often an afterthought at age 16. The system is designed to focus on progression into A Levels, Level 3 vocational and higher education. For many Nacro learners, their post-16 experience continues the negative experiences of education and training they faced in school. With a continued focus on higher level vocational education that is often disconnected from local employment opportunities, young people continue to fall outside the mainstream, failing to see a future where they can achieve and fit in. In addition, our learners tell us that the learning challenges they experience following a significant period disengaged from mainstream education are not addressed and they quickly fall behind. It is not until learners reach Nacro that progression opportunities of entry level and Level 2 routes, connecting to considered employment pathways, are realised. This is a missed opportunity. Nacro learners are a testimony that a poor start doesn't have to mean a poor life. But the learner journey must reflect individual experiences, ambitions and need. It is crucial, therefore, that the success of vocational providers should be tracked against learner progression and employment outcomes. This means providers being able to display how they add value to a learner's journey and providing skills that will aid prospects and job opportunities well into a person's adult life. The quality of outcomes is just as important as merely tracking them and providers need to be held to account as to how they help a learner gain skills for a prosperous future.

We believe young people who do not follow the traditional higher education route could be supported more effectively at a local level; by coordinating vocational provision and employers to provide practical education, training and employment opportunities for young people to build sustainable careers. Please see below for more detail on this.

4. *How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?*

The transition from school to work can be improved in a number of ways, supported by a move toward a robust system that caters for alternative provision much earlier on in a young person's education journey. This means supporting and enabling more vocational provision, effectively catering for young people as well as establishing responsibility locally for plugging skills gaps and supporting economic growth.

Connecting young people to apprenticeships, work experience and exposure to work earlier on is extremely important. European models, such as those in Germany and Switzerland, combine apprenticeships with classroom education for over half of their students. This means students are exposed to the workplace much faster, enabling a smooth transition. While the Government pledge to introduce a voucher system for

smaller employers offering apprenticeships is welcome, more needs to be done to ensure employers and students are joined up at a much earlier stage. There are equal benefits for the employer as there are for young people; working and supporting young people means a more stable workforce, positive and supportive relationships and room for progression and growth.

Local consortia made up of providers, businesses and local authorities should be given responsibility and funds to deliver a strategy based approach, addressing the training and employment needs of a local area. Employment and Skills Boards, sometimes called Work and Skills Boards, are an example of a local body or entity that could be responsible for this. Through this entity, employer engagement could be stimulated, including matched funding arrangements to invest in training.

By changing the structure of education provision, and including more vocational training at an earlier stage, there is an opportunity to embed softer skill learning in qualifications, aiding the smooth transition from education to work. Currently this is not being met in mainstream schooling.

Local Growth Fund grants are an example of where money is being invested in local areas to support economic growth. The fund is matched by local industry to create a local strategy towards skills gaps and development. Currently, regions receive varying amounts of money, if any at all. A consistent and robust model is needed, evaluating impact and ensuring appropriate levels of investment and accountability for outcomes.

Nacro's experience in working with employers shows that both the individual and the employer can benefit from supported placements, providing the learner with an invaluable opportunity to gain employment skills while also plugging employment gaps. Supported placements are an excellent example of where learners can gain practical and, crucially, transferrable skills while receiving the individual support they need to progress.

Moreover, it is essential that engagement with employers is meaningful and provides individuals with practical skills. While being in the workplace provides value for learners, this needs to be underpinned by using the experience to gain strong transferrable skills for progression, including communication, organisation and interpersonal skills. One of the fundamental Wolf Report recommendations was to open up wider access to genuine work experience for enrolled students, not just apprentices, to provide softer and harder skills training. It needs to be recognised that the long running issue of skills gaps is not solely the responsibility of education; it is cultural and social. It is important that employers recognise the value of helping to provide transferrable skills to ensure that individuals can continue to progress throughout their professional adult life. This will open up a range of progression opportunities for the individual and enable long-term social mobility. 83% of employers that have worked with us contributed to learner's progress reviews and action plans, taking an active interest in the progression of our learner.

We would argue that local consortia should be responsible for ensuring more of these partnerships are cemented.

5. *Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?*

There are both national and regional responsibilities attached to improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers. On a national level, there needs to be appropriate funding to ensure this is a prioritised area for focus, to provide support to school leavers to access the right kind of education and work progression. Funding for specialised, tailored FE provision needs to be considered an essential part of supporting transition into work for the cohort of young people who may not have received appropriate support through mainstream schooling. As stated in our introductory background section, there have been a number of comprehensive reviews into how vocational education can be improved and the recommendations from these all point to solid funding and investment from central government as well as business. It is vital that this funding is prioritised.

At a local level, this means ensuring need links directly to local skills gaps and work opportunities, as detailed in Q.4. In Nacro's response to the DBIS consultation, 'A dual mandate for adult vocational education', we explored what this might look like – with LEPs and local authorities playing a central role in providing leadership and follow up, gathering data and engaging employers to fill their skills gaps. This local function needs to be supported at a national level, with clear funding and accountability structures for outcomes in place.

28 September 2015

National Literacy Trust - Written evidence (SMO0014)

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility – call for evidence

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1.1 A strong foundation in literacy and numeracy is the most important building block to enable young people to access employment. Literacy is vital to unlock individual capability to find employment and increase earnings (John Grinyer, 2005). Furthermore, low literacy levels are associated with the lower likelihood of receiving a promotion and higher likelihood of experiencing three or more spells of unemployment by the age of 34 (Parsons and Bynner, 2007). In the words of Kassam (1994: 33) 'Literacy enables people to read their own world and to write their own history. Literacy enables people to have a greater degree of control over their own lives. In a nutshell, literacy empowers.' In terms of qualifications, a young person needs to achieve the core 'Level 2' qualifications – a GCSE grade C or better in English and maths – to meet the baseline level of qualification in these core skills. These qualifications have also become a requirement to access the higher 'Level 3' courses such as A levels and Advanced Apprenticeships. Yet in 2014 36.4% of pupils did not achieve a C in GCSE English. Many of these young people come from disadvantaged backgrounds, which immediately limit their employment prospects.

1.2 The family environment is a key factor in determining employment outcomes for young people since, for the large majority of children, the most significant role-models are the parents/carers. Evidence suggests that while many pupils from a lower socio-economic status do not necessarily have lower aspirations than their more affluent peers, these pupils and parents are less likely to have information about future opportunities and pathways. Parents who hold higher aspirations for their children tend to be those who believe that they have the ability to help their children and they are also generally more involved in their children's schooling. Many parents from low socio-economic backgrounds had negative experiences of education and lack confidence to get involved in their children's education which can lead to lower attainment and aspirations. Teachers can play a vital role here in helping both children and their parents become more aware and understand how to best achieve their concrete and obtainable goals (St. Clair, Kintrea, & Houston, 2013).

1.3 A report from the Youth Literacy and Employability Commission (All-Party Parliamentary Group on Literacy, 2013) found that young people are deeply concerned about their future employment options and want the skills that will help them succeed. However, they can find formulating their aspirations hard and can also find it hard to work out what skills they need for the future. We believe that supporting young people in formulating realistic employment aspirations (particularly in the first years of secondary education) would provide a strong framework for them to formulate their educational aspirations, since these aspirations will create a strong appetite for improving literacy skills.

- 1.4 Careers advice most commonly begins from the age of 14. This is when young people have chosen their GCSE options and started courses. It can be too late for some children, since they need to have discovered their motivation and purpose to learn before they embark on GCSEs. A recent report from Coms Res and the University and College Union (Young People's perceptions and post-18 education and training options, 2014) found that aspirations change with age, with 64% of 13-year-olds saying that they wanted to go on to higher education when they leave school or college compared to only 53% of 16 year olds. This highlights the need for early experiences of the work place.
- 1.5 For disadvantaged pupils at risk of low attainment and aspirations, experience of the work place and the opportunity to develop soft skills is essential. The National Literacy Trust's Words for Work programme recruits and trains volunteers from the business community to help improve students' literacy and communication skills. They work in small groups with targeted pupils to develop crucial employability skills and confidence. Pupils who take part give encouraging accounts of how the programme has helped them make the link between school and work, and how it has prepared them for work better than school alone could. One 14-year-old participant commented that 'Words for Work opened my eyes to what you need to do to get a job. I want to be happy in my job when I'm older and I want to work hard at school now.' Another 14-year-old commented, 'Words for Work is the best thing I have done at school. Everything about it was really useful to me. After the project, I was moved up a grade in my speaking and listening, because I felt more confident presenting in front of my teacher.' For a 14-year-old Roma student it was essential in building his confidence in speaking English: 'Sometimes when I try to speak with English people it is difficult because I am foreign and I can't talk like English people. The Words for Work programme made me confident with my communication skills by working with people from the world of work, helping me to understand English life better as well. When I get older I want to be a police man or a paramedic because I like to help people and I like to have responsibilities.'
- 1.6 Careers advice and guidance also needs to be forward thinking and ensure that it will enable young people to access employment, rather than just fulfilling the criteria of 16-18-year-olds engaged in some form of learning. According to a recent report from the Fabian Society (Out of Society, 2014) many unemployed 18-year-olds were never even taking the courses that would have addressed their major educational needs, especially in literacy and numeracy, and they even took successive courses at the same level of difficulty and skill, in different vocational areas, and never entered any of those professions.
- 1.7 There is also evidence to suggest that business and education mean different things by 'literacy' (Youth Literacy and Employability Commission, APPG on Literacy, 2013). While united in their understanding of the importance of young people's skills, there is a significant gap between what business and education mean by 'literacy'. Within the education space it is associated with skills needed to pass an exam, including reading and writing. However, business has a much wider definition with a focus on 'softer skills' such as problem solving, teamwork and communication skills. The danger is that young people are falling down this gap, which creates personal tragedies and a national crisis as economic success and social mobility suffer.

1.8 The difference in definitions of literacy accounts for the dissatisfaction of many employers in school leavers' skills and attitudes. The CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2014 found that many businesses are not satisfied with the attitudes and skills of school leavers in important areas including attitudes to work (33%), teamwork (36%), basic numeracy (38%), problem solving (50%) and communication skills (52%). It also noted that businesses want to see primary schools concentrating above all on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy (85%), with these also as the most commonly cited priority (by 62%) in the 11-14 phase of schooling. This highlights the need for a common definition of literacy to ensure that the education system is equipping young people with the basic skills needed to access employment. The fact that only a third (31%) of businesses have links with primary schools compared to 64% having links with secondary schools and 63% FE colleges suggests that there is also potential for increased business involvement within the primary sector.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

2.1 As mentioned in 1.6, there are many young people who do not show up as NEET since they are in some form of educational provision. It is unclear, however, whether the courses they are following are actually leading to increased employment prospects and, crucially, whether they are equipping them with the core skills in literacy and numeracy required to enter the job market.

2.2 Recent research by the Local Government Association (Achievement and retention in post 16 education, 2015) highlighted that 178,100 16-18-year-olds failed to complete all or some of the post-16 qualifications they started in 2012/13, including Apprenticeships. Just over 97,000 learning aims in FE were not completed in 2012/13, 10.8% of the total number of aims started. Possible explanations for the problems with retention and success rates include 'the quality and amount of careers information, advice and guidance accessible to young people', 'the perception of academic and vocational routes' and 'the attainment levels in primary education, especially for English and Maths.'

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

3.1 Some young people who do not achieve a grade C in English and maths can choose to take alternative qualifications, such as Functional Skills. However, there is a lack of awareness about Functional Skills among employers which needs to be addressed. Although before this can be addressed, in line with the recommendations of the Education and Training Foundation's report *Making maths and English work for all* (2015), standards need to be aligned to employability skills required by employers and they need to include more standardised and rigorous assessment to ensure that employers have confidence in the qualifications.

3.2 A mismatch between the skills required by employers and what vocational education delivers exists in other countries. A report from the Society for Industrial and Organizational

Psychology Organizations (What We Know About Youth Employment: Research Summary and Best Practices, 2014) reviewed international similarities and differences around youth unemployment and best practice. It noted that new starters are required to have more knowledge, skills, and be more intrinsically motivated than in previous decades (Bailey, Hughes, & Moore, 2004), but schools are often repeating ineffective approaches that do not include the creation of a career wish, the first step towards a career identity. Studies of vocational training have identified the effectiveness of utilising training which comprises three career-related competencies including: career reflection (reflective behaviour), career forming (proactive behaviour), and networking (interactive behaviour; Kuijpers, Meijers, & Gundy, 2011). Dialogue is a particularly important part of this, with conversations focused on the future and grounded in concrete experiences. Such conversations appear very useful in getting students who would more typically drop out to become more reflective, identify meaningful actions they could undertake, and identify useful interactions for them to pursue. The National Literacy Trust's Words for Work programme builds on this evidence base with business volunteers working with students at risk of underachieving in literacy to help develop their literacy and communication skills, as well as their employment aspirations.

3.3 Over-emphasis on achieving grades which are important to schools is preventing students from building up a wide range of skills that employers want. Employer surveys often state that they look at soft skills above qualifications. There is a disconnect between the advice young people are given about work and the labour market they will be presented with. A recent UKCES report (The Death of the Saturday Job, 2015) investigated the long term decline in young people combining work and study, a trend which pre-dated the recession. In 1997, 42% of 16-17 year old students were also working. This figure has declined to 18% in 2014. They found three main reasons for the decline: 'An increasing preference of young people to focus solely on studies, a changing labour market affecting the opportunities for young people to get part-time jobs, and institutional difficulties with the incorporation of work into study timetables.'

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

4.1 A renewed partnership between business and education is key to unlocking the literacy skills of young people in schools. This partnership needs to be deeper and more systematic than before. Current changes in the governance and structures of secondary schools, resulting from the Government's academies programme, are creating new opportunities for this. However, demand and supply need to be addressed, as does brokerage. Employers need to recognise that support for a new workforce is crucial for sustainability. Schools need to recognise that links with business will drive up standards and raise pupils' aspirations. The increased focus on evidence-based practice in schools will require these partnerships to be developed on a much stronger evidence base than currently exists. Third sector and local organisations that act as brokers fulfil a vital role. They engage businesses, develop partnerships, train volunteers and support schools. However, in the current economic environment they are often squeezed. The National Literacy Forum, a group of 15 child poverty and literacy charities, are currently developing an initiative – the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge – to recognise the vital role of business in addressing the literacy challenge. Action to fulfil the pledge involves engagement with local schools to raise aspirations.

4.2 Strengthening the influence of business in education will only strengthen education. This means reflecting business needs in assessment and curricula – for instance, restoring speech, language and communication assessment as part of the overall GCSE English grade. Business needs to understand and trust qualifications. There is currently cynicism about what literacy skills are actually guaranteed by an A*-C grade GCSE in English, as well as the value of alternative basic skills qualifications. This is highlighted by a recent survey of 1,395 individuals and organisations for the Education and Training Foundation (Making maths and English work for all, 2015) which found that 46% of employers are most concerned with English skills, compared to just 17% being concerned about maths. There also needs to be more done to highlight the relevance and real world application of work done in the classroom. Good work has been done in STEM subjects to bring professionals in to share their knowledge but this still seems to be treated as an added extra and is largely absent from humanities subjects. Students will be more motivated to learn if they understand where it could take them or what it could achieve.

4.3 The new Careers and Enterprise Company could serve an important function. Its mandate is to unlock the potential of young people (aged 12-18) by strengthening links between schools and colleges, employers and careers and enterprise bodies, thereby exposing young people to the world of work to inspire them and help them to make more informed decisions about their future. Local coordinators will work with clusters of 20 schools to help them understand what the employers and programmes are in their area. The potential of the new company is significant. However, we are slightly wary of it being led by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), since whilst they are undoubtedly a key player at local level, their strategies tend to focus on working in the 16-18+ age range. Therefore, they are possibly not best-placed to understand the needs of schools and, in particular, what might work with younger pupils.

4.4 The Careers and Enterprise Company is also likely to face some challenges in building engagement where it is currently lacking. The idea that local coordinators will act as a filter for schools that currently feel bombarded with options for business engagement and careers activity, and stimulate more where they are lacking, is sound in theory. In practice, careers activities often take students out of lessons and, where schools are struggling to achieve results and under great pressure to do so, this will require a change in mind-set for schools to have the confidence that careers activities are worthwhile. This is likely to take some time to develop and it is unclear what support the local advisors will offer in this area. Furthermore, in areas where SME's are in the majority rather than national employers (who are more likely to have employee volunteering policy) successful engagement with schools often comes down to the presence of a driving force at a senior level who will support staff to dedicate time to volunteering in schools.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

5.1. There are many different sectors that can take steps to support the transition into work for school leavers, including Government, schools, local authorities, LEPs, businesses and parents. It requires a cross-sector approach with a range of interventions to reach children and young people at risk of having difficulties entering employment and fulfilling their potential.

5.2 Government should introduce statutory career education that highlights the importance of basic skills' acquisition as well as broader employability skills, such as communication and

presentation skills. This should be introduced at the start of secondary education, with primary schools also encouraged to develop awareness of employability options and skills to their pupils.

5.3 At national level, responsibility for further education colleges currently sits with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, but as the main provider of education to those at risk of becoming NEET, they would better placed with the Department for Education.

5.4 Local authorities, or specific local boards created to address the issue, are best placed to improve the system since they have a clear picture of the issues within their local area and can coordinate all of the organisations that affect the issues, with members from all key sectors with an independent chair (Fabian Society, Out of Sight, 2014). Membership would need to be at a senior level to ensure that there was the necessary authority to carry out action. They would also be responsible for monitoring.

5.5 Businesses need to create links with local schools to provide work experience opportunities to help disadvantaged pupils formulate employment aspirations. They should also ensure that apprenticeship opportunities and other routes into work are accessible for those without A-level qualifications.

5.6 Teachers and schools should inform and support both parents and students about career options and implications, particularly those from lower socio-economic backgrounds who may not be aware of wider choices and possibilities. Teachers should also try to devote time to conversations with young people to help them think about employment options from the start of secondary school and ensure that they are developing broad employability skills, as well as the resilience and character required to deal with the work place. However, we recognise that many teachers will feel ill-equipped to do this and it would therefore require support and training. Teachers should also be encouraged to build in information about future careers and real world applications to topics they teach.

5.7 Parents should encourage their children to work part time during holidays and take advantage of work experience opportunities to equip them with vital employability skills and to enable them to develop employment aspirations.

2 September 2015

National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (Inclusion) - Written evidence (SMO0076)

How can young people be best prepared for the world of work?

Written evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility on behalf of NIACE and Inclusion

1. Introduction

- 1.1 NIACE is the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, the national voice for lifelong learning. We are a large, internationally respected development organisation and think-tank, working on issues central to the economic renewal of the UK, particularly in the political economy, education and learning, public policy and regeneration fields. In July, NIACE announced its intention to merge with the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion (Inclusion). This is a joint response.
- 1.2 NIACE and Inclusion welcome the Select Committee on Social Mobility's inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds, in particular the Committee's focus on young people who are not NEET and do not follow the traditional academic pathway of A-levels and Higher Education. The needs of young people within this group are often overlooked in policy. Young people within this cohort are not a homogeneous group – they have a range of experiences, motivations, support and challenges which influence the pathways they follow, their achievements and their progression towards active and independent adult lives as young employees, parents and citizens.
- 1.3 Research shows that particular groups of young people are far less likely to follow the traditional academic pathway, compared to others. This includes care leavers and young adult carers – two groups who are of particular interest to NIACE and Inclusion, because of the level of disadvantage that they typically experience, which often has an impact upon their transition pathways and their long term life chances. A disproportionate number of these young people become NEET, but many others follow the 'school to work' transition. For some young people this transition pathway is an informed and enthusiastic choice, driven by a desire to develop vocational skills, to get a job, earn money and be independent. However, for other young people who follow this route, the situation is more complex.

Summary of Recommendations

- 1.4 In this response, we identify a number of policy recommendations for the Committee to consider in their deliberations as part of this inquiry. We would welcome to the opportunity to discuss any of our ideas with the Committee.
- 1.5 Improving education and employment opportunities and transitions for young people, particularly those who are disadvantaged, requires a cross-Government approach. We will outline to the Committee how the following recommendations would have a positive impact:

- a) The Department for Education should amend its 16-19 Bursary policy in order to help improve outcomes and transitions for young adult carers. We also recommend that guidance is issued which helps professionalise Personal Advisers working with young people leaving the care system.
- b) The Department for Work and Pensions should re-examine eligibility rules for the Carers Allowance so that young adult carers in further education are not disadvantaged by exempting 18-21 year olds from the rules in Carer's Allowance that prevent carers from learning for more than 21 hours per week. The Department should also replace Job Seekers Allowance for 18-21 year olds with a new Youth Allowance requiring learning alongside job search and work.
- c) The Education and Skills Funding Agencies, with the Department for Business Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education can do more to level the playing field so that Apprenticeships and Traineeships can be as visible and attractive an option for young people as going to University.
- d) Local authorities have a key role in ensuring that young people leaving care get the best possible chance of gaining the skills for work, such as through flexible or short course provision. We also recommend that Local Enterprise Partnerships drive the creation of more pathways to employment in key growth sectors in their areas through Traineeships and Apprenticeships.
- e) The Department for Business Innovation and Skills ring-fences a small percentage of the funding raised through the proposed Apprenticeship Levy in order to fund a new Apprenticeships Quality and Access Fund to address access inequalities and introduce new measures to improve quality.

2. Apprenticeships

2.1 NIACE and Inclusion believe that the expansion of Apprenticeships to three million by 2020 represents an ambitious drive to open up further and higher education. Apprenticeships could offer opportunities for social mobility for young people from a range of backgrounds to engage in education and training, become more productive and progress into higher level skills and employment.

2.2 In 2013/14, only 22% of apprentices were aged under 19 compared to 31% in 2010/11²⁵². Research commissioned by BIS has shown that the vast majority of apprentices aged 19+ were put on an apprenticeship programme by their existing employer; 61% of 19-24 year old apprentices and 91% of 25+ apprentices were found to be 'internal recruits'²⁵³.

2.3 NIACE and Inclusion support the principle of all age apprenticeships – we all need to learn new skills for new jobs and careers throughout our lives. However, the Committee should be aware of the existing challenge in providing apprenticeship

²⁵² Table 5: Statistical First Release, Skills Funding Agency (June, 2015)

²⁵³ Apprenticeships Evaluation – Learner Survey, Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2014)

opportunities for young people, particularly for young people who are vulnerable or disadvantaged.

3.4 Part of the drive to increase the quality of Apprenticeships, such as minimum durations and a greater focus on level 3 as the baseline standard, also risks the unintended consequence of lifting the ladder out of reach of many young people – lacking a pathway to get to the standard needed for an Apprenticeship.

3.5 There is also clear cause to be concerned about the demography of those who are going onto apprenticeship programmes; although 25% of applications through the government's apprentice vacancy matching service come from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, only 9% of current apprentices are BME, compared to 15% of the general population. There are still huge disparities in the numbers of men and women taking on apprenticeships in different sectors, gender stereotypes are deeply embedded at all levels, and only 13% of apprentices are disabled.

3.6 The new Apprenticeship Levy, proposed in 2015 Summer Budget, is a bold and ambitious step which will help halt the long term decline in employer investment in skills training. In our submission to the Treasury ahead of the Spending Review, NIACE and Inclusion proposed that a small proportion, less than 1%, of the funding raised through the Levy should be ring fenced to form a new **Quality and Access Fund for Apprenticeships** to focus on widening access from underrepresented groups, improving engagement with small and medium sized employers and enhancing outcomes for apprentices and businesses. To put this proposed investment into context, over £1bn was spent on widening participation in Higher Education in 2013-14 (£87 million in Government funding, £327 million from the Student Opportunities Fund and £611 million by universities themselves) while there is currently no widening participation funding, or indeed a strategy, in Apprenticeships.

3.7 Funding raised through the proposed Quality and Access Fund could be used to deliver the extra support necessary for employers and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. For example, this could include the provision of one to one holistic support for young people who have been in local authority care, to enable them to manage the emotional and practical transition to employment and independent living, alongside their Apprenticeship.

3.8 The Fund could also be utilised to support the development of a new quality mark for Apprenticeships – which we refer to as an **Apprentice Charter**. This would signal to parents, advisers, schools and potential apprentices which employers are offering the best opportunities for prosperous careers. In this way it would foster competition and collaboration between employers to drive up the quality of Apprenticeship opportunities. It will lead to more people starting Apprenticeships, keep them there, help them become more productive and progress onto higher level programmes or into work.

3.9 The proposed Apprenticeship Quality and Access Fund, and the Apprentice Charter, will help to level the playing field so that apprenticeships can be as visible and attractive an option as going to University.

4. Traineeships

4.1 NIACE has undertaken a range of work in support of the traineeship programme. NIACE believes that Traineeships have significant potential. They provide a focused,

yet flexible programme that fills a gap in provision and provides a bridge to employment for many young people. The three core components of work preparation, a work placement and maths and English support are appropriate and responsive to young people's needs. All three components make a difference in enabling young people to progress to employment. Whilst initial take up of the programme was slower than anticipated, recent figures highlight increased learner numbers and positive outcomes for Trainees.

- 4.2 NIACE and Inclusion argue that the impact of Traineeships could be further maximised and extended through:
- a) Improved visibility/understanding of the programme, particularly amongst employers. Appreciating the Government's moratorium on marketing spending, we believe the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency could increase visibility of Traineeships through stronger integration of traineeships with the existing Apprenticeships promotional campaign.
 - b) Action to ensure that referral and youth agencies have a consistent understanding of the programme and are active in signposting young people.
 - c) Introduction of an 'intensive Traineeship' for young people who are motivated to work, but are furthest from employment and require more intensive levels of support if they are to make effective transitions to work or an Apprenticeship.
 - d) Alignment of traineeship content with the needs of key growth sectors and skills gaps, providing a new key role for Local Enterprise Partnerships.
- 4.3 NIACE and Inclusion believe that implementing these changes would not only support economic growth, but also improve the social mobility of young people who are motivated to gain employment, rather than follow a traditional academic pathway.

5. Young adult carers

- 5.1 Young adult carers are young people, up to the age of 24, who provide unpaid care to a family member or friend, on a regular basis. Data from the 2011 census identified over 314,000 young adult carers in England and Wales. Caring responsibilities significantly impact on young people's wellbeing and life chances, they often experience a range of difficulties and disadvantage, including poverty, isolation, physical and mental health difficulties which have consequences for them throughout their lives. Part of the reason for this is that our skills and employment system fails to support young adult carers to succeed.
- 5.2 NIACE work has shown that when young adult carers do remain in education, they are disproportionately concentrated in relatively low level social care courses, which typically lead to low paid, insecure employment in the social care sector. In such cases this 'school to work' pathway does not enable these young people to become socially mobile. Many young adult carers opt for such courses because they fit with their experiences of being a carer; others lack the confidence and support to consider alternative options and pathways; many receive poor quality information, advice and guidance, which effectively pushes them along a narrow route - recent

research conducted by the University of Nottingham shows that “*less than half (46%) [of the sample of young adult carers] thought they had received good careers advice and only 19% of the total sample thought that it took their caring role into account*”.

- 5.3 NIACE and Inclusion are campaigning for three key policy changes, which will improve young adult carers’ access to learning and support their social mobility. We believe that young adult carers should:
- a) **Be formally identified as a 'vulnerable group' giving them full entitlement to the Department for Education 16-19 Bursary.** Currently young adult carers miss out on this vital support that could help them with the additional financial costs of learning and as a result many either don't take up learning or drop out. *Priority access to the 16-19 Bursary would greatly improve their access to financial support to help them continue learning.*

 - b) **Be exempt from the 21 hour rule that means they lose Carer's Allowance if they participate in learning for longer than this each week. The Department for Work and Pensions should ensure sufficient similar flexibility in Universal Credit as this is rolled out.** Most Further Education courses require longer participation than this and so, given many young adult carers have lost out on several years of education and fall behind their peers, they deserve greater flexibility to gain the skills they need for successful careers.

 - c) **Be able to access Traineeships and Apprenticeships to boost their skills and careers.** Currently Skills Funding Agency guidance states that Apprenticeships should, except under exceptional circumstances, be at least 30 hours work per week. Exceptional circumstances are not defined and no data is collected. As a result, many young adult carers are locked out of these opportunities to improve their skills and progress their careers. *We want the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency to make clear in its guidance that Traineeships and Apprenticeships with flexible hours are appropriate for young adult carers, and to work with providers and employers to make this a reality.*

6. Care leavers

- 6.1 Outcomes for young people who have been in local authority care are poor. Research shows that these young people are less likely to gain GCSEs than their peers, but they are more likely to be NEET, experience mental health difficulties, insecure housing, go to prison and become a teenage parent.
- 6.2 Whilst 40% of care leavers are NEET, a significant proportion do follow the ‘school to work’ transition pathway. However, research conducted by NIACE in 2014 found that the support provided to care leavers through the statutory Pathway Planning

process and by Personal Advisers often does not lead to positive or stable experiences of learning.

- 6.3 NIACE and Inclusion make the following recommendations, which we believe will enable care leavers to make informed decisions about education and work, improve their outcomes and promote greater social mobility:
- a) The Department for Education should issue statutory guidance to ensure that Personal Advisers receive regular training on routes into work and learning, opportunities to work and learn and local services available that can support this.
 - b) The Ofsted Single Inspection Framework to include a paragraph that requires local authorities to demonstrate the provision of high quality information, advice and guidance through transition stages and Pathway Planning
 - c) Statutory guidance to recommend that Personal Advisers work towards/or be qualified to a minimum standard of Level 3 in information, advice and guidance.
 - d) A national framework and resources to be developed by The Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills for effective Pathway Planning for education and work that is adaptable to the needs of individual care leavers. This should include guidance for local authorities about how to ensure care leavers are at the centre of its development.
 - e) A national curriculum framework and resources to be commissioned by the Department for Education on emotional intelligence and managing emotional trauma tailored to care leavers' specific needs and experiences.
 - f) Local authorities to take the strategic lead in planning and securing the delivery of targeted support and learning provision, such as short courses that are designed to enable care leavers to make smooth and positive transitions into independence.

7. What Employers Want

- 7.1 Research has shown that employers think young people are not well prepared for the world of work, and that a significant proportion would rather employ an older worker than a young recruit. This, alongside negative media representations of young people, leaves many feeling demoralised and confused about what employers are actually looking for. NIACE has undertaken a programme of work to enable young people to directly engage with employers and understand what they need to do to maximise their chances of securing employment. The following short case study of NIACE's 'What Employers Want' project highlights the effectiveness of the approach taken.

7.2 **Case study** - In partnership with ACT Training, Southway Housing Trust and Glasgow City Council Employment and Skills Partnership team, NIACE carried out work to identify the skills and attributes that employers look for when recruiting a young person. 30 young people were supported and trained to conduct face-to-face interviews with 31 employers, including Asda, Wales Millennium Centre, Glasgow Rangers Football Club, The Princes Trust and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service. The project was funded by the European Commission and UKCES.

The young people who took part got to hear first-hand what skills, qualities and experience are most important to employers when they are recruiting a young person. These are:

- Positive attitude – employers want young people to be ‘sparky’, they want them to show enthusiasm, commitment and energy.
- ‘Soft skills’ – the basic personal skills that enable young people to ‘get on well at work’, such as communication, time management, team work and problem-solving skills - which are transferable to different jobs.
- ‘Hard skills’ – many of which are job specific, but employers place particular value on literacy, numeracy and IT skills, which are considered important for almost all jobs.
- Qualifications – even though employers recognise that not all the qualities they are looking for can be measured through qualifications, they are valued by employers.
- Experience – a range of different types of experience, particularly work experience and volunteering.

The young people involved also gained practical skills, confidence in interviews and links with employers.

‘It’s made me a lot more pro-active and a lot more confident with regards to applying for work...it’s made me more confident making that initial contact.’

There were benefits for employers too, who welcomed the opportunity to talk to young people and were reminded of the energy, enthusiasm and fresh approach that young employees can bring to their businesses.

Building on this work, NIACE has developed a new responsive website – *What Employers Want* – for young people, learning providers and support agencies. The website, funded by BIS, contains direct advice from employers – including Barclays Bank, Topps Tiles Plc, Spirit Pub Company, Sureline Communications Ltd, and Manchester Digital Laboratory (MadLab) – to help 16-25 year olds secure a job and develop their careers. The website also provides full details of the project methodology and the supporting materials needed to replicate the approach of training and supporting young people to interview local employers.

Currently, as part of NIACE’s role as UK Coordinator for the European Agenda for Adult Learning, we are working with a social enterprise – NOW – to pilot the project in Northern Ireland and develop the approach so that more young people with differing levels of learning abilities can meet directly with employers, increase their understanding of what employers want, and gain new skills and experience to help them in the workplace.

- 7.3 What Employers Want is an effective approach to enabling young people to engage directly with employers. It supports their journey towards employment by improving their understanding of what they need to do to get their first job and progress at work.
- 7.4 We encourage members of the Committee to visit www.whatemployerswant.org - a new website developed by NIACE providing information, advice and activities to help young people get a job and progress at work, based on research with employers.

8. A new Youth Allowance

- 8.1 Too many young people do not get support on a career pathway from a school system focused on university as the end goal, and an employment system focused on any job.
- 8.2 This has major consequences for social mobility – locking in low earnings and lack of opportunity- and for the economy, contributing to our national shortage of technician level jobs and workers. The employment system focuses on finding young people any job so that they are off benefits, rather than long-term career prospects, and the skills system focuses on qualifications, rather than competency to complete tasks effectively.
- 8.3 Youth unemployment has been found to have lasting impacts on the future career and earnings prospects of young people. There is also evidence that longer periods of unemployment can increase vulnerabilities to mental health issues later in life. A more joined up and practical approach between the employment and education sectors is needed to give young people the best start to working life.
- 8.4 NIACE’s Adult Participation in Learning Surveys consistently show that adults who leave full time education early are less likely to participate in learning at all ages and stages of life. This reinforces the need to engage young people in meaningful and constructive learning so that they are ready and prepared for the

changes that will happen around them and to them through careers of 45-50 years and retirement in their 80s, 90s and 100s.

8.5 We support the Government's ambition to ensure all young people are earning or learning. In fact, we argue that young people, and indeed everyone else, should be earning and learning. Recognising the distinct needs of young people, we have advocated the replacement of Job Seekers Allowance for 18-24 year olds with a new Youth Allowance which would require accredited learning up to level 3 alongside job search and work. We believe this would improve opportunities for young people in the following ways:

- a) The Youth Allowance would be conditional on participation in education or training up to level 3, replacing the narrow focus on just job entry of Job Seekers Allowance and Employment and Support Allowance. Temporary or permanent exemptions would be in place for young people with disabilities, health conditions or caring responsibilities or other forms of disadvantage that typically prevent smooth and sustained transitions to employment.
- b) The Youth Allowance would be accessible to young people in education or training. Currently, the '16 hours rule' disincentivises continuing study for people claiming JSA but would be focused at young people with low/no incomes with low/no skill levels.
- c) The Youth Allowance could be implemented by local areas who can better instigate and maintain better partnerships between employment and skills providers locally.

New Meaning Limited – Written evidence (SMO0031)

The following main responses were collected from groups of students aged 16 to 18 and through a workshop process

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

- Figuring out what to actually do – what to focus on or have a go at.
- It feels like we have to make a definite decision – but who really knows
- The pressure is intense – it is not about your needs but others – parents and teachers push their own agendas
- School didn't offer me anything that helped me decide – they treat it as just another academic subject but it isn't – it is our lives
- Teachers have little real world experience – what do they really know about other occupations

There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the ALevel and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

- I am in this position because I didn't know what to do next – I lacked the confidence to take the initiative
- Staying at school was of no benefit – it made me lose confidence – it was a waste of time
- They should be offering more practical opportunities to explore different careers and ways of learning
- They don't teach you relevant skills
- More work experience is needed
- The school should motivate you to become more independent – in many ways it makes you less so

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

- No – you are pretty much left to do your own thing – it is too much about advice and not enough about places you can go to explore what is possible
- We were seen as less important at school – an inconvenience
- The schools reputation is more important than us – we are a problem for them
- They don't care because you don't get the grades – they don't help you find out what you are good at – you start to believe you are no good at anything
- Teachers don't think you are capable – they don't listen

Note from author:- no transition process in any school (primary to secondary to external world) pro-actively prepares young people by teaching them methods that will enable them to “make sense” of the transition they are experiencing. Help is only provided when a young person is in crisis. Transition and change is a normal part of life and yet young people do not know how to appreciate and learn from the transition experiences they have had. These experiences shape powerful beliefs that are often negative and “I can’t do” based – they young people have no sense that they can choose/decide what an experience will mean to them – putting a choice between the stimuli and the belief they choose to adopt.

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- Pro-actively prepare young people by teaching them how human brains make sense of experiences and shape beliefs.
- The capacity to transition is 80% attitude – not aptitude - the schools teach it the other way around
- How I transition is down to me – not what Shakespeare said
- Shakespeare is all very well – but he isn’t here now to help me – who is

Note from Author – in this section we discussed what employers are looking for – young people feel they expect too much these days. There was a real feeling that employers are so lean and pushing efficiency that they have become intolerant to young people who need time and guidance. The young people felt that they cannot make mistakes and “everyone (employees) is so stressed all of the time – they don’t have time to spend with us and train us”.

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- The Government – more support like offered at The ToolShed (new centre in High Wycombe)
- People should understand what we want from life and not push us into a job because it solves their problem ... US
- “We are important” – we are the future – stop treating us like things that can be pushed around
- Promote the fact that practical work also has value – tradespeople are not lesser people in society – we are made to feel that way – if you don’t become a lawyer, doctor, etc then you feel less of a person – somehow beneath these other people
- Let us try things – to see what is fit for size – there are so many options now – aren’t we suppose to live in a free country – so why can’t we try before we buy into a particular career.

10 September 2015

The Prince's Trust – Written evidence (SMO0040)

The Prince's Trust response to the Select Committee on Social Mobility Call for Evidence

About the Prince's Trust

The Prince's Trust is the UK's leading youth charity which helps disadvantaged young people to get their lives on track. It supports 13 to 30 year-olds who are unemployed and those struggling at school and at risk of exclusion. Many of the young people helped by The Trust are in or leaving care, facing issues such as homelessness or mental health problems, or they have been in trouble with the law.

The Trust's programmes give vulnerable young people the practical and financial support needed to stabilise their lives, helping develop self-esteem and skills for work. Three in four young people supported by The Prince's Trust move into work, education or training. The Prince of Wales's charity has helped 750,000 young people since 1976 and supports over 100 more each day.

The Prince's Trust Research

We have based our response to this consultation on two main sources of information. The Prince's Trust annual *Feedback from the Frontline* survey gathers the views of the young people we work with, our staff and volunteers, and employers. We take their views on a range of issues, from the challenges facing young people to opinions on Government policy. This consultation response uses information from 2015, 2014 and 2013 survey. The numbers of respondents are below:

2015 (interim findings): 914 young people

2014: 1441 young people; 414 Prince's Trust staff, volunteers and Delivery Partners

2013: 491 young people; 761 Prince's Trust staff, volunteers and Delivery Partners; 33 employers

Our recent *Skills Crunch* survey (2013) assessed the current business landscape across the UK, examining growth prospects and how workforces are equipped to meet demands. The research represents all major UK sectors and samples businesses with 500+ employees. Interviews were conducted with 616 senior directors in businesses across the whole of the UK. Sector specific breakdowns are available for the following sectors: construction, retail, manufacturing and logistics, science, technology and engineering and healthcare and social care. The survey was conducted by Loudhouse, an independent research agency.

Factors affecting social mobility (questions 1 and 3)

Q1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people?

Q3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Based on our research, there appears to be a number of significant factors that affect social mobility and employment outcomes for young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route. These include:

- A challenging labour market
- Lack of available and accessible work experience
- Negative misperceptions of young people affecting recruitment
- Challenges for skills funding
- Under-resourcing the route to apprenticeships
- Lack of 'soft skills'; exam ready not work ready
- Lack of available careers guidance

A challenging labour market

The ability for young people to transition successfully into the workplace has become increasingly difficult over the past decade. Although the jobs market for young people has made a recovery from the depths of the recession, the number of young people (18-24) out-of-work is still 178,000 higher (4% proportional increase of population) than it was in 2004.²⁵⁴



In recent years, the young people The Prince's Trust work with have been increasingly frustrated by a scarcity of opportunity for entry level jobs and see this as the biggest challenge in their lives. According the Feedback from the Frontline (FFTFL) Young Person's (interim) Survey 2015:

- A small proportion (9 per cent) of unemployed young people spent less than one month looking for work while almost a third (32 per cent) of young people spent over one year looking for work
- When asked 'How many jobs did you apply for during this time?', most young people (35 per cent) had applied for more than 50 jobs

²⁵⁴ ONS Labour Market Statistics, Table UNEM01: Unemployment by age and duration: People (seasonably adjusted)

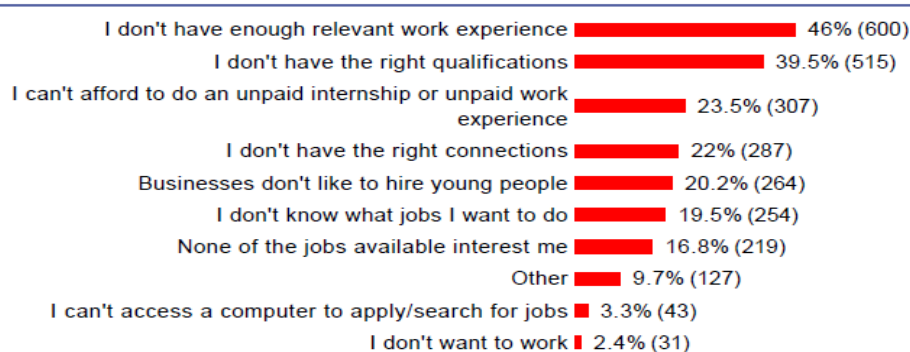
Lack of available and accessible work experience

There is a feeling amongst young people that their inability to find work is down to three key factors:

- Lack of relevant work experience
- Lack of relevant qualifications
- Not being able to afford to do an unpaid internship or unpaid work experience.²⁵⁵

What makes it difficult for you to get a job? (Tick all that apply)

HIGHEST FIRST NETT RESPONSES: 1304



Negative misperceptions of young people affecting recruitment

Their inability to find work is also compounded by the attitudes of employers. While employers are keen to invest in upskilling the next generation, the research also shows that young people – particularly those who are currently unemployed – still face stigma and negative stereotyping from business leaders.

- Seven in 10 UK businesses admit that jobless young people face stigma from employers (71 per cent), while one in five believe recruiters see them as “lazy” (20 per cent).
- More than two-thirds warn of a culture where unemployed young people and those without a degree are unfairly overlooked in the jobs market (69 per cent and 67 per cent respectively).
- Fifty-nine per cent agree that unemployed young people could be promising workers, and yet two-thirds admit they could be more open-minded about recruiting unemployed young people (67 per cent).²⁵⁶

Challenges for skills funding

²⁵⁵ The Prince's Trust, *FFTF Young Person's Survey* (2014)

²⁵⁶ The Prince's Trust, *The Skills Crunch Survey* (2013)

Investing in the skills of young people is a key objective for any government which endeavours to give every young person the chance to succeed. We recognise that matching policy objectives with public sector funding challenges is not an easy task. However we can identify some funding cuts which will actively jeopardise the Government’s policy objectives.

In recent years, funding levels in the education system have become increasingly unequal.

Figure 1: Total adult skills budget in England

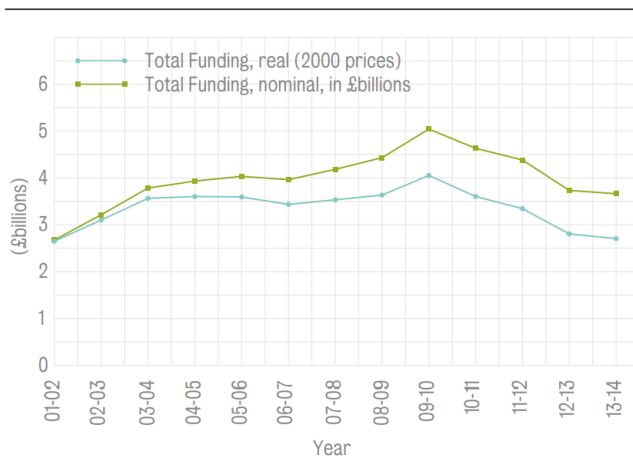
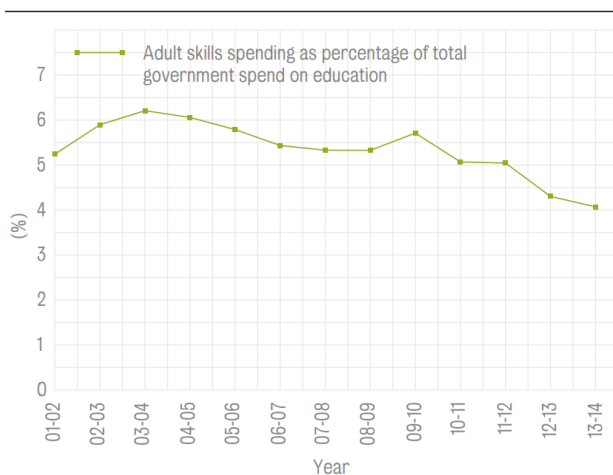


Figure 2: Adult skills spending as a percentage of total government spend on education



As indicated by the graphs above, the adult skills budget has declined not only in real terms (figure 1) but also as a proportion of total public education (or ‘education and training’) spending (see figure 2). As Professor Alison Wolf highlights; ‘In absolute terms, less is now spent on it than on either pre-primary education or on taxpayer contributions to university teaching costs’.²⁵⁷ This trend of decline has continued, with a further 3.9% cut implemented on non-apprenticeships funding announced for the 2015 to 2016 financial year (April 2015 to March 2016).²⁵⁸

²⁵⁷ Professor Alison Wolf, *Issues and ideas. Heading from the precipice: Can further and higher education funding policies be sustained?* King’s College London (June 2015)

²⁵⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/446922/Funding_Allocations_2015_to_2016.pdf, p.2

These cuts are a further blow to colleges, who have already sustained significant funding reductions since 2009, yet play a vital role in the transitioning young people into the workplace. This will have potentially devastating effects on employment outcomes for vulnerable young people, as the resources available for shorter and more flexible courses are squeezed in favour of apprenticeships and traineeships.

While many think of 'further education' as synonymous with FE colleges, a wide variety of provision is funded from skills budgets and is also affected by these cuts. The Prince's Trust, for example, runs a programme called Team, which is funded from skills budgets drawn down by colleges. However the programme is delivered through a mixture of direct delivery by colleges themselves and community organisations to which colleges contract out; this offers young people who are put off by a formal college environment an alternative route either to employment or back into learning. Team is a 12-week programme of personal development, helping 16-25 year olds - the majority unemployed - to develop their confidence, motivation and skills through teamwork in the community. 18% of Team members entered into employment as a direct result of Team, with 44% no longer NEET. We see the Team programme as vital provision for the cohort of disadvantaged young people looking to progress into apprenticeships but also traineeships. However, we have seen the numbers of young people able to access this diminish over the last couple of years with the primary reason being cuts to government funding.

Under-resourcing the route to apprenticeships

We welcome the Government's focus on Apprenticeships, and its establishment of Traineeships as an earlier step on the vocational ladder. The recent pledge to protect the apprenticeship budget (£770m) and deliver three million more apprenticeships should prove popular with young people. According to the FFTFL Young Person's (interim) Survey 2015:

- 85 per cent of young people agreed or strongly agreed that apprenticeships and traineeships are a good opportunity for young people

However, the consequence of this almost exclusive focus has been a further squeeze on resources available for those young people who are not ready to step on to that ladder. There is a cohort of young people who do not have the skills to commit to a Traineeship, who face significant barriers, have complex needs (some within the Troubled Families space), and are the furthest from the job market. Although many of them lack English and Maths qualifications which are vital to sustained employment, they find the idea of continued formal learning off-putting, and this often deters them from joining a Traineeship programme or a programme of study at an FE college. If the Government is to meet its very laudable aim of 3 million new apprenticeships over the lifetime of the Parliament, and wants to ensure young people make up a large proportion of the new apprentices, it needs to ensure there is a 'pipeline' of young people coming through to step in to those opportunities.

Lack of soft skills; exam ready not work ready

In addition to this, there is growing evidence suggesting that “soft skills” are major factors affecting social mobility. According to the ‘Character and Resilience Manifesto’, young people equipped with traits and skills, such as problem solving skills, critical thinking skills, persistence, social skills, creativity, and self-control, are more likely to succeed in their public lives, workplaces, homes, and other societal contexts.²⁵⁹

The Government has begun to react to this growing research, with the current education secretary, Nicky Morgan MP, promoting ‘character education’ and increasing the focus on employability and skills beyond the classroom. Despite this, it seems that many young people are leaving education without these necessary “soft skills”.

- 62 per cent of young people agreed or strongly agreed that too much time at school is spent preparing for exams at the expense of learning skills for life²⁶⁰

As a result, employers are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit prospective employees straight out of education, as although they may be technically or academically able, they lack ‘soft transferable skills’. According to a 2008 employment survey from the UKCES:

- Nearly two fifths (37%) of all establishments agreed both that they have problems with recruiting and that the education system does not supply people equipped with the skills they need to start work.²⁶¹

Lack of available careers guidance

Effective careers education and guidance play a crucial role in ensuring a smooth transition from education to work. However, since removing the statutory requirement on schools to provide careers education under the Education Act of 2011, this appears to have become increasingly neglected. Schools have become increasingly focused on preparing for exams and less focused on preparing young people for the world of work. This is confirmed by our findings (FFTFL Young Person’s (interim) Survey 2015):

- Only 32 per cent of young people agreed that they found the careers guidance provided at school or college helpful

When asking our young people ‘How much would you like to improve the following skills?’

- 48 per cent wanted to work on online job applications ‘a lot’ or ‘quite a lot’
- 51 per cent wanted to work on CV writing ‘a lot’ or ‘quite a lot’
- 64 per cent wanted to work on job interviews ‘a lot’ or ‘quite a lot’

This further exemplifies the desire and need for greater provision.

²⁵⁹ As outlined in the ‘Character and Resilience Manifesto, The all-party parliamentary group on Social Mobility, p.13’.

²⁶⁰ The Prince’s Trust, *FFTFL Young Person’s (interim) Survey (2015)*

²⁶¹ UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), *Skills for the Workplace, Employer Perspectives (2008)*

How to tackle these issues (questions 4 and 5)

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

Central government, local government, schools, colleges, businesses and charities must all work together to improve the transition into work for school leavers.

- The government must first redress the current funding crisis facing skills provision
- Schools and colleges must improve careers guidance for young people
- There needs to be greater access to meaningful work experience

Readdressing the current funding crisis facing adult skills

To improve the transition from school to work for all young people, the government must first redress the currently unequal funding levels in the education system. The government needs to recognise that further education offers a variety of significant economic and social benefits and invest the necessary public resource to ensure that learning opportunities remain available and accessible for all.

Improving careers guidance for young people

The current education system need to do more to prepare young people for work by improving careers guidance and advice.

The Prince's Trust provided the Secretariat to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility, until July 2014. Much of the academic and anecdotal evidence the group has heard concludes that careers information by itself is not sufficient for many without guidance. Merely putting information out into the public domain, without the guidance to interpret that information, only serves to confuse students who need support, and advantages students who are already advantaged. One witness, senior figure at a leading UK university²⁶² argued that we have had a proliferation of information and advice in recent years, but that guidance is the really discriminating factor. Increasing face-to-face guidance on options as well as coaching CV writing and interview practice in schools is therefore crucial.

Increasing access to meaningful work experience

Meaningful work experience opportunities are needed more than ever; they prepare young people for the work place, help them gain employability skills and are a potential route to a permanent job.

²⁶² I have not named the witness because I do not have permission to re-quote them

As stated by IPPR, “a strong workplace-based vocational education and training system, with high employer involvement, contributes more to a smoother transition from education to work and a lower rate of youth unemployment than anything else”. (IPPR, *Remember the young ones: Improving career opportunities for Britain’s young people*, 11 Aug 2014).

The Prince’s Trust works with employers to provide vocational work experience placements for unemployed young people. As part of our ‘Get Into’ programme, we work directly with employers, including HSBC, Marks & Spencer, Balfour Beatty, Accenture, DHL and Asda, and offer two to six week courses that develop young people’s skills in a specific sector and support them into outcomes within that sector. Since it started, Get into has supported more than 18,000 young people. Based on last year’s performance results (1st April to 31st March 2015):

- 72% of young people left Get into programs with a positive outcome (in employment, education, training or voluntary work)
- 59% of Get into graduates went into employment

However, there are also further benefits for employers. According to a small survey of employers who run the ‘Get Into’ programme with The Prince’s Trust:

- 93% of businesses said a key benefit was the opportunity to see candidates in action before offering them a role.
- 47% said the programme increased their workforce diversity
- 53% said the programme recruited loyal and committed employees



Do it! It’s a fantastic opportunity to give young people who actually want to work the opportunity to find employment. It is a cost effective way of recruiting and there are so many long term benefits for existing employees in your business. I believe we may have found some real superstars for our business who, on paper, we may have otherwise overlooked.”

Glen Cinnamon – Regional Director, Lidl Northern Ireland

We therefore welcome the Government’s recent ‘WE can’ campaign, which encourages employers to create more work experience opportunities for young people in attempt to tackle youth unemployment and bridge the skills gap.

While work experience placements are encouraged, we issue some caution on this subject. Young people are eager to work and as a consequence will often take up voluntary unpaid work experience. This should always be on an agreed short term basis with structured support and progression opportunities. The best schemes help young people understand the reality of work whilst inspiring them to gain the skills they need to progress, benefiting both employer and young person. Given the challenge of an increasingly competitive labour market, The Prince’s Trust recognises and values the time and resources employers invest in young people through high quality work placements. Whilst there is no shortage of young people willing to take up unpaid work experience, this should never provide companies with an alternative to creating jobs for young people.

Summary

There appears to be a number of significant factors that affect social mobility and employment outcomes for young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route. These include:

- A challenging labour market
- Lack of available and accessible work experience
- Negative misperceptions of young people affecting recruitment
- Challenges for skills funding
- Under-resourcing the route to apprenticeships
- Lack of 'soft skills'; exam ready not work ready
- Lack of available careers guidance

Central government, local government, schools, colleges, businesses and charities must all work together to improve the transition into work for school leavers.

- The government must first redress the current funding crisis facing skills provision
- Schools and colleges must improve careers guidance for young people
- There needs to be greater access to meaningful work experience

11 September 2015

Prospects Services – Written evidence (SMO0091)

Response from Prospects Services to

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility Call for Evidence

1. Background

1.1 Prospects is a leading education, employment and training services company, working nationally and internationally. We estimate we help more than half a million people each year, through a range of high quality services. We are one of the first and largest new public sector mutuals, with shares owned by managers and staff.

1.2 Our services

1.2.1 Welfare to Work

We are on the DWP ERSS (Employment Related Support Services) Provider Framework, a Prime Contractor in the South West, and a large subcontractor in London, for the Work Programme. We have been a supplier to DWP/Jobcentre Plus for 16 years, a Community Task Force Prime Contractor; we deliver DWP and local authority welfare to work and related services in London, Birmingham, West Midlands, Yorkshire, South West and West of England.

1.2.2 IAG and Careers

Prospects is the largest national supplier of young people's IAG (information, advice and guidance) and careers services, to educational institutions and local authorities; universal IAG services and targeted, intensive youth support for vulnerable young people with special needs, learning difficulties (LDD) and other disadvantages.

1.2.3 National Careers Service (NCS)

Prospects is the largest provider, delivering hundreds and thousands of adult face to face IAG sessions, NCS Prime Contractor in Greater London, South West and West Midlands (new contracts won from October 2014); member of the Prime Contractor consortium JV (Joint Venture) in Yorkshire and Humberside; delivering the 'In Custody Offer' in all 36 prisons in London, West Midlands, South West, and Yorkshire and the Humber.

1.2.4 Ofsted inspection

One of only two Ofsted Early Years Inspection Service providers, covering the Midlands and North.

1.2.5 Events

Prospects Events - largest national provider of careers and skills events: Skills London, Skills Cymru, Skills Scotland; portfolio of regional and county careers and skills events.

1.2.6 Education Services

'Prospects Improve' educational consultancy, training, school improvement, inspection preparation; education resource materials, publications, careers information, equipment; promoting entrepreneurship in all phases of Welsh schools, for the Welsh government; Leading Parent Partnership Award (involving parents fully in their children's education); Parent Partnership and Independent Support services to families of children with LDD; services to independent education through Gabbitas.

1.2.7 Employer facing services

Prospects' recruitment company – CFA - provides services within the company and outside; Prospects Professional Training & Consultancy delivers training and workforce development; we also provide vacancy handling, research and evaluation, quality improvement, surveys, psychometric testing, regeneration initiatives and business awards.

1.2.8 Public service mutual

Prospects offers expert advice, consulting, joint ventures and partnership for organisations considering becoming public service mutual and is the Independent Sector Partner to 3BM, the first public sector JV 'spin-out' providing school support services in Hammersmith, Kensington and Westminster (Tri-borough).

1.2.9 Quality

Prospects holds many recognised quality standards e.g. Investors in People, Investors in Diversity, Merlin (supply chain management), "Positive about Disabled People", CHAS, matrix; ISO9001/ISO14001/27001.

1.2.10 More information

Further information on Prospects may be found on our website at www.prospects.co.uk

2. Summary

2.1 Young people face a complex transition from education to employment. Those with specific vulnerabilities have a more difficult journey. Some face economic and social barriers, while many leave school lacking the basic employability skills which recruiters seek from young entrants.

2.2 Young people are approaching the labour market with a lack of preparation, support and guidance. Information, advice and guidance are too often neither impartial nor comprehensive.

2.3 There is a need to recognise and share good practice. Schools should be held accountable for delivering better careers education and guidance, preparing young people more effectively for working life. The Department for Education should take a lead role in overseeing improvement to the support for young people's transition from education to employment. It needs to ensure better linkages across departments to ensure a more co-ordinated approach. Ofsted should hold schools, colleges and other delivery organisations accountable for the effectiveness of their input. The business world also needs to be involved in providing inspiration and insight. All agencies involved in this agenda need to work more collaboratively together.

3. Significant factors affecting the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place.

3.1 The transition from school to work is complex for many young people.

3.1.1 There are vested interests and biases within the education and skills system, which emphasise preferred pathways and effectively diminish individual choice.

3.1.2 There is more restricted access to attractive employment and training opportunities for those lacking high GCSE English and maths grades (A* - C).

- 3.1.3 Negative media portrayal of young people has perpetuated a myth of a lazy, work-shy generation, expecting unrealistic career development and reward for minimal effort.

- 3.2 Specific vulnerable groups face additional barriers to successful transition. Young people's vulnerability is raised when they are part of the care system, have a history of youth offending, become young parents, or have learning and physical disabilities.

- 3.3 Economic factors influence social mobility and employment outcomes.
 - 3.3.1 Some young people face family pressure to bring income to the household. This can reduce the viability of lower-paid opportunities or apprenticeships, where a young person might follow a developmental progression. Instead many young people opt for the highest paying option even if this offers no progression or development. This has been exacerbated during recession.
 - 3.3.2 The removal of maintenance allowances, and the wider reliance upon loans to fund education and skills beyond age 18 create a perception of unaffordability among some groups.
 - 3.3.3 Young people entering the labour market have taken a disproportionate share of positions which have little or no training or progression opportunity, are paid at minimum wage rates, and offered with less generous terms and conditions including zero hours.
 - 3.3.4 Teenagers have less access to part-time work, where they face increasing competition from undergraduates seeking income to support their studies.
 - 3.3.5 There has been a declining emphasis on work-related learning and fewer pupils have work-experience since these were made non-statutory.

- 3.4 Employers believe schools and colleges are not adequately preparing young people for employment.
 - 3.4.1 Vocational pathways for young people are perceived as lacking structure and rigour.
 - 3.4.2 In response the FE and skills sector has seen a "cull" of qualifications deemed irrelevant, with low take up, or lacking the recognition or respect of employers. It also faces a period of uncertainty with reviews likely to lead to an increasing number of mergers and restructuring of provision.

3.4.3 Alongside this government has emphasised a business-led skills system encouraging “employer ownership of skills” and actively encouraging employers to partner with education providers to offer “inspiration” to learners.

3.4.4 Employers continue to complain that young entrants to the workplace are lacking in employability skills and many remain wary of engaging with schools and colleges.

4. What we know about young people who do not do A-Levels but are not NEET. The support available for this group within the current system.

4.1 Young people are approaching the labour market with a lack of preparation, support and guidance.

4.1.1 There is a “post-code lottery” in the support available to navigate the transition from school to employment.

4.1.2 Even when support is available there is huge variation in the qualifications of those offering careers advice and applicable quality standards.

4.1.3 Young people don’t always have access to comprehensive and transparent information about the variety of pathways open to them.

4.1.4 Some young people lack necessary social capital and networks which might otherwise assist them in accessing higher quality opportunities.

4.2 Young people have diverse talents and ambitions. These should be nurtured and recognised. Young people should not be forced down pathways designed more for the convenience of institutions and employers than for the skill and personal development opportunities they could provide. It is important that young people don’t feel exploited through low pay and poor employment conditions.

5. Improving the transition from school to work for all young people, particularly those who do not study A-levels and higher education.

5.1 There is a lot of good careers provision and it is not the case that everything currently offered needs to be reinvented or replaced. What is needed is smarter and more connected use of existing services, and a consistent level of investment in specialist resources and support. We need to ensure that future delivery builds upon what works, and that innovation within the sector is show-cased and good practice shared.

5.2 Prospects supports some young people through this transition. We deliver using a wide range of effective methods, using experienced, qualified staff, adhering to nationally recognised quality standards. We work closely with local partners and stakeholders to create locally responsive solutions. We combine traditional methods like face to face advice, group sessions and assessment tools with innovative and alternative approaches such as enterprise mentoring, soft-skills challenges, digital job search gurus, city employment tours, interactive employment and skills fairs and guidance delivered using social media.

5.3 Schools should deliver careers education, helping their students develop their knowledge and skills in relation to the labour market.

5.3.1 Transition can be improved through raised awareness of the local, national and international labour markets and the different opportunities, entry points, progression pathways and support available.

5.3.2 Strong links with employers and the local community can provide a clearer line of sight to the world of work, through exposure to inspiration, as well as business and enterprise insight.

5.3.3 Awareness of individual skills, talents and potential can aid young people assess their own readiness and suitability for different pathways and opportunities including education, training, volunteering, employment, social enterprise and self-employment. Many young people may benefit from expert support to assess their skills, identify and review their career development plans.

5.3.4 Good career management skills can help young people transition effectively as they enter the labour market, but also support them as they make career decisions throughout their working life.

6. Responsibility for improving the system to support the school to work transition phase.

6.1 . Schools and colleges should be required to publish a detailed strategy outlining their careers education and guidance offer. This should include:

6.1.1 The input students should expect from the institution through careers education

- 6.1.2 Specific career management and employability and enterprise outcomes which every young person should achieve
 - 6.1.3 Input from expert professionals whose services they might commission and invite into the institution
 - 6.1.4 Community resources, such as parent and alumni networks, links with local agencies and partnerships the institution will call upon to provide insight and inspirational employment and enterprise related activities
- 6.2 Employers have an important role to play in inspiring young people and providing insight into the requirements of business. Independent brokerage and support can help employers to engage more effectively with learning establishments.
- 6.3 The Department for Education should take a lead role in overseeing improvement to the support for young people's transition from education to employment. It needs to ensure better linkages across departments to ensure a more co-ordinated approach. There are many stakeholders with interests and activities within this sphere. What is needed is for one Department to take hold of policy development, reducing the current complexity. This should involve the strengthening of partnerships with the Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS), the National Careers Service, Skills Funding Agency (SFA), Department for Work & Pensions (DWP), Youth Justice Board, Ministry of Justice, the Careers & Enterprise Company, local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), local authorities, Job Centre Plus and other private and third sector organisations working in this field. All should co-ordinate their approaches to avoid duplication of effort and burdening young people, schools and employers with multiple, overlapping and confusing delivery offers.
- 6.4 Ofsted should ensure that schools, colleges and other delivery partners are held accountable for the effectiveness of their provision and meet national benchmarks and quality standards.
- 6.5 The complexity of vulnerable young people's needs should not be underestimated within any proposed model to support transition from education to work. A multi-disciplinary approach offers greater effectiveness in supporting more vulnerable young adults. Approaches like those adopted by Prospects delivering the Youth Support Service on behalf of Gloucestershire County Council offer more joined-up mechanisms to help young people overcome a wide range of barriers relating to employment and training, school problems, emotional health and wellbeing, becoming a young parent, sexual health, drug and alcohol problems, issues around being in care, leaving the care system, housing and homelessness, and being or at risk of being in trouble with the police.

6.6 Established quality standards such as MATRIX and the Careers Quality Standard should be key indicators expected successful delivery. Should these not be seen as fully fit for purpose, they should be updated and enhanced to become so.

7. Further suggestions

7.1 Prospects would be happy to present further evidence in relation to this inquiry and to answer the Select Committee's Specific questions.

7.2 Prospects would be happy to host visits to allow Select Committee members the opportunity to witness first hand aspects of provision they have a particular interest in and to meet with young people benefiting from support in their transition.

Michael Larbalestier
Head of Research
Prospects Services

14 September 2015

PSHE Association – Written evidence (SMO0016)

PSHE Association Submission to Social Mobility Committee – 3 September 2015

Introduction

1. The PSHE Association is an independent charity, the national association for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education in England, providing advice and support to a network of over 9,000 teachers and other professionals working in state and independent schools nationally.
2. PSHE education is a non-statutory curriculum subject which covers topics under core themes of living in the wider world; health and wellbeing, and relationships. The subject teaches pupils about employability, careers and the world of work; and embeds key skills, qualities and attributes – including self-esteem, self-management, communication, team-working and resilience – throughout all topic areas.
3. Our submission focuses on the personal and social skills (often termed ‘non-cognitive’ or ‘soft’ skills), qualities and attributes taught through PSHE education which we believe are crucial to social mobility. We argue that the low priority given to the teaching of these skills hampers pupils’ transition to work, and is out of step with evidence that the development of these skills is crucial to work-readiness and career progression. There is compelling evidence that disadvantaged pupils in particular miss out on the development of these skills, so we recommend that PSHE education, the subject which prepares pupils for the world of work, is given statutory status to ensure all pupils have the same opportunities and disadvantaged pupils do not miss out.
4. We would be pleased to provide further details or oral evidence if this would be helpful.

Summary

5. There is strong evidence to show that the development of personal and social skills such as communication, resilience and team-working can play a key role in pupils’ successful transition to work; yet school-leavers (and in particular those from less advantaged backgrounds) often lack the opportunity to develop these skills, as teaching them is currently optional for schools. This is despite considerable employer demand for school leavers who possess these skills.
6. Numerous studies have shown that personal and social skills can be taught as part of a programme of classroom-based learning. With its focus on preparation for life and work in modern Britain, PSHE education lessons provide the ideal context in which to develop these skills. Yet the potential of PSHE education is currently unfulfilled, with an Ofsted review of provision concluding that standards are ‘not yet good enough’.

7. We believe that statutory status for PSHE education is essential if we are to ensure that all pupils can develop these employability skills. We argue that statutory status for the subject would encourage schools to prioritise this teaching on the timetable and invest in teacher training, both of which are crucial to driving up standards. We also set out how business and education leaders could work together to develop the PSHE curriculum so that it makes an even greater contribution to pupil employability.

Q1: What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

8. There is strong evidence to show that personal and social skills – such as confidence, resilience and assertiveness – can support young people’s transition to work and progression throughout their careers. Such skills improve young people’s life chances, are desired by employers, and contribute to social mobility. In addition, these skills are not simply innate and can be taught effectively as part of high quality classroom education.
9. There is evidence to suggest that efforts to improve social mobility should focus on personal and social skills alongside academic skills: the [Nobel Prize winning economist James Heckman](#) has long argued that non-cognitive skills play a greater role in determining labour market outcomes than cognitive abilities, while [a 2011 Demos study](#) also showed that these personal and social skills are more important in determining life chances at age 30 than academic qualifications²⁶³. The Fair Education Alliance, which includes among its supporters the CBI, has set out as one of its ‘[Impact Goals](#)’ to ‘ensure all young people develop key skills including resilience and wellbeing’, noting strong evidence showing that non-cognitive skills are associated with success in later life.
10. Business leaders have also consistently called for schools to teach personal and social skills. [The PSHE Association’s own research](#) revealed that 98% of employers think that skills such as self-management, communication and teamwork are essential for the work place, but only one in three business leaders believe that schools are doing enough to develop these skills. [The CBI Education and Skills Survey](#), which consulted firms employing over 1 million people between them, concluded that the most important factors employers weigh when recruiting from school leavers are attitudes (85%) and aptitudes (58%), far surpassing formal qualifications. Last year [the British Chamber of Commerce Skills and Employment Manifesto 2014](#) called for intensified efforts from schools to help pupils develop ‘soft employability skills’.

²⁶³ There is strong evidence that these skills also aid academic attainment: [an analysis of over 200 social and emotional skills programmes](#) run in schools, predominantly delivered through PSHE education, demonstrated improved pupil attitudes and behaviours and an 11% improvement in academic achievement. [The Education Endowment Foundation now recommends](#) such programmes as a way to improve literacy and numeracy amongst disadvantaged pupils.

11. A number of recent reports show that young people from less advantaged backgrounds are missing out due to lack of opportunities to develop personal and social skills:
- i. Evidence from [PISA data](#) shows that disadvantaged pupils are less likely to be resilient, less likely to persevere, and more likely to have lower self-belief.
 - ii. A [review of three independent reports](#) investigating personal and social skills undertaken by the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission concluded that “social and emotional skills play a fundamental role in shaping life chances of children and young people and the nature of their adult lives” and recommended urgent and purposive action in schools and the youth sector to implement effective programmes and measure their impact.
 - iii. [Research](#) from the Sutton Trust and UpReach demonstrated significant disparity in pay between independent school graduates and their state school counterparts once in graduate employment. Similarly, a [recent report from the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission](#) demonstrated that ‘elite firms’ are excluding bright working-class applicants while recruiting. While both of the reports recognise the role of academic achievement in employment processes, progression and salary, the reports suggest that a large proportion of the disparity is due to less advantaged individuals lacking the personal and social skills to pass interview stage and then progress at the pace of their more advantaged colleagues.
 - iv. [The London School of Economics, on behalf of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission](#), have identified a ‘glass floor’ effect, meaning that less able but better-off pupils are more likely to become high earners than brighter pupils from less advantaged backgrounds, in significant part due to the investment more advantaged parents make in their children’s personal and social skills.
 - v. Research from the [Education and Employers Taskforce](#) shows that of those pupils who do gain work experience, disadvantaged pupils are less likely to gain high-quality experience, meaning that they may be less likely than better-off peers to develop employability skills.
12. These trends mean that disadvantaged pupils are less likely than their more advantaged counterparts to develop key employability skills, making school-led learning to aid the transition to the workplace all the more important (see recommendations below).

Q3: Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

13. As set out above, pupils are more likely to make successful transitions to work if they possess key personal and social skills, yet pupils are at present not adequately nor equally supported to develop these skills, with pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds more likely to miss out. Such skills are essential for all pupils, and in particular those who do not pursue A-Levels and higher education. Schools can play a significant role in preparing pupils for the transition from school to work, helping to ensure that pupils understand the world of work, raise aspirations and help pupils develop the skills they need.
14. As previously outlined, there is strong demand among employers for school leavers who possess good personal and social skills. We believe these skills would aid transitions significantly. Surveys of employers also show that they recognise the role that schools can play in preparing pupils for work, and are concerned that not enough is being done. For example, the [2013 CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey](#) identified 'communication skills' and 'self-management' as among employers' top priorities from schools. A recent YouGov survey of 700 business leaders commissioned by the PSHE Association found that only 32% of business leaders think that schools are doing enough to equip pupils with skills for the world of work such as self-management, communication and teamwork.

Q4: How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

15. PSHE education lessons provide an important context in which to deliver a planned, developmental curriculum which supports them to develop and practice employability skills, supports them to achieve their academic potential, and guides them to make informed choices which affect their future.
16. PSHE education is, however, currently not delivered to adequate standards, with a recent Ofsted review concluding that provision was inadequate in 40% of schools. The poor quality of PSHE provision is a result of the low status of the subject. Our survey of 40 local authority PSHE leads working with over 4,000 schools showed that provision had decreased in 70% of surveyed areas in recent years (PSHE Association, 2014), and an earlier NASUWT survey also found a 14% reduction in planned provision²⁶⁴.
17. As a non-statutory, non-examined subject, schools have little incentive to invest in CPD for PSHE which would ensure teachers are well-trained, or to provide sufficient space on the timetable – both prerequisites for quality teaching. We therefore recommend that the Government make the subject statutory in order to signal to schools the importance of this learning and drive up standards of provision

²⁶⁴ NASUWT survey of subject provision 2013:
<http://www.nasuwt.org.uk/Whatsnew/NASUWTNews/PressReleases/EBaccSurvey>

18. Given employer demand for school leavers with personal and social skills, we should expect both local employers and business organisations working on a national level to offer support to develop an employability skills curriculum, and to recognise and accredit pupils who undertake such a programme. The PSHE education expert group has called for a partnership of business and education leaders to come together to develop a PSHE curriculum focussed on the skills young people need for the world of work. We elaborate on this idea in our recommendations below.

Q5: Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

19. We believe that a large responsibility falls on the Government, and particularly the Department for Education, to help ensure that school leavers are already equipped with the personal and social skills desired by employers. Further, we believe that statutory status for PSHE education would be a big step in the right direction and would guarantee that all pupils had lessons which prepared them for the workplace, delivered by trained teachers. The argument for statutory PSHE education is widely supported by education specialists, including five leading teaching unions; in response, [the Commons Education Committee recommended statutory status for PSHE education](#), to ensure that the subject is taught in all schools and by trained teachers. That recommendation was made in February and we await the Government's response.

20. Educationalists and business leaders also have a major role to play in providing pupils with opportunities to develop soft skills to better support pupils' employability. The PSHE education expert group, which consists of practitioners from a range of settings, made a similar recommendation stating that businesses and educationalists should work together to develop and accredit a PSHE curriculum to develop employability skills. Such a programme would be particularly important for pupils in key stage 4 who are preparing to transition from school to work. There is evidence of enthusiasm amongst business leaders to work together on this issue: a YouGov survey commissioned by the PSHE Association found that 77% of business leaders supported the idea of working together to improve the PSHE curriculum, and 85% felt that it should be statutory in order to ensure that all children receive the learning they need.

Recommendations

21. We recommend that the Government should make PSHE education statutory in all state schools. Statutory status for PSHE education is the first step in ensuring that all pupils receive lessons from trained teachers on developing the essential personal and social skills they need to thrive in their future lives.

22. We recommend that business leaders and educationalists work in partnership to design and accredit a PSHE curriculum aimed at developing employability skills. This would raise standards of provision in the subject allowing pupils to receive the

learning they need to thrive.

3 September 2015

Pupils2Parliament – Written evidence (SMO0132)

Preparing for Work

A Report of Pupils' Views to the Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

October 2015

Introduction

1. Pupils 2 Parliament is a project to enable school pupils to think about, and feed in their views to, consultations and inquiries being carried out by Parliament, the government and national public organisations. The project has been approved by the Clerks of both Houses of Parliament to use the word 'Parliament' officially in its name.
2. Pupils 2 Parliament brings the special viewpoint of children and young people to people carrying out inquiries and consultations - plus the uniquely fresh and often challenging analysis that children and young people bring to making decisions and policies.
3. The project gives school pupils the chance to learn and think about important decisions being made by parliament, government and public bodies, and to take part in democracy by feeding their views and experiences into real national decisionmaking.
4. We gather pupils' views independently, through discussions with groups of pupils led by someone from Pupils 2 Parliament. We use material from the relevant consultation or inquiry document to explain things. We specialise in putting the issues and questions even-handedly, without leading pupils in any way or suggesting any responses. All views therefore come straight from pupils, with no adult prompting.
5. This report gives you all the views pupils gave us, without us leaving anything out, adding anything in, or making comments on what pupils said. The views in this report are pupils' own views, and nothing but pupils' views.
6. The views in this report came from 18 secondary school pupils aged 14 to 18, through two focus groups, held at Newtown High School and John Beddoes Campus, Presteigne.
7. The Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility had been conducting an inquiry into the transfer of pupils from secondary school and into work, and asked Pupils 2 Parliament to carry out some consultation with secondary school pupils on key issues being

raised in this inquiry. The questions we put to the pupils came from the Select Committee itself, and this is our report back to them on those questions.

Are there lots of different choices for school leavers which lead to a good job?

8. The Select Committee wanted pupils' views on the issue of choices of ways towards getting into a good job.
9. Sixteen out of the 18 pupils said they already knew what sort of job they wanted to do after leaving school – many of them needed to go through more education or training to get to where they wanted to be. Some were clear on the choices they needed to make to get to the job they wanted, but others knew where they wanted to end up, but not how to get there.
10. There were widely different views on whether or not there were lots of different choices available to lead to a good job. Nobody in one group thought there were lots of choices available to them, but seven in the other group thought there were either 'lots' or at least 'enough' choices available. Five thought there were 'enough' rather than lots; "enough but could be more".
11. The main reason for pupils saying there were not enough choices available to them was that there were few choices in the rural area where they lived. "Not around this area", "not enough unless willing to travel".
12. Other issues raised by pupils were that there are many choices that don't seem to lead to any certainty of a job at the end, and that pupils are unsure of the choices that are available to them. Some saw apprenticeships or college courses as their main way towards a job. Some also told us that they believed many pupils 'drift' towards the future rather than being able to make clear choices on how best to get to the sort of job they wanted to end up doing.
13. We also heard that there can be competition for many sorts of job from people who have been to university, which makes it difficult for those who haven't.
14. The sorts of choices many wanted to have available to them were seeing what jobs there are locally and further afield, going and seeing people doing different sorts of jobs, and having apprenticeships available leading to the jobs they wanted to do.

Is there a good level of support available to you to help you make choices when leaving school and getting a job?

15. Exactly half the pupils said they had a good level of support to help them make choices

when the time came to leave school and get a job. Those who did feel they had sufficient support said this came from school, from family and friends, from the internet, and from people they knew who were already in work they were interested in.

- 16.**The main sort of additional support pupils wanted was to have people giving them careers and job advice who actually had first hand experience of various sorts of job (rather than general advisers who had not done the sorts of work they were advising about).
- 17.**Careers advice services outside the school itself are helpful in giving you an idea of the range of employment you could consider, and lots of different sorts of advice, but pupils felt they had to make the first move to use any service outside school. They felt that although this sort of support is available, you shouldn't just be left to find it for yourself – it should approach you to offer advice and support. "People tend to be left to sit back".
- 18.**Another issue with careers advice services was that they tended to be better at giving vocational advice and support, but were not so good at giving advice on more academic routes to work. They tend to favour vocational courses of study over academic ones, which can limit choices to consider.
- 19.**The location of both the careers advice service, and of the jobs you might be interested in finding out more about or eventually doing, were critical to those living in a rural area where a lot of travel can be involved and you can be limited in what is available. Careers advisory services are not good at introducing you to job options outside the local area or a long distance away. There are few sources of help for considering more distant job choices.
- 20.**Many were concerned about the timing of careers advice in their school careers. They felt that they had already had to make GCSE choices which might limit job choices, before careers advice services got involved. We heard of actual experience within the focus groups of pupils finding they had already chosen the wrong courses for a career they wanted to go for. Pupils need careers advice to be timed ahead of making examination and course choices at school. There needs to be a lot more information and advice on jobs and what is available at the age of 14. Also, the more specialist the sort of job you want to do, the younger you need guidance on which way to go to get there.
- 21.**Another theme was one that had already come up in relation to job choices themselves. This was that careers advisory services tend to give general advice rather than being able to give good specialist advice on particular routes to work or types of employment you might be interested in. If you had a particular job in mind, you needed the careers services to be able to put you in touch with people who were well

advanced along the route you wanted to follow. You need highly job specific careers advice, or the continuing advice of a learning mentor or tutor with experience in your chosen field of work.

- 22.**Some were concerned that there were not enough careers advisers, and that the number was being cut further in their areas. They were also concerned that careers advice outside their own school staff was not sufficiently advertised and so not readily available, or only found when it was too late to take advice on course choices.
- 23.**Within their own school, pupils would like to see teachers available more easily and earlier in their schooling to talk about possible future job choices and routes to different jobs, both locally and more distant, and both those needing vocational courses and academic courses to reach.
- 24.**They would also like teachers to organise direct contact with people experienced in jobs their pupils were interested in, picking up on individual pupil choices. Alongside brokering these individual contacts relevant to particular pupil choices, they would like to see schools organising jobs fairs where pupils could meet and talk with different employers and people doing different sorts of work to help them make choices. It would be important for job fairs to include representatives of work in different parts of the UK, and work that might be available abroad too. No one person like a careers adviser can possibly cover all sorts of job, and pupils need lots of different people from lots of different sorts of job to come into school for them to meet. It is not possible for an individual school pupil to find contacts in a job they are considering on their own.
- 25.**Teachers were seen as helpful in picking courses for particular job routes, and knew where to turn for more advice – but pupils need to hear directly from people actually doing jobs they might be interested in. As well as organising school based jobs fairs, teachers could valuably help their pupils to attend any available jobs fair, including ones run by other organisations or colleges, and to attend university or college open days.
- 26.**It was also important that colleges organising jobs fairs or open days organised these at times and on days that pupils in rural areas could travel to get there.

Do you know what skills you need to get a job?

- 27.**Eleven of the 18 pupils said they did not know what skills or courses they would need to get a job of their choice. Of those that did, many had found out for themselves what they would need to do to get a specific job they wanted, but this was a bit hit and miss and more specialist help and advice on specific jobs would be helpful.

Is it easy or difficult for you to get work experience that helps you to choose and get a job?

28.Some in our groups had already taken part in work experience, others still had this ahead of them. Here is a list of all the experience of work experience so far from pupils in our two groups:

- If you are under 16 there are lots of things you are not allowed to try in work experience
- If you are doing work experience in a primary school, this needs to be better timed so that you are there when the school is fully working, and not just when it is winding down for the summer holidays
- Work experience is good because you do see work places and learn new things about working
- There is too much paperwork, like filling in booklets about what you have done
- It is possible for work experience to lead to being offered a job in the place you went for experience (this had happened to one pupil in a group)
- Work experience wasn't that great in itself – just watching things – but it did help get a job afterwards
- Work experience wasn't much good as they made me “watch and not actually do”. You often find yourself watching things rather than trying or doing things
- People who haven't done it yet often think work experience is going to be boring – but you should try and find someone at school who has already worked in the place you are going, who had a good experience there, to help you get the best out of it
- Health and safety rules prevent many sorts of workplace from taking you on for experience – this is a problem if that is the sort of work you want to go into
- It's hard to find work experience in a specific job or route to work that you have already chosen

- You can find yourself getting mandatory work experience, but not tailored to anything you want to do
- Work experience in the medical field is difficult to get because of rules and age limits
- Data protection rules prevent work experience in areas such as air travel – so you end up having work experience in a general area like ‘customer service’ rather than directly relevant to the work route you want to take.
- A rural location really limits the work experience available
- Work experience can help you choose what you do NOT want to do as a job. This is valuable and leads to you broadening your horizons again
- Getting documentation needed for some sorts of work experience can be lengthy, and a lot is up to you to do for yourself
- Fitting work experience in to a busy school schedule can be difficult
- Extracurricular awards, like the Duke of Edinburgh’s Award, can be just as useful as work experience.

29. There was a continuing strong view from both groups that work experience needs to shift towards being more specific and tailored towards the type of work an individual pupil is interested in doing, obviously where an individual has made that choice. Once a pupil has chosen the type of work they are interested in doing, ‘general’ work experience is far less useful than having a ‘taster’ of their chosen sort of work – which might confirm that is what they want to do, help them to get into that sort of work, or sometimes help them decide that what they have chosen is not right for them and they need to choose something else.

30. Having a try at the sort of work you are thinking of going into can help pupils avoid doing courses that aren’t right for the way they want to go. Not trying out the sort of work you are headed for risks the costly waste of doing the wrong courses.

31. Specific work experience in a chosen type of job needs to go along with specific information and advice from someone with direct experience of such work, and specific advice on the right courses to take to get into that work.

32. Given the strong support for more specifically tailored work experience in both groups, we asked all the pupils to vote on whether work experience should usually be specific to chosen areas of work, or general to give wider experience of a working environment. Fifteen out of the 18 pupils voted that work experience should be

specific to your choice of type of work, assuming you had chosen the sort of work you wanted to do (which as we had found out, 16 of the 18 had done). Pupils acknowledged that this meant individuals being given more options of types of work experience to suit their choices, which in turn meant much more organisation by schools who may have to search for new places for particular kinds of work.

- 33.** 'General' work experience, in a workplace but not necessarily one you had chosen to work in, was still important and beneficial to give experience of a working environment rather than school, for those who had not yet chosen what sort of job they wanted in the future. General work experience can give you a view of the world of work, and although it is of course in a particular type of work which you might not want to go into in the future, "at the end of the day we are all still young people so have lots of time still to focus on our careers".
- 34.** Many thought there was a case for two stages of work experience; 'general' experience of a workplace when you were in the lower years of secondary school, followed by specific 'taster' placement to try the sort of work you were considering doing in the upper years, once many had chosen what sort of job they wanted in the future.
- 35.** There was a recognition that people might wish to change their choice of future work, or may be uncertain and be interested in more than one, perhaps very different, area. There was therefore a case for having a backup plan which might allow a second taster of work experience in other areas if your job choice changed. It would also be helpful for some to be able to try work experience in more than one specific type of work, to help them choose between different possible future jobs.
- 36.** A final point from one group was that doing specific work experience can be daunting, but any work experience alongside your school education can help prove to future employers that you have drive and motivation.

Are there enough good jobs available for school leavers in this area?

- 37.** Both our school groups were in rural towns. Fourteen of the 18 pupils thought that there are not enough good jobs available for school leavers in their area.
- 38.** There was some discussion about just what a 'good' job was. There was general agreement in one group that two quite separate factors made a job 'good' or not – one was how much you would be paid for doing it, and the other was whether it was the sort of work you wanted to do.
- 39.** In a given area, there might always be jobs you could do, but they might not be 'good' jobs according to these two criteria.

40. It was also rare to be able to go straight into a job you wanted to do with just your school qualifications – you usually had to do more training.

What will be the barriers or obstacles you will need to overcome as you move on from school to the world of work over the next few years?

41. Pupils expected obstacles in their route from school to work, but in one group we heard that almost by their nature, the obstacles are unforeseen things that might be an obstacle to one person but might benefit another. You need to be ready to deal with what comes in your way; “you just got to kind of go for it”.

42. Many obstacles might be psychological ones. To get from school to work you need motivation to get there, leaving school and joining new people is in itself a barrier you have to get through. Life after school will be very different, and you need confidence and skill at social integration.

43. One group saw a main obstacle to be overcome as getting the GCSEs and grades you needed for where you wanted to go.

44. There was also the obstacle of actually getting a job in competition with other people going for it. One group was concerned that there are generally not enough jobs to go round, and lots of people who had been to university chasing after the same job. They were also concerned that many people drift into university when they don't really know what they want to do afterwards.

45. The issue of living in a rural area was raised again. Long travel distances can be a big obstacle to attending college courses of any kind, and as one pupil put it, “good colleges are very far away”.

46. Many saw money as an obstacle to getting where you wanted to go, including fees for courses at universities or colleges. Even applying for some courses can cost you money (for example, applying for drama school courses outside the UCAS system).

47. There is a case for helping students train for good jobs by providing free travel to necessary college courses.

48. The issue of taking the wrong courses for your intended job came up again. Having made the wrong choices in the past, when you didn't know the right choices for where you wanted to work, was always going to be a big obstacle.

49. Many pupils saw a definite obstacle in getting the right information to make your course and job choices. You could draw on your peer group and the experience of your family, but you also needed to be able to do your own research into what

you needed to do to get where you wanted to go.

- 50.** Once you had chosen the way you wanted to go, you could face the obstacle of many people going for the same course in competition with you. Also, many courses are overcrowded and may not focus on your particular needs, meaning that you might not get the best out of the course.
- 51.** In one group there was the concern that if you wanted to aim for a high up sort of job, there were lots of complex processes and barriers you needed to be able to get yourself through in order to get there. You needed to know about these in good time.
- 52.** Not an obstacle as such, but in one group there was the view that as you progress into work and through work, new sorts of jobs will be created all the time, with different and new specifications, and the need to train and retrain and to get in the right position for future work will keep happening throughout your work career, and not just when leaving school for work.
- 53.** I am grateful to the Head and staff of Newtown High School and John Beddoes campus for the chance to hold these discussions with their pupils. I am especially grateful to the staff who worked very hard taking detailed notes of each of the views given by each of the pupils. And above all I am very grateful to each of the pupils for their thinking, votes and views.



Dr Roger

Morgan OBE

Pupils 2

Parliament

28 October 2015

Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership – Written evidence (SMO0038)

SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY

CALL FOR EVIDENCE

Response to Inquiry Questions – Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1. Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership (SLLP) is funded by housing associations and local councils to run a project (ETHOS) which employs Careers and Employment Advisers who engage with unemployed adults and support them through confidence building, helping them to identify their skills and aspirations, building their CV, preparing them for interview, providing courses to develop the skills they are lacking and helping them to build their work experience. When beneficiaries find work it provides ongoing support to help them maintain their confidence while adjusting to new work routines and pressures.
2. Our experience of young adults that have been referred to this project is that they have left full-time education poorly prepared to find work. Two very recent examples:
 - a. A bright young graduate (24) initially had no ideas as to what he wanted to do.
 - b. A school leaver with A levels can't find an employer to find an apprenticeship and is lost.
3. Neither had received the information, advice and support they needed. They lacked confidence and knowledge of how to think through their situations for themselves, actively seek work and how to present themselves to employers. Their CVs were not fit for purpose.
4. The holistic approach we offer - providing additional skills if needed, securing the services of other organisations if needed – is very effective in empowering and motivating these individuals.

There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

5. I would provide an example of a former trustee of our charity who when younger fell into this group. Labelled a daydreamer at school and raised in a family where

education wasn't considered a priority, he was unable to read at the age of 7. He left school at 15 and laboured alongside his father on building sites because he didn't think he could do any better. At 29 whilst working as a kitchen porter, a chance encounter with a taxi driver (who had himself just completed a counselling course) prompted him to think about what else he could do. 15 years later he is a PhD Research Fellow and University lecturer with a 1st class honours degree.

6. Adult Learners Week provides many such stories which could help you to shed light on why individuals do not progress and how their lives have been transformed. (NIACE holds much case study evidence). The clear lesson is that the potential for learning is lifelong and lack of achievement as a young person is no guide to future potential. SLLP seeks to show that learning is fascinating, exciting and useful at any age.
7. As above the solution is holistic support – in this case the intervention of a counsellor and the opportunities afforded by a local college. The difference between a trajectory of continuing to feel unfulfilled as a labourer or following a vocation as an educator.
8. There are also those who have a bad experience of school and would not wish to return to academic study. Some may have learning difficulties and many lack confidence. SLLP runs a number of social enterprises which are attractive vehicles for work experience. Individuals who engage with its Bike project, for example, join first to enjoy the atmosphere to be part of an interesting business venture and once 'hooked' become open to gaining skills and qualifications (for example, in City & Guilds cycle mechanics and mathematics).
9. SLLP is currently seeking to develop traineeships to support young people who engage in social enterprise as volunteers or for work experience, or because they are referred (for example by the probation service).

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

10. Young people ought to leave school with a good reflective CV and, the skills to be self-critical and a knowledge of what they could and might do. This does not appear to be happening and too many are written off.
11. The National Careers service is operating outside of schools and spread very thinly.
12. Learning Partnerships and community and voluntary organisations provide different solutions and longer term support to individuals. SLLP has convened partnership

meetings of schools, colleges, local councils and employers to address local learning and employment needs.

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

13. SLLP is interested in establishing a recruitment agency as a social enterprise. This could work with local employers, Jobcentre Plus and schools, provide ongoing careers and employment adviser support for the individuals needing the service. It would help build confidence, self esteem and skills and, through managing work experience placements, track record and references.
14. Funding could comprise a mix of fees from employers on successful recruitment, contributions from partner organisations (e.g. ETHOS), and income to support learning and training from Government and employers.

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

15. The National Careers service surely has a key role to play. It needs to support schools in preparing their young people so that they are active, purposeful and skilled and seeking to continue to develop themselves and to find work for which they have realistic aspirations.
16. To find innovative solutions engage the community and voluntary sector locally. They are prepared to go the extra mile in providing support. They establish new enterprises to reach the hard to engage.
17. Create a focus for employment and skills support post school, for example, a recruitment agency run as a social enterprise with a mission to work both in the interests of the young person and the employer.
18. Ensure that local initiatives are supported through referrals by key partners – such as Jobcentre Plus, local authority, schools, Local Enterprise Partnerships
19. If community and voluntary sector organisations are to be part of the solution fair funding has to be provided for the work. With the introduction of Prime Contractors funds to these smaller subcontracting organisations are being slashed (SLLP receives 15% of its SFA Community Learning allocation of three years ago). Lack of core funding truly hampers organisations which work directly at the heart of the most disadvantaged communities and the very hard to reach. Funding is generally for short term delivery only which does not allow for development and appropriate

infrastructure staffing. Nevertheless SLLP continues to engage with circa 600 disadvantaged adults each year many of whom have/are travelling the routes with which your inquiry is concerned.

Kevin Delf
Chief Executive
Surrey Lifelong Learning Partnership

11 September 2015

The Sutton Trust – Written evidence (SMO0111)

Submission to the House of Lords Social Mobility Inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds

September 2015

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

For seventeen years, the Sutton Trust has been working to improve social mobility through education. Our ground-breaking research has helped place the issue of social mobility high up the political and policy agenda, and has shown how elite groups continue to dominate the positions of power and influence in Britain. Successive governments have made social mobility a key priority, and the coalition made its improvement ‘the principal goal’ of its social policy.

In particular, the Trust has helped to put higher education access firmly on the policy agenda, and our work has helped to increase the numbers of state-school educated students at top universities. Our programmes – most notably our university summer schools – help thousands of young people fulfil their potential every year. Nevertheless the gap remains wide: almost ten times as many 18 year olds go to Sutton Trust 13²⁶⁵ universities from the most advantaged fifth of neighbourhoods as the least advantaged.

While historically the Sutton Trust has focused on higher education access as one of the key levers for improving social mobility, we recognise it may not be the best path for everyone. Research that we will publish in October 2015 will indicate the earning potential over a lifetime that a person could expect from higher apprenticeships compared to undergraduate degrees. The research will show that while degrees from Oxbridge and Russell Group universities remain the surest way to earn higher wages in later life, there is evidence that undertaking the best apprenticeships is an increasingly sensible financial decision.

Apprenticeships as currently implemented are not a panacea for helping disadvantaged young people in the UK. But they have the potential to be one. For apprenticeships to be genuine paths to success for young people, they will need reform. This will include increasing the proportion of apprenticeships at levels 4 and 5 (higher) – the best apprenticeships – in addition to ensuring that level 3 (advanced), rather than level 2 (intermediate), is the minimum standard for most apprenticeships targeted at young people. If the Government’s promise of three million apprenticeships is to lead to a genuine skills revolution, progression to level 3 must be built into vast majority of level 2 apprenticeships.

265 The Sutton Trust 13 of the most selective universities are Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Durham, Edinburgh, Imperial College London, London School of Economics, Nottingham, Oxford, St Andrews, University College London, Warwick and York.

Alongside these changes, the culture around apprenticeships also needs addressing. If undergraduate degrees are always seen as a gold standard, these vocational qualifications are too often seen as 'second best', or a 'fall back option'. But some of the UK's most famous and successful entrepreneurs were formerly apprentices - from the celebrity chef Jamie Oliver to the billionaire jeweller Lawrence Graff to the late fashion designer Alexander McQueen. Success can come through apprenticeships, but work is needed to boost their quantity and quality.

Our polling has shown a lack of awareness of apprenticeships among teachers, even where young people are keen to access them. We need to ensure that schools with the duty to provide good impartial guidance have the knowledge and expertise to fulfil their responsibilities. This is why we should have a high standard of career guidance in every school and college. Ensuring that young people have access to the right advice about their options and guiding them towards those that will best enable them to fulfil their potential can make a huge difference.

The overall decline in good career guidance and access to apprenticeships is reducing social mobility for young people in the transition from school to the work place. We welcome recent government pledges to address both of these issues, with the commitment to create more good apprenticeships through a levy on employers, as well as through the creation of the careers and enterprise company. Our forthcoming report on apprenticeships will call for the government to ensure that all intermediate apprenticeships, which are not strong vehicles for social mobility, lead to advanced and higher apprenticeships, which are. We are also working with the Careers and Enterprise Company during the early stages of its development, which is in part modelling itself on our sister charity the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

The EEF is leading the way in developing approaches to school improvement based on evidence. The Sutton Trust has always called for rigorously evidence-based education practice, and in 2011 was awarded a Department for Education grant of £125m to set up the EEF as lead foundation in partnership with Impetus Trust. It has since established itself as the organisation that most effectively trials evidence-based programmes to narrow the attainment gap between the poorest children and their classmates. Through evidence schools and teachers can learn how to best close the attainment gap, and by closing the attainment gap we can improve social mobility for young people regardless of whether follow the higher education route into work.

The Sutton Trust and the EEF have consistently found that the single most important factor for improving the outcomes of people from underprivileged backgrounds in education is high quality teaching. The importance of high quality teaching must not get lost from this debate. In the transition from school into the workplace, even for young people who do not follow the A-Level to higher education pathway, high quality teaching can improve attainment, enhance aspirations, and transform young people's transition from school to the workplace. If we improve the standard of education overall, we improve outcomes for everybody.

Relevant research:

- Hooley, T., Matheson, J., & Watts, A. G. (2014). *Advancing ambitions: The role of career guidance in supporting social mobility*. London: Sutton Trust.
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<http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/APPRENTICESHIPS.pdf>
- Robert Coe, Cesare Aloisi, Steve Higgins and Lee Elliot Major (2014). *What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research*. London: Sutton Trust
<http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-makes-great-teaching-FINAL-4.11.14.pdf>
- Sutton Trust (2015) *Mobility Manifesto* London: Sutton Trust.
<http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Mobility-Manifesto-2015.pdf>

2. **There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**
3. **Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?**
4. **How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?**

We will answer these questions together.

The Sutton Trust does not have accurate data on this specific group of young people, although we do know that a significant number of young people who enter into work via apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are one of the main routes into adulthood and a

rewarding career. However, despite a recent re-emphasis on the importance of their quality, there remain far too few high quality apprenticeships.

Provisional government figures show that for the first three quarters of the 2014/15 academic year (August 2014 to April 2015) there were 776,800 people participating in apprenticeships. Of these there were 458,700 at intermediate level, just under 60% of the total. There were 311,500 people at advanced level, about 40%, and 24,300 at higher level, only 3%. As these figures suggest, there is a wide gap between the number of people on intermediate apprenticeships and those participating in advanced or higher apprenticeships. There has been a narrow increase in the number of people on higher apprenticeships, from 2-3%, but this remains a tiny proportion of the total.

It is vital that we address this gap and ensure that good quality apprenticeships are a serious option for all young people. However, too often the growth in apprenticeships has been a numbers game with successive governments with commitments only to increase the quantity of apprenticeships and little done about the need to increase the quality. Only recently, since the Richard Review, has there been a stronger push on advanced and higher apprenticeships. The government's commitment to create 3 million apprenticeships has again left questions that quality may be sacrificed for quantity.

The quality of apprenticeships is important. A report that the Sutton Trust will publish in October 2015 will look at the lifetime earnings of a graduate and an apprentice and evaluate whether the apprenticeship route may also be financially beneficial for many young people over higher education. The report will find that apprenticeships offer substantial potential for improving the social mobility of young people in the UK. However, the standard of apprenticeship is essential to improving future career outcomes. Low quality intermediate apprenticeships are only marginally better than holding no qualification at all. Higher apprenticeships on the other hand result in similar lifetime earnings on average to an undergraduate degree from a non-Russell Group university, yet only 3% of apprentices are following this route.

To make apprenticeships a genuine way for young people to begin a successful career, significant reform of the system is needed. Too many of the apprenticeships available in the UK are at intermediate level, which does not provide the breadth or depth of skills training required for success in today's labour market. Both government and employers have a responsibility here. We are encouraged that the government plans to provide 3 million more apprenticeships by 2020, but to make a series impact on social mobility it should ensure that the vast majority of these new apprenticeships start at or develop to level 3 (advanced) at minimum. The government should also ensure and that current intermediate apprenticeships should provide automatic progression to advanced (level 3), with employers also contributing to this aim.

To use an example, the first result returned by the government's 'Find an Apprenticeship' website for an intermediate apprenticeship (a hairdresser) listed duties including, "making teas and coffees for clients". It is this kind of advertisement that has led some to criticise intermediate apprenticeships as little more than glorified work experience programmes, allowing employers to pay nominal wages to employees that would otherwise qualify as

formal junior staff. The recent government promise to protect the term ‘apprenticeship’ may have some positive effect here, but this remains to be seen. As long as such low quality apprenticeships exist, there is a risk that the perception of apprenticeships more widely will be devalued.

And the perception of quality is almost as important as the standard of quality if we are to change the way the UK approaches apprenticeships. Polling for the Sutton Trust by Ipsos MORI and NFER in 2014 found that²⁶⁶:

- 34% of adults in England aged 16-75 say a degree-level apprenticeship would be better for somebody’s future career prospects than a university degree.
- 21% of adults say that a traditional degree would be better for somebody’s future career prospects than a degree-level apprenticeship.
- Just under two thirds (63%) of adults in England believe that most apprenticeships should be set at A-level standard (Level 3) or higher.
- More than half (55%) of young people aged 11-16 say they would be interested in an apprenticeship rather than going to university if it was available in a job they wanted to do.
- Only 31% of young people say that their teachers have ever discussed the idea of apprenticeships with them at school.
- Only 26% of teachers think (to a great or some extent) there are enough apprenticeships available at A-level standard or higher.
- 65% of teachers said they would rarely or never advise a student to take an apprenticeship if they had the grades for university.
- 56% of parents say they are likely to encourage their children to consider a university degree, while only 40% would encourage them to consider an apprenticeship.

This data allows us to draw three broad conclusions: most people believe that degree quality apprenticeships could be better for many young people than a university degree would be; most young people want more high quality apprenticeships that directly lead to work to be available; and that teachers and parents are disinclined to advise young people to follow an apprenticeship route to work if university was a viable alternative. This is symptomatic of a wider cultural ignorance of the value of apprenticeships. As Rt Hon Nick Clegg MP told your committee in his evidence session, there is a “peculiar form of British snobbishness towards apprenticeships” that is contributing to putting young people off what may be a more beneficial route into work.

This is why the culture around apprenticeships also needs addressing. Undergraduate degrees are generally seen as a gold standard, while vocational qualifications are too often

²⁶⁶ Ipsos MORI surveyed a total of 1,728 adults aged 16-75 in England from 13th – 17th June 2014 via its Online iOmnibus Survey. The survey data were weighted by age, gender, region, social grade, working status and main shopper to the known profile of the English population aged 16-75. 455 respondents were parents of children aged 0-19.

Ipsos MORI surveyed 2,796 young people between February and April 2014, as a part of their Young People Omnibus Survey. Interviewing was conducted via self-completion questionnaires which were completed in school during a single classroom session. The survey data were weighted by gender, age and region to the known profile of pupils aged 11-16 in England and Wales 3 Chart 1: Which of the following do you think NFER Teacher Voice omnibus survey, March 2014

seen as 'second best' or a 'fall back option'. This is partly due to the low quality of too many apprenticeships that contributes to an inferior status. The status of vocational education in Germany is often cited as a contrasting example to the British experience, while Switzerland, Australia and Austria all have effective schemes that the UK can learn from. In Germany, all apprenticeships are at level 3 or above, while Switzerland has 43 apprentices at level 3 for every 1000 staff, compared with 40 in Germany, 39 in Australia and 33 in Austria. Germany is also able to provide over twice as many apprentices aged 15-19 as the UK does in total, with around half of employers offering apprenticeships compared with around 15 per cent in the UK. We may not be able to impose this culture overnight, but we can learn from what other countries do right.

This is why the government's target to recruit 3 million more apprentices by 2020, while very much welcome, only addresses one aspect of the issue. We cannot overstate the importance that quality should not be sacrificed for quantity in order to meet this target. Previous Sutton Trust research found that a move to three year apprenticeships on a German scale could boost the economy by £8 billion a year and reduce public spending by £2.5 billion, after initial apprentice wage subsidies. Our forthcoming report on apprenticeships will also offer insight on the positive wage differentials that young people can expect by pursuing the high quality apprenticeship route into work.

This report will answer offer insight into some of the more complex questions around the transition of young people into work that do not enter higher education. Which is the better pathway into work for a young person: the academic or the vocational? What informs this decision: cultural values, socio-economic background, earning expectation, parents or school advice? How do we support more young people to follow the most beneficial route for their future?

What is clear is that higher quality apprenticeships can transform a young person's opportunity; they are an invaluable lever for improving social mobility. The greatest obstacles to this are that there are not enough of high quality apprenticeships around, not enough young people will be made aware of their potential value, and recent government commitments may only partially address this.

Relevant research:

- Sutton Trust. (2015). *Aiming Higher: The potential of UK apprenticeships* [Published here from 8th October 2015 - <http://www.suttontrust.com/research/>]
- Sutton Trust. (2014). *Higher ambitions: Background report*. London: Sutton Trust. <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/higher-ambitions-report-final.pdf>
- Boston Consulting Group (2013). *Real Apprenticeships Creating a revolution in English skills*. London: Sutton Trust <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/APPRENTICESHIPS.pdf>

- Sutton Trust (2015) *Mobility Manifesto* London: Sutton Trust.
<http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Mobility-Manifesto-2015.pdf>

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

There is no single person, group or institution that can be wholly responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers. A young person's transition into work is influenced by several factors, from their family and background to their skills and aspirations. For young people from non-privileged backgrounds, the Sutton Trust's has found that their future outcomes can be transformed by the quality of educational or vocational experience they receive during the transition from school to work. For young people that do not take the higher education route into work and opt for an apprenticeship, it is the quality of apprenticeship that can be transformative and not merely the experience of the apprenticeship itself.

The transition from school to work also relies considerably on good educational support, both in terms of raising the attainment of young people to secure a high quality transitional experience (i.e. an apprenticeship), raising their aspiration to seek out such transitions and raising their awareness of their post school options. Good educational support requires high quality teaching. Research by academics at the London School of Economics and Stanford University for the Sutton Trust has found that the effect of good teaching is especially significant for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds: over a school year, these pupils gain 1.5 years' worth of learning with very effective teachers, compared with 0.5 years with poorly performing teachers. In other words, for poor pupils the difference between a good teacher and a bad teacher is a whole year's learning. Education remains perhaps the most transformative factor in the school to work pathway, and good teaching underpins this.

The responsibility for improving the system of transition therefore falls on the government to support the development of a good educational and vocational experience of young people, as well as on schools, further education providers and apprenticeship providers to support young people during the transition, and on employers to offer a good outcome for the transition. No person, group or institution within this system should avoid responsibility for its improvement. Government, appropriate agencies (such as the Careers and Enterprise Company), schools and employers all need to have a role in improving the system to support the transition into work for schools leaders.

- Recommendations for improving the apprenticeship support system may be found in our forthcoming report, which will be published on 8th October 2015.
- Recommendations for the government to improve social mobility in the UK may be found in our *Mobility Manifesto*, published ahead of the 2015 General Election.
<http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Mobility-Manifesto-2015.pdf>

- Recommendations for improving the teaching may be found in our report *What Makes Great Teaching*, published last year. <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/What-makes-great-teaching-FINAL-4.11.14.pdf>
- Recommendations for improving careers advice for young people may be found in our report *Advancing ambitions: The role of career guidance in supporting social mobility*, also published last year. <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Advancing-Ambitions-16.10.pdf>

About the Sutton Trust

The Sutton Trust was founded in 1997 by Sir Peter Lampl to improve social mobility through education. As well as being a think-tank, the Sutton Trust is a 'do-tank,' having funded over 200 programmes, commissioned over 160 research studies and influenced government education policy by pushing social mobility to the top of the political agenda.

Our cause

We work to combat educational inequality and prevent the subsequent waste of talent. We are particularly concerned with breaking the link between educational opportunities and family background, and in realising a system in which young people are given the chance to prosper, regardless of their family background, school or neighbourhood. Low social mobility and lack of educational opportunity is arguably the biggest social challenge of our times: the income gap between the richest and poorest in society continues to widen, while education opportunities remain overwhelmingly dominated by children from the most privileged homes.

Our approach

As disadvantage starts before young people are born and continues through to the workplace, the Trust's interest covers parenting and early years projects, primary and secondary schooling and access to university and the professions. At later ages we have a particular focus on academically talented young people with the potential to study at leading, highly-selective universities.

We focus our efforts in three distinct areas;

- **Programmes**

We have funded over 200 programmes to address educational inequality including our flagship UK Summer School Programme, our more recent US Summer School Programme and career specific programmes such as our successful 'Pathways to Law' programme and our new 'Pathways to Medicine' programme.

- **Research**

It is only by understanding the root causes of educational inequalities that the Trust can identify and promote effective solutions to combating them, so research is an important part of our work. The Trust has commissioned over 160 research studies

in a broad range of areas and this list continues to grow as we identify emerging areas of interest.

- **Advocacy**

Our most significant achievement and source of leverage is our impact on government education policy and education spending. Our approach is called strategic philanthropy. Strategic philanthropy involves leveraging our work to ensure wider impact. We achieve this by both generating private funding for scale-up of proven programmes or influencing government policy/spending and public debate.

17 September 2015

STEMNET – Written evidence (SMO0109)

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY: STEMNET SUBMISSION

STEMNET is an organisation working with all UK schools and thousands of employers that provide feedback around the issues they face supporting young people into careers and so this expertise best places STEMNET to offer information about transition from school to work. Therefore the focus of this submission is limited to addressing the Committee's Question 4:

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Background to STEMNET

STEMNET creates opportunities to inspire young people in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). It is an independent education charity bridging schools and employers to help young people to meet role models from the widest range backgrounds who can demonstrate the vast number of careers and opportunities requiring STEM skills.

STEMNET runs three main UK-wide programmes: the **STEM Ambassadors** Programme, bringing volunteers working in STEM occupations into schools to offer inspiration in STEM subjects and careers; the **Schools STEM Advisory Network** that provides schools with the help they need to deliver exciting enhanced STEM lessons and enrichment projects and the **STEM Clubs** Programme supporting teachers in providing pupils with hands-on activities beyond the curriculum.

Response to Question 4.

When looking at young people and particularly those who fall between those taking A-Levels and Higher Education and those classified as NEET there is evidence that there are young people in the careers market in need of work and with little direction or aspiration, this is particularly relevant to STEM subjects. At the same time there are high growth industries of the future, especially requiring the skills STEM studies can provide, in urgent need of new workers. STEMNET believes there is an opportunity to pull these two groups together through work in schools including supporting teachers.

Research shows that young people's aspirations are strongly influenced by their social backgrounds (e.g. by ethnicity, social class and gender) and family contexts. These factors can play an important role in shaping the perception of certain high demand career paths, such as Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths as being not for them¹. In addition there is a perception that STEM is only linked to a limited range of careers (e.g. scientist, doctor etc) which discourages many children from seeking careers in and from STEM, despite STEM industries being in urgent need of people.

This particularly affects families with little 'science capital' (i.e. qualifications, knowledge, connections and interest in science) and who are particularly likely to be from White and Black working-class backgrounds. Particularly within the physical sciences, women and those from working-class and/or certain minority ethnic backgrounds (e.g. Black Caribbean) are severely under-represented². Therefore it is important that role models (such as STEM Ambassadors) are able to put a face to what working in STEM means, as well as broaden students horizons of what careers are available and help to raise aspiration³. STEMNET works with all schools in the UK but also reinforces targeted support for schools with lower achievement of A*-C, higher levels of free school meals and other circumstances of disadvantage.

STEMNET believes in the importance of lifting young people's aspiration by showing them role models from similar backgrounds to themselves. More than 30,000 volunteer STEM Ambassadors with STEM skills from business and industry are trained to work with and inspire young people and teachers about STEM subjects and careers. More than 40% are female and over 60% are aged under-35, giving pupils the chance to meet people like them. To support young people STEMNET offers exposure to careers information that might not be available at home or school.

In particular focusing on those who do not go on to study A levels and higher education who are understood to be:

- Pre-16, these learners do not have the qualifications to continue readily in the current offer of post-16 general education
- In post-16 education, comprises all those who are not on a full A Level programme and who are unlikely to gain grades to progress them in higher education and those not on Apprenticeships leading to jobs with the prospect of advancement.
- In particular these young people are less likely to experience vertical progression and are more likely to drop out of education and training at 17+⁴.

Supporting STEM skills is vitally important. The OECD has found there is a positive association of proficiency in literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments and the probability of participating in the labour market and with higher wages⁵.

However, just looking at science alone, evidence shows that even though the vast majority of children at this age enjoy science at school, have parents who are supportive of them studying science, hold positive views of scientists and even undertake science-related activities in their spare time, nevertheless, very few (less than 17%) aspire to a career in science⁶.

In order for transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education, 'Push' factors are school-based: good information and careers education, personal guidance tailored to individual needs, and, above all, inspiring teaching that gives pupils the right qualifications. 'Pull' factors come from employers who demonstrate jobs in the real world, who show pupils what the workplace is like and inspire them with the opportunities of work, through measures including direct experience of the workplace and meeting employers and employees in person. Employers provide the 'pull' to complement the 'push' from schools⁷.

Pupils need to be made aware of all routes into employment in addition apprenticeship and degree routes, to have their interest engaged, be supported in understanding STEM subjects, as well as developing employability skills. STEMNET identifies three main target groups:

- Young people
- Teachers
- Employers

STEM Ambassadors helps teachers bring the real world of STEM into the classroom.

- Amongst pupils who have had contact with STEMNET's programmes 61% want a job that involves STEM, compared to 37% of all pupils⁸

The most effective approach to engaging young people with science is through practical investigations while making science interesting for pupils these also raise achievement in science. Experts such as STEM Ambassadors and STEMNET UK-wide Network support teachers by offering their knowledge and experience of practical applications of STEM as well as supporting practical activities. STEMNET works closely with teachers to advise, share knowledge and build confidence

in STEM education, enhanced STEM curricula and enrichment projects and STEM careers information. STEM Ambassadors support this through their access to real work examples at the cutting edge of STEM.

In addition our STEM Clubs work with children of all aptitude and levels of interest to engage them in practical STEM activities for students beyond the curriculum.

Teachers also gain an increased knowledge of STEM career options and the skills required by such careers and report that they have improved relationships with business and industry.

- 77% report increased awareness of STEM career and employment options
- 71% report an increased understanding of STEM business and industry¹⁰

During the last year over 21,000 teachers and their classes were involved with STEM Ambassador activities. Year on year demand grows for STEM Ambassadors to deliver activities supporting teachers with enhanced curriculum delivery, careers and STEM Clubs support.

STEM Ambassadors are seen by teachers as inspirational role models, able to motivate and enthuse pupils and inform teachers about new industry practise. Following STEM Ambassador visits:

- 87% of teachers report an increased awareness of STEM subjects and their real world applications amongst their students
- 85% of teachers report increased pupil engagement in STEM subjects
- 82% of teachers consider that STEM Ambassador activity improved pupils' motivations and aspirations to study STEM subjects further¹¹

Employers also have a vital role in engaging young people and should be encouraged to engage more young people from this group. According to the Gatsby Foundation, and many others, engagement with employers, through multiple encounters and work experience, are essential for giving pupils an authentic picture of the world of work¹². Therefore giving students practical experience and opportunities to experience the world of work is extremely important.

Employers also have a vital role in terms of social mobility, an extra 4.5% of median annual earnings is associated with each 'additional school-mediated employer contact' (including work experience, employer talks, mentoring, employer-led projects and prizes)¹³.

In terms of encouraging employers to support these young people, STEM employers report positive impacts from their engagement with STEMNET's programmes such as a greater public understanding of their work. Employers also observed an improvement in their ability to recruit staff, thanks to their work in schools¹⁴. Employers view their involvement with the STEM Ambassadors Programme as a means of helping young people acquire necessary skills, as well as seeking to attract a greater number of job applications from young people upon leaving education.

While those on Apprenticeships do not appear to fall under the categorisation of those who do not go on to study A-Levels and Higher education, they have been shown to be beneficial to young people. However more could be done to make young people aware of this route as a career route. In particular our Apprentice STEM Ambassadors, who are of a closer age to students are able to demonstrate the highlights of this career path.

Case study

Recent STEMNET STEM Apprentice award winner, Fiona Keenaghan from Thames Tideway tunnels, a great example of an inspirational Apprentice "I hope I can continue encourage other young women to consider careers in engineering and construction by being a STEM Ambassador and talking about how exciting a career in this industry can be."

Fiona has taken part in a number of STEM events for Thames Tideway Tunnel, including

visiting her old school to talk to a science class about her apprenticeship, and attending networking sessions to help others find out about construction and engineering¹⁵.

There is a great opportunity for matching needs in the school transition to work. Evidence suggests that children meeting people from similar backgrounds to themselves from careers in the growth industries of the future can support the raising of aspirations¹⁶. However, transition from school to work for young people begins at primary school when children identify role models. Role models volunteers working with children at this younger age could offer a strong platform to enhance social mobility and employability which can be built upon at secondary school.

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16 September 2015

Step Up To Serve – Written evidence (SMO0029)

The House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

How can young people be best prepared for the world of work?

Submission by charity Step Up To Serve

10th September 2015

1. We are currently failing to maximise the energy, talent, commitment and potential of 8.4 million young people in the UK aged 10-20, who could make a **huge contribution to their communities and the UK workforce**. We need to recognise more readily that they are a generation that matters for the future and that their service to others will strengthen society as well as improving their own lives and opportunities. Educators and employers recognise the potential of Youth Social Action to help improve the educational outcomes for young people as well as **build the skills they need to be successful in the workplace**. Therefore it is vital to galvanise cross sector and cross party support to dramatically increase the opportunities for young people to participate in social action.

Step Up To Serve

2. Step Up To Serve is a cross-party and cross-sector UK-wide campaign to increase the number of young people taking part in social action (e.g. volunteering, campaigning, fundraising). The campaign is focused on young people between the ages of 10 and 20. Our collective goal is to double the number of young people taking part in social action by 2020.

3. The campaign is an umbrella initiative working across society to promote the benefits of Youth Social Action and recognise the contribution that young people make. The campaign aims to do this by mobilising the support of organisations right across society.

4. We want social action to become the norm in young people's lives and a habit for life. Social action builds important skills and attitudes to be successful in today's **workplace**. It improves educational outcomes. It also benefits society by building safer communities, increasing civic participation, community resilience and wellbeing, creating a 'double benefit' for both the individual and wider society.

History

5. In 2012, the Prime Minister asked Dame Julia Cleverdon DCVO, CBE and Amanda Jordan OBE to review how the Government, business, voluntary, public and education sectors could work together to support young people to engage in social action between the ages of 10 and 20. After consultation with a range of organisations in the UK and internationally, they produced an interim report highlighting the barriers to Youth Social Action and recommendations to overcome these.

6. The barriers were identified to be: a shortage of activities for young people to engage in social action as they progress through each stage of their education from 10 upwards; confusion in the education and business sectors about quality Youth Social Action initiatives they could support; failure to promote and celebrate Youth Social Action in a way that inspires young people's engagement; and an absence of an inspirational, coherent and long

term vision to drive a change in culture towards Youth Social Action becoming the norm for all young people.

7. The recommendations were to create progression from one opportunity to another; scale up programmes to fill gaps in provision; embed social action in young people's educational experience (school, further and higher education); and develop a culture of promoting and celebrating Youth Social Action comparable to the effective programmes running in the US, Canada and Australia.

8. "To give all young people the opportunity to take practical action in the service of others has been a lifelong ambition for me. This campaign will not succeed without the drive of organisations and individuals from every sector. I am incredibly proud of the young people across the U.K. who are doing marvellous things, which are not only benefiting their communities, but also help them to develop their own skills and character."

HRH The Prince of Wales, Patron of Step Up To Serve and the #iwill campaign

Embedding Youth Social Action in young people's journey

Embed in education

9. Many education leaders already see the inherent value in engaging their young people in social action, often citing the development of young people's skills and character as a motivator. In a Cabinet Office 'Decade of Youth Social Action' survey of teachers, 98% agreed that social action can be beneficial in supporting pupils' development. Many education institutions ensure that building young people's character and **wider skillset** (in many cases through social action) sits side by side with academic rigour, putting an equal emphasis on both.

10. The #iwill campaign aims to empower leaders to advocate the benefits of youth social action in developing **employability skills** in all parts of formal education and encourage them to inspire other leaders from across the sector to create more quality youth social action opportunities that develop these skills in their remit.

11. The Prime Minister recently announced a new partnership between National Citizen Service and Teach First, both whom are #iwill campaign's key partners. Teach First's aspiration is that from 2017 all of its teachers will volunteer for NCS, unlocking many new mentors and leaders for the programme. This move directly supports the #iwill campaign goal to increase social action opportunities, especially for **young people from less affluent families**.

Embed in employment

12. The campaign is already backed by a group of high profile Business Pioneers –

Barclays, British Gas, Business in the Community (BITC), Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Chime, Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), EDF Energy, Heathrow, Linklaters, Lloyds, National Grid, O2, PwC and Sky.

They have been joined by other businesses and employers who know that:

13. • Research confirms young people who take part in social action are better prepared for the world of work

- Staff support of youth social action increases employee motivation, leadership skills and retention
- By supporting youth social action, employers are actively backing future generations of customers and employees

14. There is a growing evidence base for the campaign to build upon. The Demos report *Scouting for Skills* (2014) for example provided **evidence of the value of youth social action as means of informal learning to develop valuable work skills for young people**. If employers genuinely start to recognise youth social action on a young person's CV or job application, this will be another motivator for young people, schools, colleges, universities and parents to ensure this is something young people take part in. If developing your skills through youth social action will help you get a foot into the job market, this will do a lot to influence others.

15. In July 2015, the CIPD and #iwill campaign launched their report 'Unlock new talent: How can you integrate social action in recruitment?' which presented the case for why employers were recognising and valuing youth social action in their recruitment processes. A recent CIPD survey with employers found that 67% reporting that entry-level candidates who have voluntary experience demonstrate more employability skills. The top three skills cited by respondents were teamwork (82%), communication (80%) and understanding the local community (45%).

16. "There is no doubt that taking part in social action can help young people develop the kind of skills the businesses we represent say they need when preparing to take on a job."
John Cridland, Director General, CBI (Business Pioneers for the campaign)

High- impact pledges to the campaign

17. The campaign is supported by many high- profile organisations pledging to support the youth social action agenda. Please see below for some examples:

Ofsted

"Ofsted has always understood the importance of how schools engage their students in extra-curricular activity and volunteering in their local community, which we reflect in our judgements on behaviour and safety. During 2014, Ofsted will ensure our guidance for inspectors and schools and colleges emphasises the importance of young people having the opportunity to serve others in their community. We wish Step Up To Serve every success in this important campaign."

- HMCI, Sir Michael Wilshaw

CBI

- Raising awareness of the #iwill campaign among the 240,000 businesses for which we speak, highlighting and sharing good practice and demonstrating the case for engagement.
- Running a major campaign on school reform, including embedding youth social action in schools and colleges.

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF)

- Encourage schools and charities to strengthen their relationships in order to help more young people experience the double benefit of participating in youth social action
- Campaign to ensure that young people are recognised for their commitment to high quality youth social action through the UCAS application process
- Encourage participation in social action through leading the international day of giving #GivingTuesday in the UK

PricewaterhouseCoopers

- Deliver work experience reinforcing youth social action to hundreds of young people across the UK.
- Highlight the benefits of social action through our programmes in 25 secondary schools across the UK impacting hundreds of peoples.
- Recognise the skills young people gain through social action as part of our recruitment process for graduates and higher apprentices.

Department for Education

- Recognise youth social action as an important way for all young people to develop key character strengths, irrespective of their background or need, ensuring every child is better prepared for work and life
- Invest £5million into researching and rewarding the development of character in and out of school, including where character is developed through youth social action

Jobsite

- To communicate the benefits of youth social action to young people by including a section on the benefits of youth social action in the 'career advice' section of their website
- To communicate the benefits of youth social action to employers through influencing them to include questions in the recruitment process on whether applicants have undertaken any youth social action
- To communicate the benefits of youth social action by blogging about the 'double benefit' of youth social action

Universities UK

- Universities UK and the National Union of Students will work together on a project that aims to break down any barriers preventing students from engaging in volunteering and social action.

O2 (Telefonica UK)

- O2 will promote social action in their recruitment materials and on their Talentum website, encouraging applicants to include details about their social action experience.

- By 2020, O2 will have backed 10,000 youth social action ideas, which will inspire a further 50,000 young people to participate in youth social action through Think Big.
- O2 will celebrate diversity and inclusion within our programme, focusing our offer to engage 50% of participants from disadvantaged backgrounds or areas of high deprivation, working in partnership with over 70 youth sector partners across the UK.
- O2 will maximise GoThinkBig.co.uk as a channel to promote the benefits of social action to our 0.5 million unique users, and work with UK business partners to promote the links between social action and employability.

Business in the Community

- Business in the Community will step up and help their 850 member companies to create more opportunities for youth social action and benefits for young people for taking part.

Teach First

- Teach First strongly believes that all young people should develop the confidence, skills and resilience to achieve success within and beyond education. We will encourage our teachers and students to get involved with partners working to close the gap in Youth Social Action. For example we will partner with National Citizen Service and set a clear aspiration for our teachers and ambassadors to engage with NCS programmes as part of their leadership development from 2017. This will ensure more young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds benefit from the rich opportunities the programme provides.

For more information on the campaign, its partners and research on youth social action, please visit <http://www.iwill.org.uk/>

10 September 2015

Thinkforward – Written evidence (SMO0092)

ThinkForward submission to House of Lords Commission on Social Mobility

Introduction

1. ThinkForward ensures that young people who are disengaged from or underperforming at school receive the support they need to transition successfully into higher education or sustained employment. We do this by working with schools to identify young people with the worst attendance, behaviour and academic achievement. These young people often have chaotic personal lives, few or no positive role models and little hope for their futures.
2. ThinkForward provides each young person with an experienced and trusted Progression Coach at age 13, a critical transition point in their lives. Working across all aspects of their life, Coaches build long-term and enduring relationships over five years, helping them to overcome challenges in and out of school and to build the confidence, aspirations and work readiness capabilities they need to gain employment. ThinkForward is currently operating in 14 schools in north east London, and has worked with nearly 1500 young people since being piloted in 2011. More than 80% of our post-16 cohort have chosen a non-A level route on leaving school – opting instead for vocational study or work-based learning – so ThinkForward is very well placed to input on the challenges faced by this group.
3. Key to ThinkForward’s approach is our use of data at all stages in the delivery of the programme. This includes identification of schools and participants to work with, tracking progression of young people and matching them to suitable opportunities.

There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

4. ThinkForward’s experience of working with many young people who do not follow the traditional A-level and higher education route is that they very often come from challenging family or socioeconomic backgrounds, have struggled to engage in education and may have limited interpersonal skills. As a result, they have numerous factors which limit their aspirations and potential career trajectory.
5. ThinkForward uses available data to identify schools where our input would be most beneficial in order for participants to make a successful transition from school. Factors considered include schools with low

From ThinkForward’s data-driven and targeted approach, we know that young people enrolled in the programme face a number of challenges in their engagement with education including:

- 44% who have some form of identified Special Educational Needs
- 20% are classed by their schools as being persistently absent
- 22% have had one or more exclusion from school

levels of pupils achieving 5 or more grades A*-C, large proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs, large number of pupils who do not have English as a first language or who are eligible for Free School Meals. In selecting participants, ThinkForward again draws on data held by the school in order to identify those most in need of support, resulting in us working with young people with the issues shown right.

6. From ThinkForward's intensive support for young people, we understand the reasons behind the statistics shown above. These can be split into three broad areas of limiting factors: personal background, lack of appropriate guidance on suitable pathways and geographic aspects.
7. Many of the young people supported by ThinkForward come from backgrounds which do not value academic achievement or do not aspire to traditional white collar jobs. As a result, our young people often have limiting beliefs about what they can achieve, lack of knowledge of possible careers paths available to them, and do not value academic attainment. More generally, young people supported by ThinkForward often have limited or no positive adult role models to provide necessary support and advice in order to maximise their potential.
8. Secondly, schools focus on academic attainment which means that many young people do not receive appropriate information, advice and guidance on suitable training or career pathways. As a result, many young people either make inappropriate choices between vocational or academic pathways, or those who opt for vocational routes start their training at a level below where they could be studying, therefore slowing their potential career trajectory.

The final limiting factor faced by ThinkForward's participants is geographical. Many young people would typically not see beyond their immediate environment when considering what training to engage with on leaving school or identifying potential roles.

9. Young people supported by ThinkForward who do not follow the traditional academic route therefore have often experienced challenges in engaging with education and have limiting factors due to their backgrounds and environment, resulting in lower aspirations and potentially constraining career progression.
10. The current systems of post-16 transition is not sufficiently geared to learners who want to pursue more applied or vocational pathways and particularly those who require extra

"I never thought I could be the sort of person who worked at Canary Wharf or at Barclays. I always thought I would be a failure and that only the rich got these sorts of jobs"
Jay, ThinkForward participant

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

support in the transition from school to work. We believe there are three main reasons why.

11. Firstly, there is a **lack of coherent information on local learning and employment pathways**. Some previous work to develop an overarching further education prospectus and common application process (like a UCAS for 16-19 year olds) has floundered. This means that young people rarely have all of the information they need on the local labour market opportunities, which are the best local learning providers or who are the employers offering Apprenticeships in their area. This is compounded by the fact that the local learning offer may not match the employment opportunities, meaning that many young people are ill equipped for the available jobs.
12. Secondly, there is **not enough personalised support for young people in navigating the transition from education to employment**. The transition from school to further education is has not had the same level of forensic analysis as the primary to secondary transition and as a result practices vary and many young people get lost in the gap. Unlike the primary teacher responsible for their class, not all secondary school staff take a 'progression' mindset. Even for those young people who get some individualised careers guidance, there is rarely the level of ongoing support to ensure that they see through their action plan.
13. Thirdly, **the capabilities required for further education and the world of work are not well embedded within the school curriculum**. Whilst recognising the need to ensure that all young people achieve the core functional skills, the narrowing of the curriculum in recent years has reduced both the school time available and the inclination of schools to invest in wider skills. Building work readiness does not require separate lessons, but it does require a focus on skills development across the curriculum and access to work experience opportunities.

ThinkForward has identified six essential capabilities which are vital for further education and the world of work:

1. Self-aware - when a young person takes responsibility for themselves and others; through active reflection exhibits self-control and understands personal accountability.
2. Receptive - the willingness to address weaknesses, takes feedback, and openness to new ideas.
3. Driven - the positive attitude a young person has; applying him or herself consistently; generally going the extra mile.
4. Self-assured - having good levels of self-esteem, willing to ask questions and seek information, able to work alone.
5. Resilient - coping with rejection and set-backs, learning from failure, determined to overcome challenges.
6. Informed --- understanding of the job market and the types of roles that suit him or her; it means they have done their background research and they understand the etiquette necessary for being on a job hunt.

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

14. ThinkForward has been particularly successful with this group of young people due to the fact that Coaches work across all aspects of a young person's life, providing connectivity between school, home and the world of work, supporting young people in three areas:
15. **Early and long-term intervention:** investing in at-risk 13-19 year olds and providing five years of sustained support through key transition points in a young person's life (e.g. from school to training and from training to work);
16. **One-to-one relationship with an experienced, trusted Coach:** ThinkForward Coaches are highly qualified and skilled coming from backgrounds in teaching, social work and youth offending. Coaches are placed in schools to provide a single point of contact and build positive, enduring relationships based on trust.
17. **We connect young people with employers:** research by the Education and Employers Taskforce found that young people who recalled four or more employer contacts were five times less likely to be NEET. ThinkForward addresses this by providing access to over 300 professional volunteers and activities as simple as visiting a workplace or having a local business leader speak at a school through to more involved activities including business mentoring, interview workshops and work experience placements. All activities focus on building young people's work readiness capabilities.
18. Employer recruitment practices are changing. Word of mouth recruitment is on the rise putting young people who lack the relevant contacts and networks at a disadvantage. Use of formal and informal online job postings has reduced reliance on traditional job centres and young people lack awareness or resources to apply. Many employers place a growing emphasis on 'soft' skills, however, young people most at risk of becoming NEET often come from families without working role models nor have access to opportunities to develop these skills.
19. UKCES research shows that only 1 in 4 employers offer work experience placements or internships, only 24% of employers have hired a 16-18 year old (versus 53% of those employing 19-24 year olds) and only 15% use Apprenticeships. The success stories of ThinkForward young people and evidence from the Work Foundation, prove that enhanced employer engagement and ownership of this problem can produce sustainable employment opportunities for previously disengaged young people who would not be taking A-levels and going into higher education.

"It was about finding ambition really, what ThinkForward did for me," says 17-year-old Jay, reflecting on his time on the programme. And ambition is what Jay has in volumes. He is talking to us at the end of the working day – a working day spent at the London Stock Exchange where he is coming to the end of a one-year apprenticeship as a Market Data Support and Administrator Apprentice. As Jay sits there talking about his experience, smart in his suit and tie, it is hard to believe that he ever thought people in suits were "born into" successful careers.

Right from the start Jay's ThinkForward coach Charlene has been there to support him. "I've been working with Jay for three years now," Charlene recalls. "He will always stand out in my mind because he is articulate, very bright, and very ambitious." Getting Jay to dream big about his future was not her initial concern, instead she focused on helping him understand what he needed to be doing today to achieve his ambitions. "Putting him on a realistic plan that connected his starting point with what he wanted for his future was where we began," she says.

Charlene always checked in with Jay at important milestones. According to her, getting involved in his life early in his secondary school years is "what makes it all work". Encouraging and providing opportunities for "direct experience" with the world of work also helped to make Jay's future more tangible, more achievable. If Charlene's role as coach is to provide the steady, sustained support, mentors complement this approach by creating sparks of understanding and motivation.

Meeting Adam, his mentor from Barclays, was Jay's light-bulb moment. Adam is from the same area of London. He now has a well-established and successful career at a major global corporation. From that point forward Jay started to think differently about his future and Charlene and Adam stayed with him along his journey, helping him to analyse his thinking and define his interests, and providing coaching in interview skills.

14 September 2015

TQ Training – Written evidence (SMO0004)

Evidence for the Select Committee of the House of Lords on Social Mobility

Date: August 2015

Submission from: Dr Michael Motley, Managing Director of TQ Training

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1.1 Poor IAG When the careers service to schools through the Connexions service was taken away by the government, schools were expected to deliver this service themselves with no extra funding to deliver it. Just at a time when employers were saying that school leavers were not prepared for work, the government takes away careers advice. In a recent survey by Careers England, they found that about one third of schools deliver a good service themselves, one third try but deliver an inadequate service and one third deliver no service at all to their pupils. The quality of careers advice and guidance in schools is therefore very much a post code lottery.

1.2 Preparation for Work Many employers constantly say that school leavers are not ready for work (they also say this of graduates!). My experience of those young people applying for apprenticeships is that many do not have the skills to complete the application form; many selected for interview do not attend and do not inform of their non-attendance; some of those who do attend are poorly dressed, have a poor attitude and some even use their phones during interview(!). There is quite clearly an urgent need to do some preparatory work before they leave school but is difficult to see, in such a tight curriculum, where time can be found.

1.3 The Demise of Work Placement Just at a time when employers were saying that school leavers were not prepared for work, the government took away from schools the requirement to deliver work placements. Some schools have maintained some sort of work placement scheme but, again, this is a post code lottery. Many of the Education Business Partnership (EBP) schemes, run by the Local Authorities (see below) have folded and the valuable databases of the large numbers of employers who were willing to engage in work placement have been lost. Some types of schools, e.g. Studio Schools, run extended work placement schemes, a full day every week in years 10 and 11 and two days per week in years 12 and 13. These are very substantial compared to the traditional two weeks sometime in year 10 and can lead to the individuals being recruited at 16, including onto an Apprenticeship.

1.4 The Benefits Trap There is much evidence in colleges of those on full time programmes who are not ready or willing to take up employment, including employment with training (apprenticeships). I have experience of construction employers wishing to recruit apprentices from college full time programmes. The learners, in the main, were reluctant to engage with this process, preferring instead to progress on a full time course to the next level at college. On investigation, this seemed to be a case of their parents able to

claim benefits while their children were in full time education to the age of 18 and persuading their children to stay on at college rather than accept work. There was also some evidence of the college lecturers preferring the students to stay on full time courses at the next level in order to fill their course, protect the college estate and continue the traditional “bums on seats” attitude. Another example is where a special government project funded the preparation of LLDD learners for work, finding them employment. Again, some learners rejected the offer of work after pressure from their parents who wished to maintain their benefits.

1.5 Work Readiness Employers do not believe that 16 year olds are work ready. Either they should accept this and provide more robust induction or young people should be better prepared for work while at school through:

- Work placement
- How to present themselves
- Interview skills
- Employability skills
- Understanding the work ethic

1.6 Literacy and Numeracy 38% of 16 year olds who leave school do not have sufficient literacy and numeracy (GCSE Grade C or above). Clearly, literacy and numeracy are key elements of the skills required for employment and career progression. The school system has failed over a third of its pupils and this needs to improve. Meanwhile, the post-16 education and training system needs to continue to provide the opportunity for the students to improve their literacy and numeracy but not necessarily by retaking their GCSEs where 11 years of schooling have failed. The Education and Training Foundation have reported that Functional Skills is a sound alternative, much supported by employers and can be integrated into work situations, including Apprenticeships, making literacy and numeracy much more valid and interesting.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

2.1 English and Maths 38% of 16 year old school leavers do not achieve their GCSE English and maths at grade C or above. Quite clearly, this group do not follow the “A-Level” and higher education route and are likely to be a high proportion of those who are not NEET. They are not only likely to have inadequate literacy and numeracy, they are also unlikely to have few other GCSEs. If they are not NEET, i.e. are in employment or (further) education, they will be on and remain on low paid jobs in employment as they will tend to be with no training or will struggle at college due to lack of previous qualifications.

2.2 Apprentices at 16 Only 18% of 16 year olds are apprentices. Although the government funding available is biased towards the 16-18 age group, recruitment and retention onto apprenticeship programmes remains a challenge. Only 5% of 16-18 year olds are currently

apprentices. There are therefore likely to be a high proportion of those who are not “A” Level/HE nor NEET who are also not apprentices. They, instead, will be employed on low-skilled jobs with little opportunity for progression due to the lack of training or will be attending FE college on low level programmes and will struggle to progress to programmes that have any significance in the workplace.

2.3 Children in Care Although children who leave care only account for 1% of the population they accounts for 23% of the prison population. Only 12% of children in care gain 5 GCSEs at grade A* to C, including English and maths, compared to 59% of the total population. Care leavers will therefore be a significant part of the non-A-Level/non-NEET population.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

3.1 IAG in Schools Since the demise of the Connexions service, the expectation is now on school teachers to deliver advice and guidance about vocational qualifications, apprenticeships and employment. With teaching being graduate entry, the majority of teachers have been through school, sixth form, first degree and PGCE and then back to school. It is unfair to expect them to advise on a world they have never experienced. There needs to be more recruitment of teachers from commerce and industry and more teachers need to come through an Apprenticeship programme themselves (Teaching Assistant) as a route into teaching. Alternatives would be to use those organisations with the Matrix standard, proving their ability to deliver independent Information, Advice and Guidance or use more employers in schools, telling the pupils of job opportunities and careers in their organisation. The problem with the latter is that it will be too narrow. Those accredited with Matrix tend to be colleges and training providers, who tend to have a much wider view of the world of work through their delivery of Apprentices and other work-based training. It is not unusual for them to have hundreds of employers in their network to whom they deliver training.

3.2 Understanding of the Workplace Those who do not follow the A-Level route have little understanding of the workplace. Many have not been on work placement. There are many young people in families with four generations of unemployed whose parents do not have an understanding of the workplace. Many teachers, also, do not have a wide view of the workplace and therefore cannot pass on this understanding. Volunteering opportunities are becoming more common as route for young people to experience the world of work but, as volunteers are not eligible for Apprenticeships, then there is an opportunity lost to develop their skills within a work-based framework.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

4.1 Work Placement Bring back work placement. Some employers are willing to offer extended work placement from aged 14 as seen in the Studio Schools model. If we could only recover the deleted EBP databases then this would provide an instant network of employers willing to work with education. Building, from scratch, the relationships necessary for this level of engagement with employers will take some considerable time and effort. If schools are willing to work with Matrix-accredited organisations, they often have a large network of employers already engaged.

4.2 Careers Advice Substantial, quality and independent careers advice needs to re-emerge in schools. Without it, our young people are not well served, prepared and informed in order to make good choices for further education, training and employment which may well affect their future career prospects.

4.3 EBP Re-establish Education/Business Partnerships (EBP). These were managed by Local Authorities and some, unfortunately, have destroyed their databases of employers who are willing to commit to engage with schools. Starting to engage from scratch again will be a major and expensive effort.

4.4 Young Apprenticeships The Young Apprenticeship programme, where school pupils from age 14 could follow a specific vocational route-way which was supported by business, should be re-established. The thought that every school pupil needs to follow an academic route is fundamentally flawed. An early introduction to Apprenticeships will help overcome the current lack of understanding of or reluctance to promote Apprenticeships in schools.

4.5 Business Benefits Many business do not understand the benefits of employing young people, especially as apprentices. We need to extol the benefits to business of employing young people. There is much data published which will help clarify and inform employers so that they can make more informed decisions about whether to take on apprentices.

4.6 Employer Incentives Continue to incentivise employers, especially SMEs, to employ young people on Apprenticeship programmes. The Apprenticeship Grant for Employers (AGE) has been available for some time, but the criteria keeps changing. Some stability would be useful. There are some other grants for employers in some localities – again a post code lottery.

4.7 Recruitment Promote Apprenticeships to employers as a long recruitment process and to potential apprentices as a long look at employment in a particular sector. This may be important for vocations such as teaching where, currently, 40% of graduate teachers are leaving within the first year of teaching. In other sectors too, employees need a long look at vocations before they commit.

4.8 Volunteers Encourage volunteer opportunities for young people as a type of internship for non-graduates. Enable Apprenticeships to be started while on volunteer placements. Currently, volunteers are not eligible for apprenticeship funding and we, as providers, have the situation where we can have retail apprentices in New Look on the High Street but next door in Oxfam, their volunteer staff are not eligible.

4.7 Employed Apprentices There needs to be more understanding that apprentices are employees and not just on a scheme. There is much evidence of the latter, especially in larger employers, where they do not have real jobs for apprentices to do. There are examples of large employer schemes where many apprentices are “employed” simply to be able to draw down the funding, albeit with qualifications at the end, but no job. The cycle then starts again, with hundreds of apprentices “employed” for the purposes of the scheme.

4.8 Employer Commitment Only 14% of employers currently engage with the Apprenticeship programme. Employers need to commit in much larger numbers. The government’s direction to the Public Sector to take on far higher numbers is OK and will help but this hides the reluctance of the PS in the first place. Some large employer schemes are not good quality (reference the interim report of the Employer Ownership of Skills Pilot). Many of the sectors in which we need to deliver Apprenticeships are made up largely by SMEs, many well over 90%. There is a need to therefore encourage SMEs to engage.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

5.1 Matrix There is a long-established standard for Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) called Matrix which enables training providers and colleges to deliver IAG with independence and integrity. Schools need to allow this expertise in to advise their pupils on their options which are alternative to the “A” level route. To do this, Head Teachers need to get over their paranoia about colleges and providers stealing their best students. They currently tend to see these organisations as competitors for their pupils and subsequently many schools do not allow other providers in to advise pupils.

5.2 Parental Responsibility Parents and the wider family of young people need to take on some responsibility for the transition of their sons and daughters into work. They have a challenge, however, when they have not sufficient information regarding options such as Apprenticeships.

5.3 Employment Induction Employers need to take responsibility for transition into work and all need robust induction programmes for their young employees. Mentoring training and qualifications are available for those in employment who can support apprentices.

4 August 2015

OVERVIEW

- **Experience of the workplace is fundamental.** Internationally, countries that have better labour market outcomes for young people are better at providing access to experience of the workplace, through work experience, part-time work whilst studying, and apprenticeships.
- **The work-based pathway into higher-skilled work traditionally helped those from working class and poorer backgrounds to build to professional careers** – so UK's poor record in apprenticeships and the disappearance of work-based pathways from the 1980s has most likely contributed to low levels of upwards social mobility.
- **Employers value work experience yet not many offer it.** 66% of employers say work experience is a critical or significant factor in their recruitment. However the proportion of employers offering work experience placements to young people in education is just 30%²⁶⁷. It's also worth noting that work experience is cited as more valued by employers when recruiting than academic or vocational qualifications, with the exception of the Financial Services and Education sectors.

1. WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE UPWARD SOCIAL MOBILITY, PARTICULARLY FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS?

a) The effect of earning and learning on social mobility and life chances

²⁶⁷ Only 20% of employers had someone from a local school doing a work experience placement at their establishment in the past 12 months. Even fewer, 12%, offered the same sort of placements to further education institutions.

- Those who combine work with full-time education are 4-6 percentage points less likely to be NEET five years later than those just in education. Every country in the OECD that has more earning and learning at 15-19 has fewer people becoming NEET later on in the 20-24 age range. The same patterns applies to 20-24 year old learners and 25-29 year old NEETs.
- In 1997, 42% of 16- 17 year old students in the UK were earning and learning (defined here as studying full-time and having a part-time job). This figure has drastically declined to only 18% in 2014.
- Young earners-and-learners are also likely to earn more than those who only studied once they've entered the labour market, with a premium of 12-15%.
- Part-time jobs are excellent ways for young people to gain experience of the working world, a factor which 66% of employers say is important when recruiting (rated more highly than academic and vocational qualifications in the majority of sectors). At the same time, most employers who take on young people find them well prepared for work, but for the minority who don't, lack of work/life experience is pointed to as the main reason.
- Part-time work develops those skills and capabilities which employers value; OECD evidence ('Learning for Jobs' cited in Precarious Futures) shows that skills such as problem solving, communication and conflict management are more effectively developed in the workplace than the classroom. Added to this, evidence that a young person has held down a job whilst studying, been punctual, hard-working and able to manage their time effectively boosts employment prospects and develops human capital. Across the literature on social mobility, the effect of social background on the individual's ability to accumulate human capital is cited as a primary driver of diminishing upwards mobility. For working-class young people, earning and learning is a key way to compete with young people from more affluent backgrounds in the labour market.
- Earning and learning is also affected by parental education and family characteristics. Amongst young people whose parents are in possession of at least a level 2 qualification, approximately 45-50% combined work with study in 1996, compared to 30% amongst those whose parents were in possession of qualification at level 1 or below. Although this has now declined across the board, this is a significant gap between young people whose

parents possess degree level qualifications, A-levels or GCSE A-C grades, and those whose parents don't possess these qualifications – with the former much more likely to be earning and learning.²⁶⁸

- Furthermore, a recent paper from the Institute for Social and Economic Research²⁶⁹ reported that students who worked part-time were also more likely to have a father in a professional occupation (16% versus 13%) and managerial occupation (37% versus 31%).
- This report also found that students who worked part time whilst studying were, in general, more able: students who worked part-time at the age of 16 also scored higher on English (35 points versus 33.6 points) and mathematics tests (38.2 points versus 36 points) taken at the age of 11, indicating that it was the more able students who chose to work. This is also reflected in GCSE exam performance, where those who were employed during term time achieved a higher number of A*- C passes in comparison to their counterparts who were not working (7.1 versus 6.5). These differences are all statistically significant.

b) Where you live affects the opportunities available to you

- UKCES recently compiled a series of heat maps, showing the geographical incidence of work experience and work inspiration activities²⁷⁰ at a Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) level in 2014. We found that there is a 'postcode lottery' of opportunity:

Work Inspiration

- The Humber and Tees Valley both have low levels of employers engaging in work inspiration but high youth unemployment and low GVA (gross value added) per head.
- Cheshire and Warrington LEP, and Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Thames Valley LEP both have low youth unemployment and high levels of employers engaging in work inspiration.
- Overall, employers tend to offer work inspiration activities in regions with a higher proportion of knowledge-intensive businesses and low youth unemployment. Young

²⁶⁸ Death of the Saturday Job, 2015, UKCES

²⁶⁹ *The impact of students' part-time work on educational outcomes*, Nov 2014

²⁷⁰ Organising site visits for students; undertaking careers talks; providing one-to-one mentoring support; conducting mock interviews; helping design or set coursework; sponsoring, supporting or participating in enterprise competitions.

people raised in these areas therefore have more opportunities to transition from school to higher-paid careers.

Work experience

- Humber, where only 29% of employers offer work placements is also an area of high unemployment, including youth unemployment, low GVA (gross value added) per head, and low proportions of employees in the top three occupational classifications, a proxy for highly-skilled professionals.
- Employers in the south of England are more likely to offer work experience: 40% compared to 35% elsewhere. This may reflect the geography of knowledge intensive businesses, which cluster in the south. This work experience was also mainly offered to students participating in higher education.

2. HOW ARE THE STRUCTURAL CHANGES TO THE ECONOMY AND THE CHANGING LABOUR MARKET AFFECTING EXPECTED OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE?

Structural changes to the UK labour market

- The hourglass labour market - alongside high-skilled jobs, service-intensive jobs (especially in the care and leisure sectors) have grown through much of the recession and recovery period. The recession's job losses were concentrated in middle-skill clerical and skilled trades roles, as well as labour-intensive jobs; employment in these categories remains below pre-recession levels. These changes also reflect long term trends, going back over several decades: more high-skill and service-intensive roles, fewer middle-skill and labour-intensive roles. The result is that middle-ranking jobs, which traditionally acted as a 'stepping stone' allowing those in lower-ranking jobs to progress through promotion or skills acquisition, are disappearing. This has implications not just for young people in low-skilled jobs, but also for parents of young people that can also become stuck in low-pay, low-skilled occupations.

- Growth in high-skilled jobs - the number of high-skilled jobs (for managers, professionals, associate professionals and technicians) was not hit by the recession and has grown robustly since. From 2006 to 2013, the UK added 2.2m high-skilled jobs out of 5.1m added across the EU, more than any other member state. The UK now has one of the largest graduate workforces in the EU, and one of the largest shares of high-skilled jobs in employment.
- Competition for entry level jobs – the decline in middle-ranking jobs pushes workers who would have occupied those middle-ranking occupations into lower-paid roles, and often into jobs traditionally seen as entry level. By definition, these workers have more experience and are usually older – when they apply for lower-level jobs, they are up against young people with little work experience. This limits opportunities for young people, who are generally less competitive in the labour market. The result is that young people are at a significant disadvantage when looking for work, and this is exacerbated if they haven't had prior opportunities to accumulate human capital.
- There are fewer opportunities for lower skilled workers to progress – the job roles young people typically enter (Elementary, Sales and Customer Service, Admin/Clerical and Caring/Leisure) are also the job roles more likely to be deemed a low priority for upskilling.²⁷¹ The 2013 *Employer Skills Survey* also found that 55% of those in elementary occupations have been trained over the last 12 months compared to 70% of professionals and 65% of associate professionals. This is an additional barrier for young people in those roles as they are less likely to be given the opportunity to gain new skills and progress. Labour market progression is identified as a key factor in supporting social mobility and the alleviation of poverty. However there is little evidence that entry-level positions are viewed as 'stepping stones' and too few people in low paid jobs are able to develop a career that involves progression to better paid jobs.
- Those that enter and remain in jobs (or sectors) which offer few development opportunities are unlikely to realise their potential to progress in the labour market. The issue is of particular importance given that many people leaving benefits take their first step on the jobs ladder by accepting lower-skilled, entry-level work: a route out of

²⁷¹ The UKCES Employer Skills Survey 2013 asked establishments which of their staff were a priority for upskilling. Just 12% said their Administrative and Clerical staff, and just 14% said their Elementary staff.

unemployment and poverty and ultimately enhancing social mobility. Exposure to a job and training connected to it has been repeatedly found to be a key factor in making a successful transition to work.

- As employers primarily determine the terms and conditions of employment and how work is organised, including the balance of temporary and permanent workers, skills requirements and progression structures through their human resource management and practices, initiatives to address low-pay and low-skilled work should seek to connect with employer interests in terms of improving competitiveness.
- Employers' human resource management policies and practices can help to encourage retention and progression; unionised workplaces appear to be an important factor in access to training opportunities. The support and active involvement of line managers is also critical for the retention and development of workers at all levels. The development of management skills has been a policy concern for several years and there is evidence suggesting that line managers may need further training so that they are equipped to place the development of the individual at the forefront of their approach.²⁷²
- Where low-skilled occupations are taken up by those with few or no qualifications, the impact of on-the-job training could be significant. For those individuals that have been disengaged with the mainstream education system, learning on the job can be more accessible, feel more relevant and be more engaging. The lower incidence of training and the lower priority attributed to upskilling in these occupational groups could be a missed opportunity to forge progression routes and improve outcomes for low-skill employees.
- Recruitment patterns/methods – the way that employers recruit their staff (and especially their young staff) puts those without family contacts or access to informal networks at considerable disadvantage; word of mouth/personal recommendation was the most common recruitment method used in 2014 to recruit young people. Alongside the decline in earning and learning and the unequal availability of work experience opportunities, this particular recruitment method means that young people from non-

²⁷² UKCES (2011) The role of skills from worklessness to sustainable employment with progression

privileged backgrounds are once again in a more disadvantaged position; they are stuck in a catch-22 situation, unable to get a job without experience or a reference, and unable to get experience or a reference without a job.

- Low pay (The prospects for young people's social mobility also depend on the quality of jobs and pay available to their parents)
- **One-in-five employees (20%, or around 4.9 million individuals) earned less than a living wage (£8.55 in London and £7.45 in the rest of the UK) in April 2013.** This is a slight – and statistically significant – increase (0.5 percentage points, or 180,000 people) on 2012. One-in-three employees (32% or around 7.7 million individuals) earned less than the reference living wage.^{273 274}
- From a low of just 15% of employees in 1975, the proportion of low paid²⁷⁵ workers peaked at 23% in 1996. Since then, the proportion has changed very little—as of April 2013 the number stood at 5.2m, or 22%. This is a slight (but statistically significant) increase (0.8 percentage points, or 250,000 people) on 2012, reversing a slight fall in the previous year.
- Extreme low pay²⁷⁶ affected just 2% of employees—likely to be young people and apprentices—reflecting the fact that the threshold falls below the main adult NMW rate.
- Across each measure, those most at risk of low pay include female workers, the young, those in lower skilled occupations, part-time and temporary workers and those employed in hospitality, retail and care.
- Britain continues to stand out as having one of the highest incidences of low paid work in the OECD—with countries such as Spain, Greece and Italy having a lower proportion of their full time employees earning two-thirds of gross median hourly earnings or less.

i. **Low pay by type of employment**

²⁷³ Annual changes in the UK's living wage are capped as to not place an unreasonable burden on employers. The uncapped reference living wage may be considered a better estimate of earnings required for acceptable standard of living. It stood at £8.80 in April 2013

²⁷⁴ Resolution Foundation (2014) Low Pay Britain 2014

²⁷⁵ Low pay = hourly wages below two-thirds of gross median hourly pay (excluding overtime) for all employees, equivalent to £7.69 an hour in April 2013

²⁷⁶ Extreme low pay = hourly wages below one-half of gross median hourly pay (excluding overtime) for all employees, equivalent to £5.77 an hour

- The risk of low pay is closely associated with precarious forms of employment. One-in-three (34%) workers employed on a temporary or casual basis were low paid in April 2013, compared with one-in-five (21%) permanent employees. Temporary workers (5%) were also much more likely to be in extreme low pay than their permanent counterparts (2%)
- The proportion of low paid workers who are employed on a temporary or casual basis increased from 8% in 2000 to 13% in 2013. This trend is even more marked in relation to extreme low pay, with the proportion accounted for by temporary workers increasing from 9% to 20% over the same period.
- Part-time workers face a particular low pay risk, with two-in-five (43%) of such employees being low paid in 2013, compared with 13% of those working full-time. While only 28% of workers are part-time, they make up 56% of the low paid.

ii. **Low pay by industry**

- There are wide variations in the prevalence of low pay across industrial sectors, ranging from more than two-in-three (70%) employees in the hotels & restaurants sector to just 3% in the public administration & defence sector. In addition to hotels & restaurants, six other classifications reported low pay prevalence above the national average of one-in-five: wholesale & retail (41%), administrative & support service activities (38%), arts, entertainment & recreation (36%), agriculture, forestry & fishing (35%), other service activities (30%) and households as employers (24%).

iii. **Progression from low pay: breaking out of low-pay, low-skilled jobs is increasingly difficult**

- As detailed above, we are seeing the disappearance of middle-ranking jobs that have provided those in lower-ranking jobs with the opportunity to step up the career ladder and progress through promotion or skills acquisition.
- While having some the world's best performing companies, the UK also has a high number of businesses that are stuck in a 'low-skill equilibrium', limiting their ambitions by organising work around a low level of skill. These businesses use the minimum

necessary skill from their employees, rather than seeking to fully utilise their talents, or develop them further, to drive the business forward.

iv. Better job design, better employee development and skills utilisation

- One of the biggest challenges facing the UK's economic is the slump in productivity growth. And what happens in the workplace matters greatly to our productivity performance. How productive people are in work depends on their level of skills but also on how those skills are used. In turn, this depends on management, how jobs are designed, how technology is deployed, and how organisations are managed and led. (This is particularly important at the lower end of the labour market as evidence suggests that just under a quarter of all jobs only require primary school level attainment)
- This is something UKCES are testing in one of our Futures Programme competition—a co-investment fund that looks for innovative, employer-led solutions to long-standing workforce issues. In the third of the series we have focused on testing ways to resolve the problem of low pay and poor progression that is so prevalent in the retail and hospitality sectors, while also identifying the potential business benefits of various employer interventions. The seven projects to whom we have awarded funding are trialling a number of solutions, ranging from developing a learning app to suit different work patterns to a real estate asset manager building an on-site academy for its tenants' employees.

Here are some examples of the projects:

- **Jamie Oliver's Fifteen Cornwall:** Jamie Oliver's Fifteen Cornwall will work with Watergate Bay Hotel, St Austell Brewery, Cornwall College and Visit Cornwall to help small employers in the region improve business productivity by investing in training and supporting career progression. Building on high quality working practices that encourage staff to work and develop across different roles and skillsets to improve business performance, the project will develop a toolkit that will enable other small businesses to take similar approaches.
- **Realm:** Realm manages the London Designer Outlet shopping centre in the shadow of Wembley Stadium. A transient and inexperienced workforce has the potential to affect the performance of all retailers as well as the centre as a whole. This project

will set up an onsite skills academy that retailers can access. Employees will be offered individual training plans and mentoring that enhance their understanding of the retail sector. In parallel, several high profile retailers operating at the centre will work together to define how talented people can progress in the sector and forge a career in retail.

- **Timewise Foundation:** Working with the UK's largest pet retailer, Pets at Home, this project will radically redesign jobs with the aim of providing clearer routes and opportunities for promotion for part time and flexible working colleagues, particularly women. One of the key changes will be to offer more family friendly flexible roles at a managerial level for workers to progress into.

3. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENCOURAGE MORE EMPLOYERS TO TAKE INCREASED OWNERSHIP OF THE NEED TO OFFER WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS, APPRENTICESHIPS AND IMPROVED VOCATIONAL TRAINING?

From our surveys, we know that 66% of employers say that work experience is important when recruiting, yet very few offer it (just 30% of employers offer work placements to young people in education).

There are a number of ways to address this. At the root, a change in culture must take place in which employers of all sizes and sectors look to take responsibility for the formation of their talent pipeline, and viewing young people from education as a valid source of this. Offering various routes which provide young people with experience of the workplace is crucial to this goal.

There are a number of elements to addressing this issue:

- 1) A greater focus on 'growing your own' talent:** employers need to recognise the benefits that young people could bring to their organisation.
 - The UKCES brochure [Grow Your Own](#) outlines support available to help employers engage young people.

- There are numerous ways in which young people can be engaged in businesses, including offering a young person a job, taking on an apprentice, offering a work experience placement or internship, or partaking in *work inspiration* activities (such as mentoring, site visits, talks in schools).

2) Improving business-education links: education and employers should be better connected to prepare young people for work.

- This includes schools building lasting relationships with local businesses, and using them to provide young people with work inspiration and experience opportunities.
- Employers becoming involved with the design, delivery and assessment of further education to meet the UK's technical skills gaps.
- Employer 'anchor institutions' are important geographic solutions which could help improve business and education links in particular local areas. These consist of large employers with a significant presence and influence in a local area, which could coordinate the engagement of smaller companies and local education providers, as well as looking to address broader skills issues.
- In this space there is indeed a role for intermediary organisations which seek to connect employers, young people and education providers to promote greater access to opportunities and the development of skills. Movement to Work is a good example of this form of organisation on a national voluntary basis. A more local example would be Local Education Business Partnerships, which connect schools and colleges with local businesses, for the purpose of creating work experience opportunities

3) Employer networks designed to engage young people: collective action on the part of employers has proved a burgeoning method of starting social initiatives within particular sectors.

- *Industrial Partnerships* (IPs) bring together employers across an industry sector to lead the development of skills, with a focus on growth and competitiveness. There are currently 8 partnerships covering the aerospace, automotive, creative,

nuclear, digital, energy & efficiency, science and tunnelling (construction) industries.

- An important example of such partnerships working to engage young people is the Energy and Efficiency Industrial Partnership, which has set itself a goal of recruiting 5,500 apprentices and 7,700 traineeships or youth employment programmes.

4. WHAT CAN THE GOVERNMENT DO TO FACILITATE STRONGER LEADERSHIP AT A LOCAL LEVEL TO BETTER LINK SKILLS PROVISION WITH EMPLOYER DEMAND?

UKCES report "[Local action, national success: How outcome agreements can improve skills delivery](#)".

- The report builds on the fifth priority in UKCES' recent report, *Growth Through People* which sets out five priorities for action on the UK's skills challenges. The fifth of these priorities is that 'success should be measured by a wider set of outcomes not just educational attainment'. The UKCES report *Local Action, national success* explores what this means for the skills system at a local and national level, particularly considering the concept of local outcome agreements.
- An outcome agreement is a collectively established, written agreement identifying both the skills needs in a local area and the solutions to address them. Outcome agreements would involve local education and training providers, employers and local/combined authorities/LEPs. Partners would be held to account for delivery of their parts of the agreement.
- Outcome agreements should mean that skills shortages can be identified and addressed more effectively, leading to better growth prospects for the whole area. A further benefit is that outcome agreements should shift the balance so that colleges are more accountable to the local economic and social community rather than just to central government and the funding agencies.
- The report proposes that for areas with little experience or history of this way of working, partners could start by identifying a limited number of skills challenges before

building up to the wider local economic need. The ambition is that the majority of provision at a local level will be the subject of a local outcome agreement including programmes for young people, adults (both in and out of work) and apprenticeships.

- The report draws on a number of international case studies (which are published alongside with the report), as well as consultations with FE colleges, employers, LEPs, business groups and local authorities across England. The report sets out the benefits of local outcome agreements for England and puts forward 8 propositions to take forward.
- In the context of increased devolution central government is looking for different ways to demonstrate accountability and we think local outcome agreements can help provide this. However, it is important that the development outcome agreements involve real local flexibility. A one size fits all approach that is centrally owned and driven will not be able to gain the buy in required at a local level. We also hope the report will encourage action at local level. Many local areas have strong partnership arrangements and are working in this way already although they may not refer to this as an 'outcome agreement'. We want to report to influence and encourage more local areas to do this.

5. WHAT FACTORS NEED TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BY THE GOVERNMENT AND OTHER POLICYMAKERS WHEN DEVELOPING POLICIES AIMED AT IMPROVING THE SOCIAL MOBILITY FOR DISADVANTAGED GROUPS, PARTICULARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS?

- Earning and learning should be the gold standard in vocational education.
 - We need a step change in attitude and uptake of quality vocational routes into good jobs. High quality apprenticeships should be a normal career pathway for many more young people, and a normal way for businesses to recruit and develop their talent pipeline.

This is why UKCES welcomes the Conservative Party’s manifesto commitment to ‘support three million new apprenticeships, so young people acquire the skills to succeed’.²⁷⁷

- Employers, working collaboratively, should have the lead role in designing apprenticeships to ensure they have value in the labour market. The public contribution should be channelled via employers to stimulate greater employer uptake.

UKCES continues to support employer routed funding and welcomes the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills’ recent proposals to give employers more control over spending on training delivery.

- In England, long-term stability in vocational education and training is essential for employers to have the confidence to engage.
- Education and employers should be better connected to prepare young people for work.
 - To create new pathways into work we need to start much earlier. All schools should have links with local businesses and use those links to inform and inspire young people about the breadth of career opportunities available.

Sir Ian Wood’s Commission for Developing Scotland’s Young Workforce aims to achieve this for all 363 Scottish secondary schools in the next three years. There should be a similar aim for the whole of the UK. We know that this is doable; of the employers that do engage with schools only 8 per cent experience any difficulties whatsoever.

- Further education colleges should be supported to work with employers to deliver higher level technical and professional education to meet the UK’s technical skills gaps.
- Closer collaboration between employers, colleges and universities is essential to ensure there are seamless opportunities to work and learn over the course of longer working careers.

²⁷⁷ Conservative Manifesto 2015

- Success should be measured by a wider set of outcomes not just educational attainment.
 - We need to align measurement of schools, colleges and universities more clearly with the outcomes that employers value, to ensure better transitions between education and work as well as more prepared and productive employees.

6. WHAT IS YOUR ONE KEY SUGGESTION FOR A CHANGE THIS COMMITTEE COULD RECOMMEND TO IMPROVE UPWARDS MOBILITY, EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES, AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS?

Streamlining and improving the vocational pathway – countries like Germany, which have low levels of youth unemployment, also have reliable and accessible vocational pathways into work for those young people who are uninspired by academic pathways.

Likewise, the Dutch system has more coherence between apprenticeship and other vocational pathways, with each using the same core standards. This means that young people can move between the two more easily than in the UK, and when economic conditions change and employer engagement in apprenticeships falls, the whole vocational system can respond. In the UK, National Occupational Standards (NOS) could replicate this, acting as a core around which the vocational education system orients itself.

Mandatory pairing of schools with local employers – in Scotland, the Wood Review proposed asking each of Scotland’s 363 secondary schools to pair with a local employer(s) for the purposes of offering work experience and/or work inspiration to their pupils.

7. APPENDICES

a) Preliminary findings of unpublished UKCES Equalities reports

i. Gender

- The work of Bukodi and Goldthorpe indicates that social mobility (upward and downward) has been a slightly increasing tendency for women but the tendency for upward rather than downward movement is less marked for women than men between age late 20s and late 30s, ie: women's trajectories don't appear to follow a steady path upwards as men's do.²⁷⁸
- Despite the fact that girls/women outperform boys/men throughout education, and are enrolled on educational courses at higher rates than men between ages 16 and 24, women make up 2/3 of the low paid workforce and suffer much more than men from the part-time pay penalty (ie: significantly lower hourly rates of pay compared with full-time) because so many more women work part-time.
- Women predominate in lower paid occupations – typically the 5 'Cs' of cleaning, catering, caring, cashiering and clerical. Women make up only a small proportion of workers in Skilled Trades and Process, plant and machine operatives (9.8% and 12.5% in 2014), but the lion's share in Administrative and secretarial (76.5%), Personal services (82.4%) and Sales and customer service occupations (63.7%).
- Reporting of under-employment (where workers want more hours of work than they have) appears to be driven in part by low earnings which helps explain why more women than men report under-employment. Under-employment will hold incomes, and potentially mobility, down.
- The impact of lower pay and reduced opportunities, typically because women are combining work and family responsibilities, impacts on life-time earnings and on pensions. This has important implications for intra-generational mobility (women get stuck) and also inter-generational opportunities (fewer means to invest in children's opportunities).

ii. Ethnicity

- While the ethnic minority employment rates are generally higher than their 2005 level, the bulk of the ratios are below (as compared with the White (UK) comparator group).

²⁷⁸ Bukodi, E et al. (2015) Op cit.

- Conversely for most ethnic groups their unemployment and inactivity rates are higher than for White (UK) labour market participants across qualification levels.
- For all ethnic minorities combined reported under-employment is greater than for the White (UK) group suggesting limits to currently available opportunities to impact on economic activity and earnings at base rates of pay.
- Certain ethnic minorities have especially high enrolment rates on non-leisure educational courses but all ethnic minorities have higher rates than for the White (UK) group. The overall enrolment rate for the 16-19 group is 81.6 per cent amongst White (UK) and 89.7 per cent amongst the all ethnic group, the corresponding rates for 20-25 year olds are 26.0 per cent and 44.5 per cent respectively.
- Taking educational outcomes data for England, particular ethnic minorities – Chinese and Indian - outperform the White (UK) group at GCSE, while other groups are close to unity. However, at Level 3 (2 or more A levels or equivalents) the White (UK) group has the lowest attainment of any group.
- The White (UK) group has the lowest proportion of any group moving into HE, but a higher proportion of individuals in employment six months after leaving undergraduate education. Conversely, while the Black group is the largest ethnic minority group with first year under-graduate students, it has the lowest comparative proportion of leavers entering employment within six months.

iii. Age

- **Inactivity rate:** There is a relatively high inactivity rate (people not in employment) of the youngest age band (16-19) in the report, which was 45.4 per cent in 2005, 55.2 per cent in 2010 and 61.1 per cent by 2014, associated with an increase in education participation.
- **Part-time:** The proportion in part-time drops dramatically from the 71.5 per cent amongst the youngest age group (16-19) to 15.7 per cent amongst 25 to 29 year olds, but rises in a mini-peak at 40-44, before falling away slightly and then rising amongst the older employees, finishing at 42.9 per cent of all in employment amongst the 65 to 69 year olds.

- **Trade, accommodation and transport sector:** Of the 16-19 age group in employment, 59.6 per cent can be found in the Trade, accommodation and transport sector in 2013. This appears to be a key sector for younger individuals who are enrolled in educational courses, but in need of employment to support them.
- **Low skilled occupations (Elementary occupation/Sales & Customer service):** The Elementary occupations start with the second highest proportion amongst 16-19 year olds and remains relatively high for 20-24 year olds – again probably reflecting enrolling individuals taking temporary work in low skilled occupations. In 2013, 37.9 per cent of those in Elementary occupations and 45.2 per cent of those in Sales and customer service occupations are under 30 years of age, compared with just 9.3 per cent of Managers. High proportions of 16-19 are located in Sales and customer service and in Elementary rather than other occupations (27.7 per cent and 40.8 per cent of all employees of that age respectively in 2013), compared with, 0.3 per cent of Managers and senior officials. The proportions for the 20-24 year old group follow the same pattern.
- **Skills utilisation:** There is reasonably strong evidence that there is an increase in skills utilisation, at least through to middle age (e.g. 30.0 per cent at age 20-24 up to 48.4 per cent at age band 45-49)
- **Apprenticeships in England:** In total, the 25 and older apprenticeships comprise 36.7 per cent of all apprenticeships by 2013/14 (over 161,000). The principal pattern for Intermediate apprenticeships is that the 19 to 24 year old group has higher success rates than the 16 to 18 year group, while, in three of the four comparison years, the 25 and over group has higher success rates than the 19 to 24 year old group. For Advanced apprenticeships, the 16 to 18 year old group has higher success rates than the 25 and above group and, in two of the years, the success rates decrease monotonically with age.

iv. Disability

- **Part-time:** All three of the groups²⁷⁹ with a disability have higher part-time proportions than the No disability group, a feature which persists in all three years. Two of the

²⁷⁹ All disability, WLD, DDA

disability groups are also more likely to be self-employed than the No disability group: in 2013, the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and WLD group²⁸⁰ has a ratio of 1.37 with the No disability group and the WLD disability group has a ratio of 1.29.

- **Non-leisure educational courses:** The overall proportion of the population aged 16 to 69 enrolled on non-leisure educational courses in 2013 is 12.6 per cent (just over 5.5 million individuals). The corresponding figure for the Disabled group is 7.8 per cent (just over 700 thousand individuals) and for the No disability group is 12.9 per cent (just over 4.8 million). All three disability groups have lower enrolment rates than the No disability group – the DDA disabled group and the DDA and WLD group are particularly low and overall all groups show a downward pattern over time.
- The No disability group always has a higher proportion of enrolments than the All disability group in both the **Private and Public sectors**. The highest ratio of All disability to No disability is in the Public sector in 2005 (0.92), but this falls to 0.90 in 2010 and to 0.80 in 2013. The lowest proportion of All disabled to No disability is in the Private sector, 0.71 in both 2005 and 2010, but this rises to 0.80 in 2013. The Public sector trains a higher proportion of All disabled than the Private sector, 45.5 per cent more in 2005, 39.3 per cent in 2010, but only 9.7 per cent more in 2013.
- **England/Educational achievement:** The proportion of pupils in England achieving five or more GCSEs at A* to C grades is over 80 per cent in 2008/09 for the No SEN group and just over 36 per cent for the SEN group, however, by 2012/13 SEN proportion is 66 per cent of that of the Non SEN²⁸¹.

b) Careers advice

- The National Careers Council's latest report to Government 2014 recommended:
 - An Employer-led Advisory Board to advise on careers provision, guide the work of the National Careers Service and ensure value for money

²⁸⁰ Work-limiting disabled (WLD) includes those who have a long-term disability which affects the kind or amount of work they might do.

¹⁵ England, Wales and Northern Ireland identify learners with special educational needs (SEN) and the comparator group are the pupils who have not been identified as having special educational needs (the No SEN group).

- Provision to schools and colleges of free and/or subsidised access to independent and impartial career development professionals' expertise.
- Improvement in the National Careers Service website to make it attractive and appealing to young people, parents and teachers
- A careers investment fund administered by the Department for Education
- The Chair of the NCC has also recently launched work to provide 100 hours of careers guidance for secondary school pupils (backed by Mayor of London Boris Johnson). The report follows successive warnings that the careers system needs to be strengthened and that a lack of good advice is a barrier to social mobility.

27 July 2015

The Who Cares Trust – Written evidence (SMO0050)

Evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Who Cares? Trust is the leading national charity for children in care and care leavers in England. We are a voice and a champion for children and young people living in care. We inform and support thousands of children in care and care leavers through our magazines and publications designed specifically for them and we influence improvements in policy and practice by ensuring their views and experiences are heard at the highest level. We also develop innovative, collaborative projects which pilot new ways of working, disseminate best practice and encourage more joined up working across the care system.
- 1.2. Our submission only focuses on the experiences of young people who are in care or who are care leavers, and includes anecdotal evidence that we have gathered from our direct work with children in care and care leavers.
- 1.3. We welcome this inquiry by the Select Committee on Social Mobility, and welcome the opportunity to contribute and to put forward the voices and opinions of looked after children and care leavers.

2. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

- 2.1. Many children in care have experience of multiple placement moves throughout their time in care. In 2014, 33% of children in care had two or more placements.²⁸² Multiple placement moves can result in attachment difficulties, poor experiences of relationships, and a poor educational experience, with changes in school and regular disruption. Without strong relationships, children in care can also lack adults in their lives who are ambitious for them.
- 2.2. A disjointed educational experience can impact on care leavers' employment outcomes. The current education system does not take into account the effect that prior experiences (such as abuse and neglect) and care experiences such as multiple moves and school changes may have on a child. Instead, it relies on chronological testing that is inflexible, which results in many care-experienced young people under-achieving at age 16. Some young people will take resits (and feel supported to do so), while others will not want to do so (or not feel supported to do so) and so have to enter the employment market with poor academic qualifications. Care leavers may take more winding paths or take longer to engage in traditional education, which can limit their opportunities while they are young.

²⁸² Department for Education, Statistical First Release Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2014, 2014, p. 8.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/359277/SFR36_2014_Text.pdf

- 2.3. Young people can leave care between 16 and 18 (in 2014, 33% of care leavers who left care did so at 16 or 17).²⁸³ When they do leave care, they go through a process that can be incredibly stressful and isolating. They may move from a home with supportive and caring adults, and often other young people, to living by themselves, having to cook, pay bills, budget, all while trying to find, or hold down a job. Care leavers are given support through a Personal Adviser (PA). PAs have high caseloads and do not always have the time to spend with the young people to develop CVs and job hunt. They themselves may not have the skills to suitably advise young people about their job hunt or their career path. Parents usually only have one or two children to advise about job applications, whereas a PA may be having to advise multiple young people, at the same time as dealing with housing, financial, emotional and educational worries and crises.
- 2.4. Some care leavers do not have the skills to write CVs and look for jobs, having not learnt these from school or carers, and are not adequately supported by their local authority or PAs to access high quality jobs. They may also lack experiences that children may have had growing up, such as weekend jobs or paper rounds as their care experience may have prevented them from accessing these, often rite of passage, experiences. Often young people access work experience or their first paid roles through their parents or through their parents' network of family and friends. Young people in care are unlikely to have had similar opportunities because they lack those networks, however some local authorities have a policy of providing family firm type opportunities.
- 2.5. Care leavers may have only had exposure to professional roles that they have had contact with, such as social workers, teachers and doctors, all of which require higher education (HE). Their experiences may be limited and they may be unaware of roles they can aspire to that do not require attending university. In addition, their own ambition for themselves may be themselves limited, or limited by their non-linear educational journey, for example some care leavers are unable to access apprenticeships because they do not have the GCSE grades required for entry.

3. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

- 3.1. 21% of care leavers aged 19 were in training or employment in 2014. 14% were in full time training or employment and 6% were in part-time training or employment. This compares to 26% in education (other than HE) and 6% in HE.²⁸⁴

²⁸³ Department for Education, Statistical First Release Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2014, National Tables: SFR49/2014 Table: D3
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption--2>

²⁸⁴ Department for Education, Statistical First Release Children looked after in England (including adoption and care leavers) year ending 31 March 2014, National Tables: SFR49/2014 Table: FI
<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-looked-after-in-england-including-adoption--2>

- 3.2. Some care leavers may be encouraged to remain in education in order to benefit from the additional support that being in education brings to care leavers who are between 21 and 25. Local authorities have a duty to support care leavers with a PA, a pathway plan and support and expenses associated with finding and keeping a job until the age of 21. However, financial and practical support continues for care leavers who are in, or who want to return to education until the age of 25 (or until the end of the agreed programme of study). Care leavers often may be encouraged to study more basic level one or two courses rather than courses that may help them have a good career path. Support from a PA past 21 for all care leavers may help care leavers to feel supported, able to tackle day to day activities and challenges, and able to look for promotions or be ambitious in their chosen career path.
- 3.3. Identifying opportunities and applying for roles is a skill and can often incur costs that care leavers can struggle to meet. Young job seekers need to have the skills necessary to write a CV and fill in an application form, even before having to meet additional costs such as travel to and from interviews and suitable clothes. This can result in care leavers being unable to apply for ambitious jobs, and are limited to opportunities that do not have associated costs, or are local to where they live.
- 3.4. In addition, not all care leavers want to follow traditional career paths, with some wanting to be self-employed, or use creative or other skills that they have learnt from the care system. However, without proper support and guidance about how to do this, young people can find themselves unable to follow these paths, and unable to access a consistent source of income.

4. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

- 4.1. We do not believe that care leavers who do not follow the A-level and HE route perform better in terms of employment outcomes, however the data that is collected by the Department for Education on care leaver outcomes is not sufficiently detailed to draw firm conclusions.
- 4.2. Young people with care experience can face a number of challenges:
 - 4.2.1. Young people are not adequately supported by their local authority to find employment, and to stay in employment. Despite having responsibilities to support young people until the age of 21 with the costs of living near their place of employment, some young people are not informed about these responsibilities.²⁸⁵ Some young people reported their local authority being

²⁸⁵ In 2013, The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers carried out 'The Entitlements Inquiry', which asked at least 444 young people if they knew about, and were receiving certain entitlements. Over half of care leavers surveyed didn't know about the entitlement to receive support with employment (see page 9 of the summary report with recommendations: http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/data/files/Entitlements_Inquiry/Entitlements_Inquiry_Summary_Report_-_FINAL.pdf)

highly supportive, providing uniforms, work placements or apprenticeships, while others report being told to get a job, but not being supported to do so.

- 4.2.2. PAs do not have to be a qualified social worker. In fact, there is no qualification that people have to complete to be a PA, despite having to know about a wide range of issues. Many PAs have high caseloads, and so do not necessarily have the time, or experience to support care leavers well to find a job, to think properly about what they want to do, and help them plan a career path. PAs, with high caseloads, have to be lots of different things to different people. They may be supporting a young person who has no GCSEs to get a job, and someone else who wants to set up their own business.
- 4.2.3. Young people are often not work-ready, having not had the opportunity to practise being ready for employment through weekend jobs, or having access to other opportunities to develop appropriate skills. This may be because many placement moves or the rural location of their children's home may prohibit this, or that a young person in care has so much else to deal with, that finding a Saturday job is very far down the list.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- 5.1. For care leavers, there needs to be responsibility taken at a corporate parenting level, and at a more universal level.
- 5.2. Corporate parents (for example local authorities and the Government) must take responsibility for improving services to care leavers with regard to their employment opportunities, improving the support that is available and their access to opportunities, for example by prioritising care leavers for apprenticeships, work experience and mentoring schemes and helping them to overcome barriers to accessing employment, such as travel expenses, uniform and equipment costs. While there is a responsibility on local authorities to provide support, not all care leavers are informed about it, and it is variable both between and within local authorities.
- 5.3. Corporate parents should be, and take responsibility for, being ambitious for care leavers. They should want them to do well, and should enable them to access opportunities to develop the skills needed to enter the workforce. They should ensure that young people are exposed to a variety of potential careers and ensure that carers and professionals know children and young people really well so that they understand where their talents lie, and how they can use them to best effect as adults.
- 5.4. Care leavers should also not be penalised for not being in education past 21, by having access to support available until they are 25, whether they are in education, employment, training or NEET.
- 5.5. However, local authorities need to have universal services to refer their care leavers to. It is unrealistic to expect PAs to know everything, and to be able to meet the needs of all their care leavers, no matter what job they want to do. They therefore

need to be able to refer care leavers to experts, such as careers advisors, or for specialist advice on setting up businesses, writing CVs and interview skills.

Evidence submitted by Chloë Cockett, Policy & Research Advisor, on behalf of The Who Cares? Trust

14 September 2015

WhyTry – Written evidence (SMO0064)

Question 1

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace?

At WhyTry we believe that helping youth learn the skills of *resilience* is the key factor in positively affecting social mobility.

Background

The WhyTry resilience programme is a strength-based approach helping young people overcome challenges and improve outcomes in the areas of truancy, behaviours, and academics.

Christian Moore, MSW, LCSW, founded the program in America 15 years ago by drawing on personal challenges of poverty, severe learning disabilities, mental illness, and family dysfunction. As a social worker in education, youth corrections, and a homeless program, Christian began to see the need for a new approach in building resilience in today's youth. Drawing from his personal challenges, his degree, his career, and his understanding of people from all walks of life, Christian created WhyTry. Thousands of school districts across the U.S. have had Christian consult on how to lower dropout rates, improve school climate, prevent bullying, lower the achievement gap, and improve academics through teaching social and emotional education to all students. Christian's personal mission is to ensure that youth are given an opportunity to succeed, regardless of social or economic status, race, background, or other personal obstacles.

To do this, they need to learn the skills of resilience.

- 2 million students in America in over 16,000 schools have learned resilience strategies through WhyTry.
- 42 post primary schools in Ireland introduced WhyTry in 2011 through the NBSS
- 200+ U.K. NHS workers, teachers, and mental health professionals have implemented the program in the last 10 years
- Currently in the UK the WhyTry program is used by many youth professionals including: Isle of Wight Youth Justice Department workers, ADHD Counsellors and NHS clinical nurse specialists in Harrow, and Family Support Workers in schools in Cambridge.

Program Description and Rationale

Resilience: From the Character and Resilience Manifesto by the all-party parliamentary group on Social Mobility 2013. '

"Character and Resilience is used here as an umbrella term for a range of concepts variously categorised as aspects of social and emotional development and as 'non-cognitive' or –

somewhat incongruously – 'soft' skills. In basic terms, these are the attributes that enable individuals to make the most of opportunities that present themselves, to stick with things when the going gets tough, to bounce back from adversity and to forge and maintain meaningful relationships.

"The first important area of impact of Character and Resilience on social mobility is in the underpinning of educational attainment.

In short, cognitive skills do not develop in a vacuum. Instead,

they develop alongside crucial character attributes in what can be seen as a mutually reinforcing process. A child will not benefit from 'academic' learning unless they are in a position to be able to access this learning and such a position is directly linked to a base of skills including motivation, curiosity, conscientiousness and application to task. Indeed, a growing body of evidence suggests that so-called 'soft' skills may often be as closely associated with levels of educational attainment as IQ scores."

Building Resilience

WhyTry builds resilience in youth by focusing on the new "3R's"

- **Relationship:** the key to creating positive change in a child's life does not lie in interventions alone, but in the relationship established with the child by the educator, youth worker, or other adult role model. The WhyTry program asserts that the lasting change and motivation is directly linked to supporting and trusting relationships between youth and mentor. The program uses strategies that allow facilitators to show the youth that he/she has value, worth, and potential as a human being.
- **Relevance:** A youth cannot fully internalize the social and emotional concepts being taught unless he can see how these concepts translate into the everyday experience. The WhyTry program uses a variety of multisensory learning tools to cater to students of every learning style and background.
- **Resilience:** By combining a positive and trusting relationships with relevance and direct application resilience building is achieved. When staff members are trained in a common language surrounding positive relationships, and when students are engaged in relevant, multisensory learning, resilience in all environments in the result. Youth and leaders learn that *day-to-day challenges and adversity can actually be transformed into motivation to succeed in school, career, and life*. This means increased engagement and academic performance in school, a decrease in anti-social behaviour activity, and an overall clearer roadmap for both having and achieving goals and dreams in life.

Implementation Outcomes and Components – The WhyTry Program

- **Description of WhyTry Program:** The WhyTry Program uses visual metaphors to teach social and emotional life skills to students. The program utilizes a multisensory approach that includes music, videos, pictures, activities, journaling, student-led presentations, and art prompts. The goal of the course is to help students build resilience using relevant approaches and tools, and to enable them to thrive both in school and in life.

- **Course Learning Outcomes – Students will:**
 - Understand the extent to which they can control the circumstances, outcomes, and emotions that affect them.
 - Identify personal challenges and methods of turning them into a motivator for additional opportunity, freedom, and self-respect.
- **Implementation Components**
 - The program tries to cater to every learning style using a multisensory approach that includes music, video, pictures, art, experiential activities, journaling, and PowerPoint.
- **Learning Outcomes**
 - **Reality Ride**
 - The student uses the Reality Ride to understand that each decision we make has a consequence, and the decisions we make today directly affect the future. The student is expected to:
 - Recognize the consequences of decisions
 - Illustrate the principles that they always have a choice to try or give up, but trying leads to opportunity, freedom, and self-respect
 - Compare and contrast the decisions of today and how they can affect tomorrow
 - Create and complete a list of attainable goals
 - **Tearing Off Labels**
 - The student uses this unit to understand that negative labels can hurt the future, but positive labels can help us achieve our goals and attain better opportunities. Ultimately, the label we wear depends on us: we can change the negative labels by changing our actions and showing others our strengths and positive traits. The student is expected to:
 - Examine the societal labels placed on people and compare their validity and accuracy
 - Identify where labels come from
 - Identify methods of removing a label or replacing it
 - **Defense Mechanisms**
 - The student uses Defense Mechanisms to understand that pressure situations are best handled by maintaining control of our emotions and selecting positive defense mechanisms (those that don't hurt yourself or others). The student is expected to:
 - Identify a defense mechanism as any behavior to divert attention away from a pressure situation
 - Role play pressure situations and methods of controlling responses to them
 - Compare and contrast the feelings inside versus the outward response
 - Model examples of an increased locus of control
 - Research positive methods of resolving conflict
 - **Motivation Formula**

- The student uses the Motivation Formula to understand that we can take our challenges and channel them in a positive direction: first to better yourself, then to turn outward and help others. The student is expected to:
 - Identify steps to turn challenges into a source of power
 - Describe and model positive self-talk
 - Define and describe what it means to have character and heart
 - Identify personal challenges and methods of turning them into a motivator for additional opportunity, freedom, and self-respect
 - Identify support systems as a means of bridging tough challenges
 - Develop methods of setting goals and using a positive attitude to achieve them
- **Climbing Out**
 - The student uses Climbing Out to understand that when you put the tools from the visual metaphors into action, and when you develop an awareness of the positive and negative ways that others can influence you, you will be prepared to avoid negative behaviors and their consequences. The student is expected to:
 - Describe the crabs in a pot metaphor
 - Develop strength to recognize when you are being held back and develop a plan for making adjustments
 - Compare and contrast real friends with those that are keeping you down
 - Compare and contrast positive and negative peer pressure
 - Identify the need to belong and the importance of choosing the right group
- **Lift the Weight**
 - The student uses Lift the Weight to understand that living by laws and rules and developing self-discipline will make you stronger, opening the doors of opportunity for the future. The student is expected to:
 - Describe the analogy of life's struggle to weight lifting
 - Identify areas of resistance and how it can be used to become stronger
 - Demonstrate the need for positive resistance
 - Compare and contrast positive self-talk and its impact on the negative impulse to give up
 - Explain the need for rules.
- **Jumping Hurdles**
 - The student uses Jumping Hurdles to understand that everyone experiences setbacks, but successful people “jump back up” and keep trying. They know that there are certain steps they can use to help them overcome their challenges and achieve success. The student is expected to:
 - Define challenges that may be hurdles to success

- Recognize the need to step back and try again
 - Research successful individuals that did not succeed the first time
 - Explain the four-step problem-solving strategy and apply it to self-goals
 - Identify steps of creating a plan and communicating the plan
 - Identify methods for accessing positive support systems
- **Desire, Time, and Effort**
 - The student uses this unit to understand that anything worthwhile in life requires desire, time, and effort. There are no shortcuts to achieving success. You will get much further in life by working hard than by simply relying on your talents and abilities. The student is expected to:
 - Explain the division of time into past, present, and future
 - Define the basic steps needed to overcome a challenge
 - Research the rewards for putting time and effort into education
 - Create a list of desires
 - Determine a plan of attainment
 - Describe the cause and effect of completing a task successfully
- **Get Plugged In**
 - The student uses Get Plugged In to understand that getting help is not a weakness but a strength. Challenges become easier when you have a positive support system to help you overcome them. You have the power to create a support system if you don't have one, and the power to strengthen a support system when yours is weak. The student is expected to:
 - Research social networks and their impact on society
 - Identify and describe the five support systems
 - Demonstrate positive communication
 - Identify and use various methods of researching information.
- **The Wall**
 - The student uses The Wall to understand that when you have a clear vision of your future, you have hope for something better, and life's challenges become nothing but temporary obstacles. When you have a limited perspective, it is hard to see beyond the day-to-day challenges, and impossible to dream of a brighter future. The student is expected to:
 - Identify the wall or challenges faced today
 - Identify real life steps to work through the challenges
 - Create the wall metaphor with individualized steps to climb over it
 - Explain how the principles learned in WhyTry can help them get over the Wall.

Evidence/Research

Across multiple third party studies, researchers have documented significant positive changes using WhyTry. Below are evidence highpoints and highlights of a research study. For more details on multiple studies visit www.whytry.org/research

The WhyTry Program helps young people prepare for the future in the following ways:

- Youth, teachers, and caregivers report improved emotional functioning
- Young people perceive themselves as being more capable of learning and accomplishing challenging tasks both now and in the future
- Students show significant improvement in self-control, perseverance, and using a support network
- Youth have a greater ability to initiate and sustain action towards goals and an increased capacity to find the means to carry out goals

WhyTry Evaluation Report 2006-2010 : Group – Classroom lessons over 4 years with over 800 students, age 12

- 73% of students surveyed reported a stronger belief that their actions today affect their future
 - 90% of students surveyed reported a positive change in the degree of their willingness to keep trying
 - 90% reported a belief in a more positive future (as compared to 56% prior)
- Bird, Brandon. "WhyTry Evaluation Report 2006-2010." Churchill County Probation Report, Field Research (2010)

A UK based research study of 200 year 7 students is scheduled for 2016 in partnership with the Brentwood County High School in Brentwood, Essex.

14 September 2015

YMCA England – Written evidence (SMO0085)

Dear Sir or Madam,

YMCA England response to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility inquiry on ‘social mobility in the transition from school to work’

Every year YMCA helps 43,000 young people into training and education. We provide a whole range of employment and training programmes including apprenticeships, vocational training, training courses, informal education and volunteering opportunities. These help to equip young people with the right skills they need to achieve their full potential and to lead independent lives.

Often the young people who access YMCA services have few qualifications and little or no experience of the workplace. As a result job opportunities can be limited and a young person can quickly find themselves in a succession of short-term, part-time, zero-hour contracts. There are many contributing factors as to why a young person reaches a YMCA in this position and there is much the Government could be doing to address this.

The comments and recommendations made within this response are formed after consultation with the young people that access YMCA services and the staff that deliver them across the country.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1.1 The young people accessing YMCA services are often the most vulnerable, with some having experienced family breakdown, abuse, substance misuse and mental health issues. This group of people are likely to find the transition into work particularly difficult. In order to ensure that such issues do not affect their social mobility and employment outcomes it is important that they are provided with support from individuals and organisations that are aware of the potential implications these issues can have in order to be able to succeed in the workplace.

1.2 Young people taking part in YMCA consultations felt that they were often discriminated against by employers. Being of a young age, many do not have the necessary experience required by employers but they are unable to get it without first being given the opportunity.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

- 2.1 In 2013/14²⁸⁶ 278,680 people aged 16-24 started an apprenticeship, which represents 63.3% of all of those starting an apprenticeship in the year. While the overall trend for young people has been positive until recent years, the numbers of 16 and 17 year olds starting an apprenticeship has actually declined by 11,070 in the last ten years. In the same time period, the number of older people (aged 25+) starting an apprenticeship increased by 161,560 and this age group now account for 37% of all apprenticeship starts in England. Many of these young people will not have done A-Levels.
- 2.2 In addition, this group contains many young people in the group who are forced to undertake a series of short-term temporary jobs, which do little to help them achieve long-term and sustained employment. This is often more apparent in the young people accessing job centres who are often forced into agency work. While this is effective in getting people off benefits in the short term, it does little to address the long-term employment outcomes of the young person as they are into a low-pay no-pay cycle with little consideration of their aspirations.
- 3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-level and higher educational route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?**
- 3.1 Leaving secondary education without the necessary qualifications can potentially damage a young person's prospects, but too often students who are struggling with the traditional academic path are often not given the necessary support.
- 3.2 At the heart of YMCA's beliefs is that people should always have the opportunity to better themselves. However, despite having the opportunities in front of them, the journey through the educational system can be disrupted for some young people due to having to deal with difficult personal circumstances that prohibits them from progressing the first time around.
- 3.3 Accessing training and education at a later stage is vital for these young people; however, a barrier to this is the removal of entitlement to full-time education of those over 19-years-old. Accordingly, YMCA is calling on the Government to extend the upper age limit for funding of training and education from 19 to 21-years-old to help ensure that young people with difficult pasts do not have poor employment outcomes.
- 3.4 Regardless of ability, it is difficult to make the right educational and career choices without being fully informed of the scale of options. The quality of careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) has traditionally been patchy at best. IAG should be treated as a specialist service that is delivered by qualified IAG

²⁸⁶ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, Statistical Data set: FE data library: apprenticeships <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

professionals rather than teachers. This service is even more important for those young people who do not wish to follow the A-level to university route.

- 3.5 Accordingly, young people are not being made aware of the different pathways available and especially those alternatives to mainstream education such as vocational training and apprenticeships. These courses can have a huge impact on a young person's ability to find work and their employment outcomes, but in many cases they are simply not known about.
- 3.6 The inclusion of employers and businesses in the classroom and the introduction of compulsory work experience, which is relevant and of a good quality, as a part of secondary school education would also aid in the widening of a young person's level of understanding prior to making decisions on their future. A strong dialogue between schools and employers would also help to tackle the bias towards traditional academic pathways that is often present in schools.
- 3.7 Many young people taking part in YMCA consultations felt that they were not ready for work, and the new challenges that employment would bring. Compulsory work experience would also provide young people with a taste of working life and help them make the transition into employment.
- 3.8 In addition to work experience, work readiness courses should be made available for young people who lack the confidence to enter into the work place. These would provide young people with the skills needed to enter into a working environment and make them more desirable to employers.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- 4.1 Early intervention is key to help those young people who may struggle to enter into work. Additional funding should be made available to schools to target those young people less likely to succeed, raising their attainment levels and allowing them to have an equal chance of success.
- 4.2 One example of a successful early intervention project is Teesdale YMCA Training Centre which was set up as a direct result of listening to the needs of young people in the area who were struggling within a traditional school environment and in need of accessing education delivered in a different way. The aim of the project is to allow young people to learn in an environment that suits their own style of learning - a more practical way of learning rather than classroom based.²⁸⁷

²⁸⁷ <http://www.teesdaleymca.com/training-education-2/>

- 4.3 While the Government's focus and drive for apprenticeships as an alternative option for young people is welcomed, the application in practice has not been as successful. There still remains a difficulty for particular age groups to access apprenticeships and being able to maintain participation is challenging when in receipt of Housing Benefit or a low wage.
- 4.4 Accordingly, YMCA is calling for a review of the current apprenticeships policy with a particular focus on what additional incentives would help encourage more companies to take on apprentices – particularly those aged 16 – 24.
- 4.5 One of the most consistent complaints from young people taking part in YMCA consultations is the regulations around the 16-hour rule and their ability to again adequate training while on benefits. Due to the limited number of part-time courses available, the 16-hour rule stops a substantial amount of training being undertaken and hinders the development of young people whilst in receipt of benefits, which in turn inhibits their ability to find employment.
- 4.6 The Government should mitigate this barrier by amending the regulations which prevent young people from participating on course or training for over 16 hours per week whilst still claiming Jobseeker's Allowance or Universal Credit.
- 4.7 For those young people who have left school without the necessary academic achievements due to substance abuse issues, it is important that a holistic approach to treatment is taken. As such, while it is important that employment support workers help them into work, this must be done in conjunction with continued support and guidance on health needs. Recovering from addiction is a complex process and relapses are frequent. Employers must recognise this and goals and targets must be realistic for the individual.
- 4.8 More funding should be available for employers to allow for reasonable adjustments to be put in place to support individuals in need into work. This could include the provision of tailored in-work support to help aid people through the transition from unemployment to employment, whether that is internally or externally via a specialist support worker.
- 4.9 Similarly, those young people whose academic path has been affected by mental health conditions must be appropriately supported when finding and undertaking work. A fear of discrimination and being stigmatised means that young people often do not feel comfortable telling employers about existing health conditions, which can worsen their effects and lead to problems sustaining work.
- 4.10 Poor mental health can have a dramatic impact on the prospects of a young person's life, yet too often young people are not getting the support they need. For both young people and YMCA staff there is a complete lack of trust or confidence in the National Health Service (NHS) to support them with poor mental health. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) are seen as ineffective, unhelpful and

poorly operated. The waiting lists for an appointment are too long and young people often get lost when transferring from CAMHS to adult mental health services.

- 4.11 YMCA is calling on the waiting times for CAMHS to be cut, with access to a first appointment to be available within a week. In addition the age limit for the service should be increased to 21 years old, and where possible a single key worker should be assigned to ensure that continuity and trust can be developed.
- 4.12 Interventions to help tackle young people's mental health conditions are likely to have a positive impact on the lives of those facing long-term health conditions and help them to access and sustain work. Effective treatment can help to mitigate the effects of such conditions, helping the wellbeing of the young person and improving their employment outcomes.
- 4.13 Young people taking part in YMCA consultations reported feeling alienated from job centres and the support that they are designed to provide. While examples of good practice exist, the majority of young people felt that job centres were not currently capable of delivering what young people need to find work.
- 4.14 To help make them more effective in supporting young people through the transition from education to employment, YMCA is calling for Jobcentre Plus advisors to be trained and supported to better understand the difficulties and barriers that young people commonly face to enable them to provide more tailored support.
- 4.15 Many young people felt that the training courses they needed to participate in were not available via the job centre and this was a barrier to employment. Young people should be able to source their own training schemes and have the opportunity to make the case to their job centre work coaches as to why it will improve their employment prospects.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- 5.1 A holistic approach is required to improve the system to support the transition into work for school leavers.
- 5.2 This support should be targeted at different stages in a young person's life, not just at the point when they finish school and are faced with the prospect of finding work. Whether it be through appropriate alternative methods of education or impartial careers advice, a young person must be fully equipped to enter the job market when they leave school.
- 5.3 In those cases where a young person cannot immediately find work, it is important that the job centre is effective in providing the employment services it is designed to do. Too often young people's experiences have shown job centres to be ineffective

and more of a benefit processing centre than a genuinely supportive service which help young people enter into work and fulfil their aspirations.

If you require any further information or have any follow-up questions regarding our response, please do not hesitate to get in touch using the contact details included.

Yours faithfully,



Denise Hatton
YMCA England
Chief Executive

14 September 2015

YMCA Training – Written evidence (SMO0077)

YMCA Training's Response to the House of Lords Committee Inquiry into Social Mobility

September 2015

Introduction

1. The YMCA was established in 1844 and is the largest and oldest youth charity in the world, helping over 60 million people in 120 countries worldwide.
2. YMCA Training, as part of the worldwide YMCA movement, is a locally responsive charity which has helped over one million people to date; it is one of the largest voluntary sector training providers in the country and works with some of the most troubled young people in society with the transition from school to further study and employment.
3. YMCA Training currently has 22 centres which provide courses including vocational training programmes, traineeships, apprenticeships and courses for employers. Our tailored and holistic provision involves employers in the training process, engages and raises aspirations of participants and provides progression routes from pre-16 to level 4.
4. Most of YMCA Training's programmes receive Government funding via the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

Question One

5. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?
6. Factors which affect social mobility are vast and can have a direct or indirect impact on employment outcomes. For this question YMCA Training will focus on factors which we

believe can have a direct impact on young people, these include: work experience, academic qualifications, careers guidance, confidence and self-belief.

7. Work experience: YMCA Training often finds that employers are less likely to hire a young person who has little or no work experience due to the cost and time associated with training.
8. Recent statistics have shown that 66% of employers say work experience is a critical or significant factor in their recruitment, however, the proportion of employers offering work experience is just 30%²⁸⁸. This has created a 'Catch-22' situation for young people looking to find entry level employment.
9. Academic Qualifications: YMCA Training also finds that qualifications upon leaving school can impact greatly on social mobility. For example, for a young person to gain employment or progress to a college course or further study, GCSE English and Maths at grade A*-C are often the minimum requirement.
10. Young people without work experience and without English and Maths GCSE's at grade A*-C are usually left facing very limited options. Unfortunately, this is a situation many young people find themselves in.
11. Careers guidance: A further significant element to consider when assessing social mobility is careers advice during school years. From our experience, we find that young people can often progress through school without knowing what their employment options are should they not follow the A-Level route.

²⁸⁸ UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), 2015. *Catch 16-24: Youth Employment Challenge*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/404997/15.02.18_Youth_report_V17.pdf

12. Recent research compiled by the Association of Colleges (AoC) found that 63% of young people could name A-Levels as post GCSE course, whereas only 7% named apprenticeships²⁸⁹.
13. Additionally, alternative options to the academic route can often seem uninspiring to young people. This in part can be due to alternative options such as apprenticeships being mistakenly viewed as low quality, low skilled options.
14. Confidence: When transitioning from school to the work place, a certain level of confidence, self-belief and resilience needs to be in place for an individual to be able to fully consider their options, to apply for positions and attend interviews.
15. Far too often young people lack the self-belief needed to consider what they would like to pursue as a career. Confidence and self-belief should therefore be considered as important factors when assessing social mobility and employment outcomes.

Question Two

16. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?
17. YMCA Training work with a large number of individuals aged 14-24 who have not followed the A-Level route and we will answer the three sub questions in order:

²⁸⁹ House of Commons Library Briefing, 2015. *Careers guidance in schools, colleges and universities*. Available at - <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7236>

18. Who are they? Our learners range in age from pre 16 to 50+ and comprise of individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds and ethnicities.
19. The majority of the young people we work with are from hard to reach groups in deprived areas or from disadvantaged backgrounds. Our learners can commonly experience dysfunctional home lives, homelessness and mental illness.
20. A number of individuals who take up courses with us are not classified as 'work ready' - they may not have the qualifications, work experience, interview skills or support needed to obtain employment.
21. Why are they in this position? There are a variety of reasons for this, for many young people learning 'on the job' is a much more suitable and accessible way of gaining qualifications and staying in employment long term.
22. A number of young people we work with are also referred to us from school, pupil referral units (PRU's), the Jobcentre and the youth offending service or by carers, parents or housing associations as they may not have the qualifications or work experience needed to gain employment.
23. What are their career trajectories? The career prospects for individuals we work with before they begin a training course or apprenticeship are usually poor.
24. School leavers who approach YMCA Training often have little or no work experience and insufficient qualifications to gain employment. As mentioned in question one, employers are usually less willing to hire young people who have no work experience or qualifications.

Question Three

25. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?
26. From YMCA Training's perspective, the current system as a whole does not adequately support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route.
27. Challenges young people can face when transitioning from school to employment include the prospect of becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training), a lack of secure jobs available and problems with upskilling whilst on unemployment benefits.
28. From April-June 2015²⁹⁰ 922,000 people aged 16-24 were classed as NEET. While statistics show that overall the number of young people classed as NEET is decreasing, the cause of this decrease is largely contested.
29. Central YMCA in their Two Futures Report 'the Lost or Found Generation' in March 2015 highlighted that certain groups are more 'at risk' of becoming NEET, for example, a young person is twice as likely to become NEET if they have a dependent child, if they have had fewer than three months in post 16 education or if they had been supervised

²⁹⁰ OECD, 2015. *Youth not in education or employment (NEET)*. Available at - <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lms/young-people-not-in-education--employment-or-training--neets-/august-2015/stb-neet-august-2015.html>

by a youth offending team in the past. Furthermore, a young person is almost eight times more likely to become NEET if they had been NEET previously²⁹¹.

30. These statistics are important to help demonstrate the lack of support certain groups of young people can experience when transitioning from school to employment and the clear need for further support for groups who are 'at risk' of becoming NEET.
31. Young people who do not follow the academic route can also frequently find themselves in low skilled employment without training prospects. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) in their 'Catch 16-24' report highlighted that for young people the labour market is fierce and without the right experience and qualifications young people are finding themselves competing for the lowest paid and most insecure jobs²⁹²
32. The report found that young people are often recruited into lower level roles and statistics have demonstrated that a fifth of employers said the last young person they recruited was to an elementary role, with only 5% saying that they hired a young person into a professional role²⁹³.
33. Challenges young people face when transitioning from school to employment can also include problems with the benefits system; one of the most common being the 16 hour rule.

²⁹¹ Central YMCA, 2015. *Two Futures Report; the Lost or Found Generation?* Available at: <http://www.ymca.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Central-YMCA-Two-Futures-Report-v4-NO-BLEED.pdf>

²⁹² UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), 2015. *Catch 16-24: Youth Employment Challenge*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/404997/15.02.18_Youth_report_V17.pdf

²⁹³ UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), 2015. *Catch 16-24: Youth Employment Challenge*. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/404997/15.02.18_Youth_report_V17.pdf

34. The 16 hour rule refers to the maximum number of hours per week an individual can study at college without being classed as a full-time student for the purposes of unemployment benefit.
35. The 16 hour rule can act as a barrier when individuals try to access skills courses due to the lack of part time courses available, this in turn can affect their prospects of gaining employment.
36. The Government recognised that the 16 hour rule can act as a barrier and removed the 16 hour rule for traineeships, YMCA Training believe that the 16 hour rule should also be removed for other short, full time, skills study programmes, for example literacy or numeracy courses.
37. Another significant barrier to employment for young people from 2017 will be the removal of automatic housing benefit entitlement for 18 to 21 year olds.
38. For a large number of young people, claiming housing benefit is not a choice but a necessity and the importance of having a stable home when taking up training or employment is often underestimated.
39. As a minimum, exemptions to the automatic removal of housing benefit should include; all individuals in supported housing, all individuals who have been in care, young people who have a dependent child, homeless young people or those estranged from their parents. Exemptions should also include those who are currently on an apprenticeship or on a study course.

40. The removal of this rule for young people would ensure they are secure in their homes and it would increase the likelihood of them completing programmes and finding long-term employment.

Question Four

41. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?
42. With the participation age rising to 18 this year, it is more important than ever to ensure young people are well informed about the career routes and qualifications available to them.
43. To ensure every child is well informed of their options and to increase the uptake of apprenticeships and other vocational and skills based courses, we would suggest a full review of careers guidance policy in schools.
44. The transition from school to work could also be improved by a greater investment in traineeships as a tried and tested successful programme.
45. Employers could be encouraged to employ more young people from this group if they had better access to Government incentives. For example, smaller businesses often lack the flexibility larger employers have and can lose out on incentives. Also, in certain sectors such as health and care or personal training, employers are reluctant to hire apprentices under 19 years of age and therefore do not benefit from the full recovery of training costs for apprentices.

46. To ensure all businesses can benefit from this incentive we would like to see the full recovery of training costs extended to those aged 19 and over in sectors where employers are reluctant to hire a younger apprentice.
47. YMCA Training has also found that smaller employers struggle with the requirement that an apprentice must be employed for at least 30 hours per week, except in highly exceptional circumstances²⁹⁴. We would suggest that this rule is relaxed and exemptions are broadened to allow smaller businesses and certain sectors to benefit from apprenticeships.

Question Five

48. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?
49. Local working groups could be developed to improve support for school leavers and consist of employers, schools and training providers to provide localised support for young people. Especially those who chose to not follow the A-Level route.

Recommendations

YMCA Training recognise that there are wide ranging factors which can affect the social mobility of young people and through our experience we have developed a number of key recommendations for the Committee to consider:

YMCA Training recommend:

²⁹⁴ House of Commons Library Briefing, 2015. *Apprenticeships Policy*. Available at - <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7278>

- A full review of careers advice in schools.
- Increased funding for traineeships.
- A review into work experience provided for children of secondary school age.
- The removal of the 16 hour rule for short full time skills study courses.
- Exemptions from the removal of automatic housing benefit entitlement.
- A review into employer incentives and a relaxation of the 30 hour rule.

YMCA Training applaud the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee's work to date and hope we have contributed in a constructive manner. YMCA Training would also be willing to give oral evidence to the Committee should the opportunity arise.

14 September 2015

Young Enterprise – Written evidence (SMO0122)

Young Enterprise response to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee’s inquiry into social mobility in the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds

What we do:

Young Enterprise welcomes the formation of the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee and the opportunity to respond to its inquiry into social mobility in the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds.

As the UK’s leading enterprise and financial education charity, Young Enterprise works with a range of young people within the cohort identified by the Committee – 14-24 year olds who are neither classified as NEET nor take the route from school to higher education – and helps to raise their ambitions and understanding of work through the range of our programmes.

Taken together, Young Enterprise’s programmes are available for young people aged 4-25 and are offered both in schools at primary and secondary level as well as in further and higher education. We also provide teachers with resources to help them deliver engaging and accessible financial education to students.

Our enterprise range from one-day interventions to year-long programmes, with each delivery led by our own staff. Our programmes include:

- [Company Programme](#) – our flagship programme which allows 15-19 year olds to set up their own business for a year and make all the decisions about the company, from raising the initial share capital through to designing their own product, selling directly to customers and paying their taxes. Over 2,000 new businesses – created and led by over 21,000 students – were launched by 15-19 year olds through this programme alone this year, with a combined turnover of over £2 million.
- [Team Programme](#) – a tailored enterprise scheme allowing young people with learning difficulties or disabilities to set up their own business – the only programme of its kind in the UK.
- [Women in Business](#) – a year-long programme, delivered in partnership with the Government Equalities Office, providing an unparalleled opportunity for female undergraduates to bring a product or service to the market.
- [Fiver](#) and [Tenner](#) – nationwide competitions, supported by Virgin Money and Business Growth Fund, where young people at primary and secondary levels create a new business with just £5 or £10 and compete to make the most profit and social impact over the course of a month.
- [Learn to Earn](#) – one of our most popular one-day programmes which helps students to think about their career choices and what kind of qualifications they would need to pursue them. This sits alongside our wider range of programmes, delivered across primary and secondary level, aimed at providing students with a greater understanding of the working world.

In addition to these core programmes, we also have a number of initiatives that are targeted at vulnerable groups in society, including those at risk of becoming NEET. Recent examples include:

- Work with the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) to extend the reach of our programmes in [six areas of high deprivation](#), announced in June 2015, ensuring that

young people from these schools have an opportunity to engage with inspirational FSB volunteers and better understand the world of work.

- **'Be Enterprising, Be Successful'** programme, delivered in partner launched in 2014 and delivered with the support of the Big Lottery Fund, which is set to help 16,000 young people from a number of deprived areas of the country to engage in enterprise programmes to help develop key employability skills such as teamwork and resilience.
- Our provision of professional development for those with direct responsibility for delivering education to vulnerable young people, helping to 'train the trainer' on financial education issues so that they are able to help ensure that the young people under their supervision develop key money management skills.

Our extensive involvement with schools, local and national businesses, and teachers across the breadth of the country provides us with frontline knowledge of the opportunities and barriers that young people, including disadvantaged students, face when making the transition from education to employment.

Relevance of Young Enterprise to social mobility

Young Enterprise welcomes the Committee's focus on social mobility and the opportunities available to young people from deprived backgrounds, particularly given the current state of play as outlined in the reports mentioned below. In undertaking this inquiry, we believe it is important that the Committee is clear about its definition of social mobility from the outset. In particular, the Committee asks about outcomes for 14-24 year olds who fall between those who are NEET and those who go on to higher education 'in terms of income and quality of employment'.

We firmly support an approach to social mobility that looks beyond a narrow focus solely on measures of absolute income and earnings, and instead also recognises the value of other measures that contribute to economic security such as stability of employment and how far individuals are able to progress in their chosen career.

At its core, approaches to social mobility within the education system should have a strong focus on helping 'pre-NEETs' (those who, without support, are likely to become NEET) succeed in the workplace and ensuring that they do not fall into unemployment. This very much fits in with our own activities across the country, including through tailored programmes for disadvantaged areas as outlined below.

Young Enterprise's impact on social mobility

Young Enterprise recognises the powerful role that education can play in driving social mobility, including through the work of our own programmes. We actively ensure that our educational

activities are open to all so that all young people, including those from deprived backgrounds, can benefit.

In addition to our key programmes we have also established a number of specific initiatives in recent years targeted at helping those from deprived backgrounds to gain key employability skills. As outlined above, some very recent examples include:

- Our 'Be Enterprising, Be Successful' project is aimed at providing 16,000 young people from ten deprived areas in the UK – from Portsmouth to Newcastle – with hands-on enterprise activities to enhance their chances of staying in education or training and securing a job.

- Our partnership with the Federation of Small Businesses to help extend the reach of our Company Programme in six areas of high deprivation in the UK, with FSB members mentoring students from these schools and providing advice on how to work in a business throughout the 2015/16 academic year.

Alongside this work, we also recognise that our local staff – located across the breadth of the country – are best placed to understand the specific barriers affecting social mobility amongst young people from deprived backgrounds in their own area. Many of them engage young people through our programmes with programmes specific and tailored for their area.

Case study – Young Enterprise in partnership with Surrey Youth Support Service:

In 2013-2014 Young Enterprise ran a one year pilot employability and enterprise programme in partnership with Surrey Youth Support Service as part of their ‘Ready 4 Work’ scheme and wider employability objectives for young people who are NEET.

The pilot was for four real life enterprise based projects amongst 16-19 year olds, to be run by an experienced Young Enterprise Manager, supported by volunteer business advisers with the engagement of Youth Support staff. The projects took place at four separate work based youth settings in Guildford, Woking, Elmbridge and Surrey Heath between September 2013 and July 2014.

The key objective of the pilot was to provide young people with the opportunity to build and enhance their individual self esteem, sense of inclusion in the wider community and employability chances - through creating and running their own team-based business and enterprise initiatives where they operated real life companies and kept all their net profits.

Participants experienced significant strengthening of their core employment competencies, such as creativeness, organisation and leadership. More than 90% of attendees went onto into further training, formal apprenticeships, college places or straight into jobs and this was deemed to be a particularly successful year for Surrey in decreasing still further the number of NEETs.

The Managing Director of the Young Enterprise company in the Walton group also went on to join the Surrey Youth Support staff, while several others were accepted on to full apprenticeship training contracts such as with Hounslow Housing, while another went on to full-time retail management training with ASDA.

- Over two thirds of participants agreed that the experience has influenced their destination choices with 67% agreeing that the programme had been helpful in defining what they want to do when finishing school.

This positive impact on employability and confidence is also reflected amongst those specifically taking part in our programmes targeted at deprived areas. An analysis of the impact of our ‘Be Enterprising, Be Successful’ programme (January 2015) has found that 98% of young people who took part in the initiative in its first year showed an increase in at least one employability skill, with 80% also recording an increase in raised aspirations.

Need to ensure social mobility

We do, however, recognise that there remains a number of barriers to ensuring young people from deprived backgrounds are afforded the same opportunities in employment as those from more affluent backgrounds. Factors underpinning these barriers are complex and varied, as outlined by a number of recent reports, including:

- Research from the [Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission](#) (July 2015) highlighting that more advantaged parents are able to secure educational opportunities and connections in the labour market for their children, and invest in their children's 'soft skills' which are highly valued in the employment recruitment process. This has resulted in less able, better-off children being 35% more likely to become high earners than more able but deprived children.
- Demos' [Learning by Doing](#) (June 2015) report finding that *'large numbers of young people in the UK – particularly from disadvantaged backgrounds – do not have enough opportunity to take part in non-formal learning and are therefore at risk of not developing key skills important for success'*.

At the same time, we know that businesses place particular value on these 'soft skills' gained through non-formal learning, with the [CBI/Pearson survey](#) (July 2015) of over 300 businesses revealing that attitudes (85%) and aptitudes (58%) rank as the most important factors they weigh up when recruiting school and college leavers, well ahead of formal qualifications.

We therefore have a mismatch between the skills needed by businesses and the opportunities available particularly for disadvantaged young people, including those in the 14-24 age range, to

develop these skills. This underlines the need for all schools to provide opportunities for young people to develop their soft skills, underpinned by coordinated government policy aimed at widening access and ensuring consistency of opportunities for students to engage in the world of work from a young age.

Raising awareness of career options

Ensuring young people fully understand the employment options available to them upon leaving education is, in our view, one of the most important drivers of social mobility in education. We know, through the work of our Young Enterprise Managers delivering on the ground across the country, that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds need to be aware of the choices they have in terms of careers and jobs well before they leave school, and that there are other routes available to them beyond the traditional route from school to higher education.

In particular, it is important that young people have the knowledge to make the right choices for themselves and are in a position to understand the costs and benefits of different employment types and jobs available, rather than opting for the most immediate and easily available role. They need to be able to know what is right for their circumstances and whether they would be able to manage their money based on the employment role on offer.

We also need to ensure that young people within this cohort (14-24 year olds) are able to take a long term view in relation to the benefits of employment. It may, for example, be initially more tempting for a young person upon leaving school to accept a job offering the minimum wage than undertake an apprenticeship below minimum wage, despite for many the latter being the better and more relevant career option for them in the long term.

Awareness and understanding of finance and money management – driven by high quality financial education – also remains important for social mobility in terms of stability of

employment. Understanding how much tax you pay each month (e.g. the difference between gross and net pay) and being aware of other potential rewards in employment (e.g. employer pension contributions) can help to ensure that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds enter employment on stable and advantageous ground.

Policy recommendations for driving awareness of career options

Building on Young Enterprise's own work in schools, we believe that driving awareness of these options, and ensuring young people have the knowledge to choose employment routes suitable for their circumstances and ambitions and are able to manage their money once in employment, should be a public policy priority for the government in its efforts to encourage social mobility.

National curriculum – enterprise and financial education

Enterprise and financial education, such as that delivered by Young Enterprise, can play a crucial role in driving this awareness. However, in order to ensure that all students have access to this – regardless of their background – there needs to be consistency between schools across the country.

The introduction of financial education as statutory aspects of Key Stage 3 and 4 Maths and Citizenship in England in the 2014/15 academic year was a great step forward in ensuring this consistency. We need to build on this important development by ensuring similar consistency in the development of employability skills.

Providing statutory status for PSHE education at both primary and secondary level – with a strong focus on enterprise – would help to instil important work-ready and money management skills amongst students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

There is an obvious demand for statutory PSHE education for all young people. Research from the PSHE Association has found that 92% of young people, 88% of teachers, 87% of parents and 85% of business leaders would support this development. The Education Select Committee and the Children's Commissioner have similarly backed these proposals. We encourage the government to recognise the role that statutory PSHE education could play in driving awareness of employment options for those who do not wish to take the route to higher education upon leaving school.

Volunteers from business

We also know from our extensive engagement with business volunteers that inspirational role-models from the world of work also have an important role to play in raising young people's ambitions, and their involvement in the education system often marks their first interaction with a local employer.

It is clear that businesses recognise this potential impact and there is clear appetite from firms across the country for getting more involved in the education sector in order to boost entrepreneurialism and the employability of young people. 80% of businesses now have links of some type with at least one school or college, with over 55% of these increasing their engagement over the past year.

Diversity of role-models is key: young people need to be able to relate to them and their own educational journey. In particular, the involvement of a diverse range of local employers is particularly important for those 14-24 year olds not intending to study at higher education – many of these often look to secure employment with such employers in their local area, so greater interaction can be helpful in providing them with useful industry contacts.

For business volunteers, too, their involvement within the education system helps to dispel outdated perceptions about attainment levels and ambition of those not planning on attending university. Many business advisers on our own programme highlight the impact of volunteering on raising their awareness of the range of skillsets that this group of young

people possess, with some even identifying potential future employees during their involvement.

It is important that we build on existing good practice in business engagement and encourage a spirit of volunteering across the UK, removing barriers to involvement of those willing to offer their expertise to students in entering different job markets. We believe the Careers and Enterprise Company can play an important role in further facilitating this involvement and, in turn, preparing work-ready employees entering the workforce for the first time.

The broader principle of embedding individuals from industry within the education system is also important and should be encouraged. We welcome the Secretary of State for Education's recent comments on encouraging those from business to change careers to teaching. In order to further this encouragement, and to facilitate additional school-business engagement, we believe the

Government should consider introducing one-year placements for those from industry to train as teachers and teach in a school. This, in turn, would further help to change business perceptions of the abilities and skills of those who do not intend to study at university after school.

Careers guidance

Careers guidance also plays a crucial role in raising awareness of different career options available to young people, including those that do not require a degree from a higher educational institution. Young Enterprise welcomes the statutory guidance from the Department for Education and its focus from Year 8 upwards in England, but believes that this needs to start earlier.

While we agree about the importance of providing this guidance for Year 8 students, particularly given that some schools are 'collapsing' Key Stage 3 and asking students to make GCSE choices in Year 9, it is important that an understanding of work and career options available is built from a young age.

Early intervention is crucial given that attitudes towards work are formed early: for those from families not currently engaged in work it is particularly important that we provide this awareness and inspiration to help prevent negative perceptions of employment developing. We would therefore support appropriate careers guidance being made statutory from an earlier age, with consideration given to making it statutory at primary level in England.

We also believe it is important that careers guidance reflects the increasingly changing nature of the workplace and what this entails for viable career options. For example, the rise of the digital economy has reduced start-up costs and helped to create a new wave of self-employment opportunities for young people. Understanding these workplace trends should be an important part of careers advice, and business volunteers also have a role to play in raising awareness of this.

Young Enterprise hope that this response is of assistance to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee, and would be happy to expand on our response further if that would be of interest.

24 September 2015

Young Womens Trust – Written evidence (SMO0046)

Consultation response

Social mobility in the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds

Introduction

The Young Women's Trust is pleased to respond to this important inquiry conducted by the Select Committee on Social Mobility.

Young Women's Trust is a small, dynamic charity that aims to improve lifelong opportunities for young women aged 16-30 by addressing the poverty, inequality and discrimination that many of them face. We have a proud history, having been founded over 150 years ago as YWCA England & Wales. We are particularly concerned about young women who have few or no qualifications; are unemployed or in precarious or insecure employment; and are on very low or no pay.

Our vision is of a society which respects and listens to young women, actively encourages their self-confidence and where they have the opportunity to be financially independent and participate fully. We aim to demonstrate the reality of young women's lives, gathering their views and voices to promote good practice and good policy.

Throughout 2014 and 2015 the Young Women's Trust carried out an inquiry called '*Scarred for Life?*' which examined why young women are NEET and what the impact is on them. This resulted in several recommendations – about further education, apprenticeships, careers advice and accountability – that are relevant to the Select Committee's area of interest. This response draws on that report, and the background research Young Women's Trust gathered about worklessness and gender.

Following *Scarred for Life?* Young Women's Trust have launched their Apprenticeship Campaign. Throughout 2015-16 we are calling for government, employers and training providers to make a wider range of apprenticeships inclusive and valuable for young women. The literature review, polling and focus groups to support this campaign provide further evidence that answers the Select Committee's questions.

Most importantly, our submission to this consultation:

- Highlights the importance of gender when considering the transition between school and employment. If the Committee is interested in improving the social mobility of all young people, they must consider how young women's needs and concerns differ from young men's.
- Calls for change when it comes to apprenticeships. The application process, careers advice, pay and flexibility are all areas that need to be examined if young women are to take up rewarding apprenticeships in the same numbers as young men, with equal pay and prospects.
- Asks for better accountability and data. We would like to see a Minister for youth employment appointed, whose work would be supported by data on young people's employment cut by age and gender.

Should the Committee wish to hear oral evidence from Young Women's Trust, we would be delighted to find young women who can speak directly to the Committee about their experiences of transitioning between school and the work place.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

The transition from full-time education to the labour market can be a delicate process. The education and work options open to each young person – and the decisions they make – are influenced by societal norms, government policy, education providers, and employers.

As part of the *Scarred for Life?* inquiry, Young Women’s Trust conducted a thorough literature review which identified the reasons why people – and young women in particular – become NEET. Labour market structure; family and personal circumstances; social exclusion; and educational attainment all have significant impact on a person’s likelihood of being NEET. The availability and quality of careers advice, vocational training and apprenticeships (including pay) also have an effect, as does an individual’s mental health. There is evidence that gender exacerbates these factors to bring about poorer social mobility and employment outcomes for women than men. For instance, 27% of female employees are paid below the living wage, compared to 16% of male employees.²⁹⁵

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

In their Call for Evidence document, the Select Committee makes reference to Spours et al’s definition of an ‘over-looked middle’ of young people who are in education, employment or training but do not pursue A-Levels and go into Higher Education. Spours et al (2012) say this group includes 14-19 year olds undertaking, or having achieved, the following levels of qualification:

- *Level 2 (five GCSE A* to C grades or equivalent), but are dependent on credit from vocational qualifications and/or lack GCSE in maths and English;*
- *Part of Level 2 – a mix of GCSE A-G grades;*
- *Level 1 – lower GCSE grades;*
- *Level 3 programmes, but who fail to complete two-years of study*
- *Level 2 programmes, usually applied or broad vocational*
- *Level 1 specialist vocational programmes*

According to the authors, one thing in common among those in the ‘over-looked middle’ is that they are less likely than those doing A-levels and Higher Education to have a clear or vertical progression route with recognised outcomes in work or higher education.²⁹⁶

We know that young women and young men experience the transition from school to work differently. For instance young women aged 16-30 who are NEET are more likely than NEET young men to be caring for children and family. They are also highly likely to want work locally – 86% of young women NEET told us that having a job close to home is important to them.²⁹⁷ We also know that even those young women who pursue A-levels and go to

²⁹⁵ Young Women’s Trust (2015) *Scarred for Life? Literature Review*

http://www.youngwomenstrust.org/assets/0000/1701/Scarred_for_Life-Literature_Review-March_2015.pdf

²⁹⁶ Spours et al. (2012) ‘The “over-looked middle” in 14+ education and training: Becoming the new NEETs?’ Centre for Post-14 Research and Innovation, Institute of Education, University of London.

²⁹⁷ Young Women’s Trust (2015) *Scarred for Life?*
http://www.youngwomenstrust.org/what_we_do/inquiry p. 4.

university end up disadvantaged in the labour market compared to men. The gender pay gap attests to that. It would appear that there is a similar gender divide in the 'over-looked middle', but there is currently a paucity of evidence that provides a detailed picture of the young women included in this group.

However, our research provides some insight about the concerns and trajectories of young women who are undertaking or want to undertake apprenticeships. Many large employers often require apprentices to have these as a minimum qualification.²⁹⁸ Here, apprenticeships policy limits (or 'squeezes') women who are NEET or in the 'over-looked middle'. There is evidence from employers, such as Barclays, who have abandoned entry requirements that show that successful completion of apprenticeships has remained unaffected. Young Women's Trust has been advocating for removing entry requirements to support the transitions of disadvantaged group including the 130,000 young women who do not achieve five A*-C grades at GCSE.

Polling commissioned by Young Women's Trust this year with ComRes also demonstrated that young men and young women have different priorities for apprenticeships. Women are interested in the immediate advantages whereas men are more interested in bigger advantages at a later date – perhaps because women are less likely to be able to afford to take a hit while they work for long-term goals. 44% of men said an apprenticeship would be more appealing if it led to a highly paid job in the future, compared to 29% of women. Being flexible to fit around caring commitments was also twice as important to women: 15% compared to 7% of men. Supporting young women to meet their immediate needs, which might include caring and family commitments, would appear to be critical factor in assuring their successful transition from school to the work place.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges to these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

The Young Women's Trust is currently campaigning for government and employers to help women to take part in a wide range of apprenticeships in the same numbers as men. Alternatives to A-Level and Higher Education exist but they need to be made desirable, both to young people and employers if they are to offer genuine opportunities for progression, For young women specifically changes are needed to make more these routes more accessible and to ensure they give young women the same benefits they do to men. The government is positioning apprenticeships as the main alternative to the A-level/HE route. In coalition the Conservatives claim to have created 2.2 million apprenticeships between 2010 and 2015, and they plan to create a further 3 million by 2020. Despite the government's efforts, there is evidence that apprenticeships are viewed by many, including careers advisors and parents, as a secondary option to A-levels/HE.²⁹⁹ 92% of parents were positive about apprenticeships, but when it came to their own children only a third would recommend an apprenticeship as the best choice.³⁰⁰ The current education system is also biased towards academic routes.³⁰¹ Still, there is demand for apprenticeships. Certainly the 1,127,000 people who applied for 106,510 places in 2012 must have considered an apprenticeship desirable.³⁰²

²⁹⁸ Ibid p. 10.

²⁹⁹ Williams et al (2013), Research into under-representation, by gender and ethnicity, in Apprenticeships, Institute of Employment Studies.

³⁰⁰ O'Leary, D., Wybron, I. (2015), The Commission on Apprenticeships. Demos.

³⁰¹ Wolf, A. (2011), Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report, Department for Education.

³⁰² NAS apprenticeship index, January 2013.

What is most concerning to Young Women's Trust is the disparity in apprenticeship outcomes between men and women. According to research commissioned by BIS and the SFA, on the whole apprentices reap substantial returns in terms of earnings and employment prospects. But in general, women get lower returns than men. For instance, on average men achieving apprenticeships at Level 2 see an employment probability return of 4.6-5.0 percentage points, whereas female achievers see a return of between 2.9-3.5 percentage points.³⁰³

Polling that Young Women's Trust have commissioned from ComRes adds further cause for concern. We found that:

- On average female apprentices earn just £4.82 an hour compared with £5.85 an hour for male apprentices. For a young woman working 35 hours a week this equates to £2000 over the course of a year.
- Young women were also more likely than young men to be out of work after completing an apprenticeship. 16% women were unemployed compared to 6% men.
- Young women were more likely to miss out on training. 7% said they received no training at work, compared with 4% of men. 23% women received no training outside of work, compared with 12% of men. This is particularly concerning as the lower rate of apprenticeship pay is usually justified by the offer of training. Where this is lacking or of poor quality, apprenticeships become merely a source of cheap labour with few benefits for the apprentice.

The differences in how apprenticeships are experienced are partly down to the sectors in which women and men work. Female apprentices are more likely to be found in 'feminine' occupations. For example, in 2011-12 93% of early years (childcare) apprentices were women, compared to 3% of engineering apprentice.³⁰⁴ Traditionally 'feminine' apprenticeships have worse pay and prospects than those such as construction or IT. The Young Women's Trust recommend that employers in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) industries should share best practice in supporting and enabling young women to enter occupations where they are currently under-represented. A key barrier for many young women entering these sectors is the way in which they are isolated and it is important to emphasise the potential role of mentors and of achieving a critical mass through large scale recruitment of young women simultaneously.

It is also worth noting the different age profiles of male and female apprentices. 51% of women who started apprenticeships in 2012/13 were over 25, compared to 39% of male apprentices.³⁰⁵ It is generally recognised that one effect of trying to increase participation quickly has been that employers 'convert' existing employees into apprentices, rather than recruiting and developing younger apprentices. Young Women's Trust focus groups about apprenticeships shed some light on why 16-24 year old women may not be participating in or completing apprenticeships:

- Young women spoke of finding the application process lengthy and difficult, but those who did get support and careers advice had found it helped.

³⁰³ Buscha, F., and Urwin, P. (2013), *Estimating the labour market returns to qualifications gained in English Further Education using Individualised Learner Record (ILR)*, Department for Business Innovation and Skills.

³⁰⁴ Fuller and Unwin (2013), 'Gender Segregation, Apprenticeship, and the Raising of the Participation Age in England: are Young Women at a Disadvantage?' Centre for Learning and Life Chances in Knowledge Economies and Societies.

³⁰⁵ Skills Funding Agency (2015) 'Breakdown by age, gender and level: starts 2002/03 to 2012/13'. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

- Young women understood the reasoning for a lower rate of pay in exchange for receiving training, but felt that the pay they received was often insufficient to support themselves or dependents, and that it was unfair considering they were doing the same work as other staff.
- There were mixed experiences among the groups about the level of support and training they received from employers and colleges. Conditions also varied, with many women unaware of their rights in the workplace.

Our ‘*Scarred for Life?*’ inquiry produced further evidence that large employers often require apprentices to have a minimum of five A*-C GCSEs. Yet the 130,000 young women lacking those qualifications are the ones who would most benefit from vocational education and training.

In response, the Young Women’s Trust would like to see the barriers to young women’s participation across all apprenticeship sectors identified and removed. In particular, we recommend:

- Removing the formal qualifying criteria for apprenticeships so that young people who do not achieve five A*-C GCSEs at 16 are still able to access quality work and training.
- Abolishing the minimum apprenticeship wage and simplify the National Minimum Wage so that everyone working or undertaking an apprenticeship over the age of 18 receives the same minimum rate of pay.

We plan to develop further solutions in partnership with employers and government over the coming year, building on existing evidence of successful methods of increasing diversity and equal outcomes from apprenticeships.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Alongside the structural improvements we have recommended to make a wide range of apprenticeships accessible, the Young Women’s Trust has further suggested improvements for the Select Committee.

We assert that good quality careers guidance is vital not just at school but post-16. Our inquiry *Scarred for life?* found that careers advice from the National Careers Service and Job Centre Plus was not meeting the needs of young women. When young women do receive advice, they report that they are encouraged into a narrow and gendered range of employment options, such as care, beauty and retail.

To counteract this, we would recommend that:

- All providers of information, advice and guidance must be trained and encouraged to deliver careers advice supporting young women to retrain or to enter jobs which are available locally, are secure and pay sufficiently. Providers should be measured against successful delivery of this.
- The National Careers Service (NCS) should be widely publicised, particularly in areas with high numbers of young people who are NEET. NCS should place much greater emphasis on supporting young women who are currently economically inactive.

Intensive, personalised and tailored information and guidance should be available.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

Responsibility for elements of young people's employability and training is split across three different departments – the Department for Work and Pension, Department for Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. Organisations that Young Women's Trust spoke to during the *Scarred for Life?* inquiry described this situation as 'an accountability vacuum' and described how departments could act against young people.

The Young Women's Trust would like to see a Minister for youth employment appointed, who could oversee the precarious period of transition between school and work for 14-24 year olds, with an understanding of how young women and young men encounter different difficulties.

The Minister would be supported in their work by data collected by one lead agency which allows consistent, regional comparison of NEETs, unemployment and economic inactivity. This would be published by age, gender and ethnicity to provide an evidence base for the Minister to use in effective intervention that takes age and gender into account.

For further information please contact:

Emma Mckay
Interim Senior Policy Officer

13 September 2015

Youth Employment UK – Written Evidence (SMO0118)

This submission evaluates the ability for young people to enter into employment after finishing education. Youth Employment UK CIC explores the factors leading to the discrepancy between expectation and reality in employment opportunity for young workers and jobseekers out of school. Thousands of young people do not follow the traditional pathway of A-Levels to Higher Education, and the Millennial generation's ability for social mobility is under constant scrutiny, not least by themselves. Utilising Youth Employment UK's pool of young volunteers, this study carries out a qualitative focus group analysis of young people aged between 16 and 24 via social media. Looking to dispel the hypothesis that Millennials lack social mobility due to entitlement and lack of desire, this work explores the hypothesis that network power significantly influences the ability for young people to increase their social mobility. This paper recommends that government increases its focus and attention of fostering broader and deeper networks for young people during their formative years, in order to increase opportunity for social mobility.

About our Organisation

Youth Employment UK is a social organisation that works to bring together a Community of employers, businesses, public and private individuals who seek to make the UK a more youth friendly place for employment. Through our members' portal and youth programme, we have an outreach of hundreds of organisations and thousands of young people. Founded in a kitchen in 2011, Youth Employment UK has grown to become a national organisation with volunteers throughout the UK. Through the work of our staff, Youth Ambassadors and Community Members, Youth Employment UK aims to change the employment landscape to cultivate fair and friendly employment practises towards young people.

Introduction

Alternative pathways from school to work are becoming more attractive for young people who have a specific trade they want to learn, or field they want to break into. One reason for this is University tuition fees rising to over £9000 per annum, with many young people financially discouraged from attending university³⁰⁶, although the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds going to university has increased by 4 per cent since last year³⁰⁷.

Secondly, the University pathway has become crowded and saturated³⁰⁸. Finally, there has been a huge boost in the number of businesses and organisations offering high quality traineeships, apprenticeships and internship opportunities for school leavers³⁰⁹.

The term 'Millennial' is defined as a person born between the 1980s to the late 1990s³¹⁰. The spectre of limited social mobility is an often raised worry by researchers and young people of the Millennial generation themselves. The current Millennial generation in Britain is the first to have a majority believe that they will be less successful than their parents³¹¹. This may simply be a blip or an unfounded fear, but trends in youth

³⁰⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-25761133>

³⁰⁷ UCAS Press Release, 13 August 2015.

³⁰⁸ <http://www.cityam.com/222741/conveyor-belt-uk-graduates-failing-boost-productivity>

³⁰⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-figures-show-record-numbers-of-apprentices>

³¹⁰

https://www.academia.edu/1410939/New_generation_great_expectations_A_field_study_of_the_millennial_generation

³¹¹ <http://www.cityam.com/218073/economic-injustice-sorry-lot-today-s-young-worrying-and-urgent>

employment, migration and housing prices do not go far to dispel this anxiety. In addition to this, Millennials have been reported as having widely unrealistic wage and employment expectations³¹³³¹⁴. This creates issues for creating an attractive and viable structure for supporting school leavers into work, and even graduates into work.

Social mobility is crucial to the continued economic growth of the nation³¹⁵, and networks have been identified as a huge driving force for social mobility³¹⁶. This paper will give evidence and recommendations exploring young people's attitudes to social mobility against their network power.

Method

We put forth the questions specified by the Select Committee on Social Mobility, along with our own, to a portion of our Youth Ambassadors through the social media platform, Facebook. Facebook was selected due to its prolifically high use among young people, its low cost and sharing ability. Youth Employment UK CIC has a secure Facebook group for its Youth Ambassadors which is used in our day-to-day communications with them.

The focus group was comprised of young people, all Millennials, aged 16 to 24 of mixed gender, ethnic, regional and educational backgrounds. This allowed for a range of responses, capturing a slice of young people opinions and attitudes and can be seen as broadly representative.

This research was limited by the small size of the focus group, non-repetition of the group testing, and the impersonality of the Facebook platform. Improvements would be to expand the size of the focus group, host several focus groups, and have groups both online and in person be questioned.

Our Youth Ambassadors answered 4 questions:

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?
2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?
3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

³¹² <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2014/apr/14/will-your-generation-have-a-better-life-than-your-parents>

³¹³ <http://business-reporter.co.uk/2015/08/20/average-16-year-old-expects-to-earn-89000-a-year-survey-finds/>

³¹⁴ <http://www.consultancy.uk/news/1484/aon-hewitt-43-per-cent-millennials-unhappy-with-boss>

³¹⁵ <http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/08/16-economic-case-social-mobility-reeves>

³¹⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12225252>

4. Has the network of friends and family around you helped you onto an education or employment pathway?
 - a. Can you explain how?
 - b. If not, do you think you would have benefitted if they did try to help you?

Focus Group Responses

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Youth Ambassadors report that it is the:

- Complex processes of application and rejection,
- Nepotism and networking
- Lack of experience from a young age
- Lack of visible success of other young people and ethnic minorities

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

Youth Ambassadors say that:

- Different learning styles
- Organisations that specifically recruit young people who do not have A-Levels or a degree
- Favourable or unfavourable location
- Nepotism, networking and social capital

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Young Ambassadors said that:

- Lack of support in transition
 - i. Stems from focus on academic achievement
 - ii. Institutionally entrenched negativity from education providers towards alternative education and employment pathways other than A-Levels and Higher Education

4. Has the network of friends and family around you helped you onto an education or employment pathway?

Youth Ambassadors said that:

- Seeing friends and family succeed encouraged them to do the same
- Having successful friends and family in their network boosted their own knowledge and skills

Analysis of responses

From the responses we gathered from our Youth Ambassadors, three observations can be deduced. Firstly, young people desire other young people to visibly be seen to be successful in alternative educational pathways and employment, and create opportunities for each other to get ahead, either by inspiration or by connections. New technological advances such as LinkedIn, which are heavily used by professionals in gaining employment, or career progression³¹⁷³¹⁸, show the importance of these networks. However, young people are not utilising these networks due to the lack of youth friendly job opportunities and the lack of a youth user base with a large professional presence³¹⁹³²⁰. Additionally, these networks rely on building upon the employment oriented links the user have made in real life, which are not heavily developed in young people outside of having academic peers.

Secondly, the desire for the search, application and recruitment processes to change to become more accessible and forgiving of failure. Those who are constantly unsuccessful in applications are not gaining the help that they need to transition successfully. The manner in which rejections are handled represents a barrier for young people. Additionally, the numerous barriers in the recruitment process represent another barrier that limits opportunity for both educators and employers to get the most from young people, and vice versa, especially when pursuing an alternate pathway from school to work.

Thirdly, for educational institutions to change their attitude and narrative on alternative educational and employment pathways. The support of the educational network is shown to be weak in terms of helping young people transition from school to work, especially in alternate pathways such as apprenticeships.

Recommendations

The following evidence calls for a deeper investigation into the relationship between network power and social mobility. With young people desiring more visibility, strong support networks, investigating the wider support and viability for the induction of young people into real life employment networks, which would support them when deciding to transition from school to work.

With more and more taking alternative pathways into work, social mobility already as restricted as it is, and the large gap between Millennials employment prospects, wage expectations and reality³²¹, there are grounds for concern that there will be further social mobility issues in the future. With rising housing costs and young people feeling less likely to be as successful as their parents, the horizon for future economic growth and social cohesion could be dimmed. While there are very positive signs with the increase of young people engaging with alternative pathways, there is still a huge discrepancy between the effectiveness of these pathways and the education network's attitudes towards them. This is a problem that must be addressed if there is to be meaningful effort into making

³¹⁷ <http://www.cvcentre.co.uk/linkedin-importance.htm>

³¹⁸ <http://www.forbes.com/sites/laurashin/2014/06/26/how-to-use-linkedin-5-smart-steps-to-career-success/>

³¹⁹ <http://www.quora.com/Why-doesnt-LinkedIn-appeal-to-young-people>

³²⁰ <http://www.successfulworkplace.org/2013/03/31/young-people-hate-linkedin/>

³²¹ <http://business-reporter.co.uk/2015/08/20/average-16-year-old-expects-to-earn-89000-a-year-survey-finds/>

alternative pathways from school to work a means of increasing social mobility for young people.

The connections that aid you into work, and the connections of peers who can inspire and support each other are connections that young people find highly desirable. The creation of a high profile, easily accessible national body that fosters the building of such networks in a non-academic capacity from a young age could be beneficial to young people in gaining social mobility opportunities in after school. Youth Employment UK's own Volunteer Ambassador network has gathered national traction and can evidence the impact of the types of peer-to-peer engagement that work. The programme already has significant plans for growth and is working closely with Young Members to support its development.

Annex

Question 1

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Ambassador Responses

AJ Moore 23 Worcester – Account Grad working for NCS

Long and complicated recruitment processes.

Paul-James Cashman-Roberts 18, Weymouth 1st year Law Undergraduate

To be really honest, I think that while outside factors like government policy do have an impact on social mobility for young people (positive or negative that depends on your own political opinion). By far the biggest impact is our own attitude, if we think we won't do it, or we can't be bothered to do it then it won't happen. However like I mentioned above outside factors also have an impact, non-more so the government laws and policy, although it is my belief that the more governments get involved in people's lives young and older the more harm than good is done (but that's just my opinion), does really acting like a third parent help? Or does it just have the opposite affect

Rhiannon 18, Level 3 Apprentice

The long cycle affects young people greatly when searching for a job. I find that the more you get rejected the less will you have over time to even try. It has a huge impact on emotional and physical wellbeing let alone social mobility and government policies. The main thing that will help young people get a job is themselves and as long as you can keep on fighting you will succeed.

Jack Welch

I think it's still very much a culture of 'who you know' and the advantages young people have when their families have strong networks or can secure work placements on their behalf. Factors also like disability, emotional wellbeing and family breakdown can also impact on the progression of young people, which can have long lasting damage. I think it's been described as the 'scarring effect' to be long term unemployed.

Zishi Zhang 17, A-level student

I think that most of the young people today do not have enough work experience while they are studying at school. To be fair, there aren't many 'nice' work experience out there. Students don't want to sit in an office and doing repetitive administration works. However, I think this situation has been improving by the National Citizen Service and the W(ork)E(xperience) campaign. However, it is still hard for a secondary school student to find a work experience related to the job they want to do in the future. Government and charities should work together and bring all sides to produce a much more comprehensive plan to provide various work experience for students. Having sufficient work experience could improve students' skills and could help them to choose a job that really fits them. Therefore, the transition between school and workplace will be much smoother.

Furthermore, there isn't enough young people involved in politics. The average age of MP is 50. We need to improve youth engagement in politics and campaign for a better education in politics for young people. When there is enough representative of young people in the decision making process and leadership, they will understand the problems teenagers facing better

Shayne The Instigator

According to a report in 2014 the percentage of All white executives in the ftse top 100 companies rose from 65 % to 69%.. A clear indication that the coperate gap between the minorities and majority is actually continually widening. Speaking from a minority perspective in terms of social mobility one feels marginalised from the offset.It tends to get hard to be motivated to aim high or for top offices when the writing on the wall is saying you are going to fail anyway. The Government and relevant ministers have attempted to put measures in place to make coperates more diverse by 2020 although this far fetched resolution would also go on to explain why young people from minority back grounds are also the least likely to vote, they have become disillusioned. One should be cautious however not to quickly scream discrimination, but More still needs to be done to encourage marginalised young people to break the trend and start exploring their fullest potential

Question 2

There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

Rhiannon 18, Level 3 Apprentice

Everybody has a different way of learning and we have to find the right one for us. If it's not A Level it shouldn't matter you are doing what you want to do and no one can stop you. However these students shouldn't then be lost in a pile of numbers. Once people go into traineeships or apprenticeships there should always be support in place to guide them because as much as it is our responsibility we also need to learn and sometimes we need the support of others to guide us.

Jack Welch 21, Freelance writer

Having met a few people in this bracket, there are a number of placements out there (which includes the BBC as an example) that look specifically for students without degrees. Many may simply fall into a good job opportunity, where it almost doesn't become unnecessary to ever need to go to university because of a regular income and doing what you enjoy. However, it is disproportionate in favour of people who live in larger parts of the country and the quality will vary as a result.

Question 3

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Jack Welch

To my mind, transitions in the UK are not simply adequate at present. given that we are the most likely age group to be on Zero Hour Contracts and in the lowest skilled form of employment opportunities available. There are many I think that struggle to achieve in school, because of a heavy emphasis on academic study and the lack of regard for more

artistic or vocational subjects by HE institutions.

As an example of a quick bit of research I did in good rates of youth employment, Norway's system offers a programme to study different vocational subjects from construction to agriculture and a college alternative for these studies, rather than university. If a better focus was put into the abilities of young people who like to be more 'hands on', we might be in a better place rather than having to spend resource on getting people just ready to apply for a job and the basics of retaining that role

[Hugo Boss](#)

I know that at my school (The Charter School - has been rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted several years in a row) apprenticeships, internships or any other alternative to university have never been mentioned, although we have had several assemblies and a lot of preparation for uni - as well as one assembly about a '1st class' and '2nd class' ticket to your future. The same is largely true for Kingsdale, a nearby state school (rated 'good' by Ofsted in their last inspection in 2012)

22 September 2015

Unions and membership bodies

Association of Accounting Technicians – Written evidence (SMO0102)

Response from AAT to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility inquiry into social mobility in the transition from school to work

1. Introduction to AAT

1.1.AAT has been an active supporter of the Government's drive to support social mobility and is a signatory to the Social Mobility Business Compact. As a professional body, our main contribution is to support widening access to opportunities and careers in the accountancy profession.

1.2.AAT is the only UK-based professional body dedicated solely to the education, training, development and support of accounting technicians. The AAT's qualification and membership develop and ensure relevant and practical accounting and finance skills for life.

1.3.One of the founding principles of AAT was to broaden opportunity for access to the accountancy profession. This objective remains central to what we do both as an awarding organisation and a professional body. In the context of this inquiry our goal has been, and remains, to offer that credible and respected vocational route within the accountancy profession for young people in the transition years. Of the **68000** students currently undertaking AAT qualifications **22,000** are **under 24** of whom **4800** are **under 19** years of age.

1.4.AAT offers open access qualifications. There are no formal academic prerequisites for entry. The AAT Accounting qualification is available throughout the UK at over 400 accredited centres. Such approved assessment centres may be Further Education institutions or private training providers. Sixth Form Colleges and schools are increasingly looking to add AAT to their curriculum. Various modes of study are available to learners including, full-time, part time, day release,

evening and distance learning. AAT qualifications are integral to accountancy apprenticeship frameworks.

1.5.The opportunity for progression is built into the AAT Accounting qualification but it is important to recognise that not all individuals will wish to or be able to progress to full membership of AAT or on to chartered status. Anyone completing a stage of the AAT Accounting qualification will have accredited professional competencies at the level achieved. This gives them recognised and valued skills. Indications of the opportunities open to successful candidates at each level are:

- **Level 2 Certificate/Diploma in Accounting** - Jobs with an administrative emphasis such as Finance Administrator or Assistant - with progression opportunity to;
- **Level 3 Diploma in Accounting** - Jobs with a more evaluative emphasis such as Finance Officer probably including supervisory responsibilities – with progression opportunity to;
- **Level 4 Diploma in Accounting** - Jobs with a management emphasis such as Finance Team Leader or Senior Finance Officer and progression opportunity to;
- **AAT full member (MAAT)** - Running own practice, senior level finance roles - with progression to Chartered Accountancy.
- (The Level 3 Diploma is also recognised for access to University with 160 UCAS points)

1.6.The potential for onward progression to full chartered status is a key part of the professional opportunity offered by AAT. Around a third of those achieving Level 4 use AAT’s vocational pathway as a progression route to a further qualification. All the main UK Chartered Accountancy bodies offer significant exemptions to holders of the full AAT qualification and ICAEW, CIPFA and ICAS all offer specific fast-track routes to AAT members.

1.7.AAT qualifications are central to Apprenticeship Frameworks and the table below shows the total number of apprenticeship starts in accountancy for the last full year for which figures are available.

2013/14 Full Year	Intermediate	Advanced	Higher	All levels
Total	2660	2680	1280	6620
16-18	1330	1010	130	2470
19-24	1040	1510	1060	3600

This demonstrates that young people make up the vast majority of starts with a significant proportion of those in the 16-18 age group.

1.8.AAT commissioned some research in 2010, using postcode based demographic data. This model allocates all UK postcodes according to demographic data ranging from the wealthiest to the most deprived.

1.9.We found that 18% of our students come from households within the most hard-pressed category as compared with an equivalent proportion of around 6% for university undergraduate students. We believe this demonstrates the potential impact on social mobility through widening access to our profession. However, we are working as part a national project “Access Accountancy” to develop a more detailed analysis of social mobility within the profession.

1.10. What this introduction is intended to show is that AAT delivers a successful model of vocational education that works within a professional setting. We make a genuine impact on social mobility for young people and enable a transition into productive work with opportunities for progression.

1.11. Our evidence to the inquiry will focus on what can be learnt from this example that can be used to guide policy and to make sure that the options available to young people offer real opportunities to progress.

2. Summary of Evidence

2.1. Our evidence covers core elements in four areas of the Committee's inquiry.

2.2. In **section 3** we look at the factors affecting social mobility and particularly that element of the brief requesting information on the impact of current (and previous) Government policy on the qualifications system; highlighting:

- The impact of statutory rise in the participation age.
- The damaging consequences of a regulatory regime that concentrates too much on process and inputs not outcomes.
- The need for greater flexibility in 14-16 curriculum.

2.3. In **section 4** we consider changes we have seen in the demographic of students who are taking our qualifications, their pathways and the outcomes for them; highlighting:

- The breadth of students studying vocational qualifications.
- The fact that there is a new group studying vocational qualifications alongside A levels.
- The salary impact of AAT qualification

2.4. In **section 5** we address the question 'what characterises high quality vocational qualifications and apprenticeships?' We highlight:

- The vital importance transferrable skills and progression routes.
- The value of the backing of an established profession body.
- The need to continuously engage with employers and practitioners.
- The need for more work to develop routes to enable greater employer engagement particularly from SMEs
- The impact of skills funding decisions.

3. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

3.1.AAT would highlight two main factors that that affect the employment outcomes for young people. The first is ensuring that any qualifications they undertake are relevant and above all have recognition and 'currency' in the labour market. The second is that wherever possible they have real experience of the world of work.

3.2.AAT qualifications are based on employer designed occupational standards. They are competence based and equip the student with the key skills, knowledge and understanding to undertake an accounting role. They are well established and recognised by employers. However, it remains the case that employers also value the core employability skills that can only be gained through direct experience in the workplace.

3.3.The most significant change for this age group in recent years has been the statutory rise in the participation age to 18. This change has coincided with significant growth in the overall numbers of students studying AAT at 16-18. However, there has also been a shift away from those studying AAT part time at this age group. Some of those will have shifted to apprenticeships - but it does question whether the law that requires any young person in work to be supported by their employer in undertaking 280 hours of guided learning during work time, has had the unintended consequence of limiting employment opportunities for young people? Certainly we have been made aware of cases where the fact that learning through evening classes was not an option has meant that employers will not employ 16-18 year olds

3.4.This is an example of a general trend in Government Skills and Education Policy. For too long there has been too great a focus on inputs not outputs - a desire to force qualifications into a prescribed pattern that is all to do with process and has little or nothing to do

with learning outcomes or potential productivity gains. It can be simply summed up as designing qualifications to meet the demands of regulators not the demands of employers or learners. The AAT itself has been forced to devote considerable resources on adaptation of its courses to fit prescribed templates. Close to £1 million was spent on adapting the former NVQ based qualifications to meet the requirements of the Qualification and Credit Framework introduced in 2010 only for it to be abolished in 2015.

3.5. Most recently in order to retain our qualifications within 16-19 performance tables AAT has been required to make significant revisions to our qualifications to incorporate synoptic assessment and grading. It is important to recognise that none of these changes were put in place because employers were saying that this was what they wanted. Resources that we believe could be much better spent on working with employers and providers to fine tune existing qualifications and develop new provision in response to demand.

3.6. Sometimes these changes don't just cause frustration and expense they can actually undermine successful provision.

3.7. The example that we would use to demonstrate this is directly relevant to this inquiry - AAT developed and piloted the delivery of the AAT level 2 qualification to 14-16 year olds in schools. The initial pilot dates back to 2006-2010 but the lessons from it are still we believe relevant. We will focus on the experience from one of the pilot sites that was representative of the success of the project.

3.8. Knowsley Community College is a large FE college in Kirkby, Merseyside. In 2006 – 2008, it was one of the pilot sites for the AAT in Schools Initiative. In the first two years there were 27 students from two schools The group included 40% who were described as the most challenging students who were largely disengaged from their school studies. Initially the students from one of the participating schools

were taught by tutors from the college visiting the school but over time all students were taught at Knowsley College while remaining at school for the remainder of their studies. Behaviour improved considerably when the learners attended College, as the students felt trusted and more 'grown up' and this encouraged more mature behaviour and less reluctance to socialise with adults.

3.9. In terms of outcome, 25 out of 27 of the first cohort successfully completed the AAT Level 2 qualification. As far as we were able to track them thereafter we know that all the 25 that completed progressed either to further study or an Apprenticeship. 15 of them continued with further AAT studies. 3 of those completed Level 4 with a view to further progression to full chartered accountant qualification Others combined AAT study with A levels and progressed to University.

3.10. The following is a link to a video that shows the students talking about their initial experiences of the course

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FvHUg2oFmwE>

3.11. One would have hoped that given the clear success of this pilot it would go on from strength to strength but the funding rules changed with ring fenced funds designed to encourage School - FE partnership being subsumed into individual school budgets with local discretion on allocation. After 2008 only one school opted to continue and by 2010 no more students were enrolled. At that point we fell foul of changes in funding rules.

3.12. Subsequently, aware of the potential for success, AAT tried to get the qualification approved, under the recent push to encourage vocational learning in schools, as a recognised specified technical qualification in 14-16 performance tables. Despite its historic success, the qualification was not recognised for teaching at this level. It was deemed too focussed on a single occupation, that it would take up too great a proportion of the timetable and finally it fell foul of the catch

all rule that a qualification recognised for performance tables at 16-19 cannot be recognised for performance tables at 14-16. Thus a demonstrably valuable initiative fails because of dogma and lack of flexibility in the system.

4. The Committee is interested in those young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A- Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

4.1.It is important to recognise that individuals within this group will be in this category for a number of different reasons. Some will have made an active choice to take an alternative route, others will have not been successful at key stage 4 and therefore are not offered the opportunity to do A levels.

4.2.Our experience has been that the majority of those who study AAT do so as an active choice because they see it as an established alternative route to a professional career without going to university and sustaining long term debt. Having said that, given AAT offers open access qualifications, there are also those who may have been disengaged from formal study and see the foundation level as an opportunity to restart their studies and have the possibility to progress.

4.3.AAT has seen a notable growth in the number of students in FE colleges, Sixth Form Colleges and School Sixth Forms registering for the AAT qualifications in the last two years. Some of that increase is linked to the recent legislation to raise the participation age to 18 (RPA), as providers review and develop the options on offer to young people. As noted in the introduction there are now nearly 5000 16-18 year olds studying AAT and this number is growing year on year.

4.4.However, it is clear that it is also a response to the higher profile of vocational qualifications and a clear desire amongst young people and

their parents to explore alternatives to university. One point that is worth making in this context is that the inquiry presupposes that students will either follow an A level/university path or a vocational route. There are an increasing number of students who are seeking the opportunity to study vocational qualifications alongside A levels. One school in Kent has this year added the AAT qualification to its sixth form curriculum and a number of students will study it alongside one or more A levels. This is an active choice in response to a desire from students and parents to have access to more practically based courses that offer an alternative progression route that offers employment options but could also lead to university. Employers have responded very positively noting that the AAT qualification provides much better employability prospects than more general or academically based qualifications such as Business Studies courses or Accountancy A levels. There has been interest in the scheme from large accounting firms who are looking to broaden access away from the traditional university route.

4.5.In terms of employment prospects, AAT conducts an annual salary survey and it shows that the average salary for AAT members aged 19-24 (including those still continuing their studies) is just over £17,000, which is considerably higher than the age group average.

5. What characterises high quality vocational qualifications and apprenticeships?

5.1.The committee asks for information about what are the hallmarks of good quality qualifications and apprenticeships. Professor Alison Wolf in her major review of Vocational Education specifically cited AAT's qualification as an exemplar of a good vocational qualification, which offers progression and transferable skills directly relevant to employment.

5.2.In our evidence above we have highlighted the progression pathway available through AAT qualification. Professor Wolf also highlighted

the availability of transferable skills. One aspect that is central to the success of AAT's qualifications is that while they are directly linked to the accountancy profession, they also offer broad-based financial skills that are potentially valuable in any employment situation. A majority of students may end up in accountancy roles but a significant number of follow a broader career in business.

- 5.3.** The feedback that we get from employers is that they value the combination of core practical skills with wider contextual understanding and that a student with an AAT qualification will be more work ready than one who may have studied a more generic business qualification.
- 5.4.** Also central to the continuing success of the qualification is the simple fact that it has the backing of an established and highly regarded professional body. The chartered accountancy profession was instrumental in its foundation. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland (ICAS) remain as sponsoring organisations.
- 5.5.** The profession identified the need for a unified training and professional body for those working at technician level within accountancy as well as a progression route into the profession. AAT was set up as the vehicle to deliver those twin objectives.
- 5.6.** The link with the chartered profession has been matched by a parallel development of links with employers. 30,000 UK employers have an employee either qualified or training with AAT. AAT's accredited employer scheme has 830 members ranging from national and local government bodies including HM Treasury through SMEs to blue chip companies such as Rolls Royce and Proctor and Gamble

- 5.7.** As a professional association itself, AAT is governed by and for its members providing a vital direct with those running their own practices and operating in the workplace.
- 5.8.** Taken together this creates a strong partnership to meet the developing skills needs for accounting staff across all sectors of employment. Most importantly in this context, the partnership creates a commitment to the renewal of the workforce through apprenticeships and vocational training.
- 5.9.** The status of the qualification and the associated apprenticeship comes from this embedded industry recognition and the continuing renewal to ensure relevance.
- 5.10.** Not all skill areas will have this established professional base but it is only an equivalent engagement with the real world of work through employers and those doing the job that will ensure that courses and qualifications have genuine value.
- 5.11.** This inevitably leads to the question of how willing and how able are employers to engage in the system to develop and assess provision?
- 5.12.** Government has quite rightly sought to put employers at the heart of the system but our own experience of being part of the development of the Trailblazer apprenticeship standards shows that to get and maintain the involvement of small employers is very challenging. It is not a case of not being interested; they just do not have the time and resources to make the level of commitment required. Our working groups, at one stage of the process were meeting on an almost weekly basis and it is only thanks to the involvement of the major accounting firms and professional bodies who were able to allocate dedicated resource that the standards were completed.

5.13. In our sector, professional bodies can provide a link with employers of all sizes through our membership, as well as the regular dialogue around standards. In other sectors, this is not available and there is a risk that the largest companies dominate the employer voice. The reality is that small businesses will have a major role in delivering apprenticeship targets and more work needs to be done to consider mechanisms through which they can be engaged that won't involve considerable time and expense.

6. Availability of provision

6.1. The final aspect of the Committee's enquiry on which we would wish to comment is that of the availability of opportunities to young people. We have demonstrated in our comments above that inflexible regulation can impact on the availability of provision but by far the biggest factor is funding. Unsurprisingly provision follows the money.

6.2. It is important to say that this is not a simple appeal for more money to be put into the system, rather it is a plea for flexibility and a move towards funding decisions based on outputs not inputs.

6.3. One example serves to illustrate our concern. AAT in response to clear demand developed a 60-hour course in basic accounting for individuals looking at setting up their own business. It was specifically designed in consultation to be available to those who might take it alongside their specialist studies for a particular trade or business. However a general principle that short courses are of little value led to a funding decision that no vocational course of less than 15 Credits (150 hours) will be funded. As a result that course is not funded and therefore, although they supported its development, providers are not including it on the curriculum and many who could benefit from it are missing out.

6.4.When public funds are at stake, measuring effectiveness is vital.

However, too many decisions around funding are based on process measures of size or design. These measurements fail to quantify what really matters: the benefit to employers and learners.

6.5.Measuring outcomes is a smarter way of working. At course level, it would involve publishing quality information on learner success rates, wage gain and satisfaction levels. At provider level, it would mean publishing an overall profile of the outcomes for learners and customer satisfaction levels, set in the context of the economic, social and labour market conditions in their catchment areas.

6.6.Such a system of outcome-based measurement would provide a sound basis for the allocation of funds and hence the availability of provision. As importantly it would provide a much sounder base for parents young people and employers to make decisions about the courses and qualifications that will support employability.

7. Conclusion

7.1.We hope our evidence gives a clear indication of the role that AAT qualifications and those like them can play in opening up social mobility for young people. We welcome the fact that the Committee is focussing attention on those in an often-overlooked category who are still engaged in learning but are not pursuing an academic path. We believe that it is important to recognise that social mobility is not just about fast tracking a select few from disadvantaged backgrounds into the elite universities, important as those opportunities may be. It is also about a continuum that offers accessible high quality vocational training that is open to people of all backgrounds, and offers them potentially transformational opportunities to progression at a level that is appropriate to them. AAT would be pleased to assist the committee in any way that we can to further support their inquiry.

Suzie Webb
Director of Education

14 September 2015

Background

The Association of Colleges (AoC) represents and promotes 335 colleges in England, including 242 further education colleges (FE) and 93 sixth form colleges incorporated under the Further and Higher Education Act 1992.

Further education colleges provide high-quality technical and professional education and training for young people, adults and employers. They prepare over three million students with valuable employability skills, helping to develop their career opportunities.

Sixth form colleges provide high-quality academic education to 16 to 18-year-olds enabling them to progress to university or higher level vocational education.

In this document we refer to *levels* of education. For ease of reference, we use the Government's descriptors³²²:

Level 1: Equivalent to GCSEs art grade D – G.

Level 2: Equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A* - C.

Level 3: Equivalent to A Levels.

Level 4: Equivalent to first two years of a degree course.

Summary

1. The following is a summary of the key factors affecting the route into work and recommendations from a college perspective:
2. **Poor careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools**
Critical to young people being successful in the employment market is knowledge of what that market is like, the opportunities available and routes to achieving these opportunities. Ofsted note that CEIAG in schools is not comprehensive and according to colleges some providers do not inform or encourage young people to explore alternatives to A Level. Colleges could act as careers hubs for their area to encourage school/college/ employer partnership working.
3. **The emphasis on the A Level/ higher education (HE) route in public opinion**
The traditional A Level/HE route is the most well-known pathway to employment, understood by young people, parents/carers and school teachers. Professional and technical opportunities need to be more widely promoted.

³²² For further information see: <https://www.gov.uk/what-different-qualification-levels-mean/compare-different-qualification-levels>

4. Lack of apprenticeship opportunities for 16 to 18-year-olds

The Government has pledged to deliver three million apprenticeship places by 2020, but in 2013/2014 only 5.9% of 16 to 18-year-olds were on apprenticeship programmes. The incentives within the proposed new apprenticeship levy system for employers to take on 16 to 18-year-olds may improve this situation³²³.

5. Lack of comprehensive information sharing between schools and colleges to support transition

Insufficient sharing of vital information about individual needs hinders the transition of young people between schools and colleges. A nationally recognised process would help to alleviate this problem

6. Pre-apprenticeship 'Traineeships' are not being taken up by young people working at pre-apprenticeship level

Only 30% of young people on traineeship programmes were working at pre-apprenticeship level, Level 1 or below. This programme needs to be redesigned to meet the needs of young people working at a lower level.

7. Inequality in funding between schools and post-16 education

Funding for the education of 16 to 18-year-olds should be the same as that provided for the education of 14 to 16-year-olds. This would reflect costs, ensure the best A Level and technical courses are available, ensure students achieve good English and maths results and reduce student drop-out.

Detailed Response

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

8. Post-16 options other than A Level are not well understood

A recent survey indicates that parents and teachers, who have most influence on young people's choices, lack information and knowledge of vocational options and would like to know more. The AllAboutCareersSurvey 2015³²⁴, of 10,000 young people indicated that that 81% asked parents about careers choices; 63% asked teachers. 45% of parents asked teachers for advice, but 82% of teachers wish they knew more about the options available.

9. Despite this lack of information, 75% of young people at colleges study non-A Level study programmes³²⁵ post-16 from entry Level to Level 3 in a wide range of subject areas. Study programmes consist of a vocational qualification, work experience, tutorial, enrichment and maths and English for those who have not achieved a C grade pass in those subjects. These qualifications prepare them for employment at age 18 or progression to HE.

³²³ The Government is consulting on a proposed levy on employers to 'choose and pay for apprenticeship training' www.gov.uk/government/consultations/apprenticeships-levy-employer-owned-apprenticeships-training

³²⁴ <http://www.mycareerspringboard.org/articles/article/view/19>

³²⁵ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/413348/16-19_Study_programmes_guidance.pdf

10. Business and Technology Education Council qualifications (BTECs)³²⁶ offer the most well-known alternative to A Level (i.e. at Level 3) and are available in a variety of subject areas such as creative industries, engineering and business. Young people can also enrol on classroom based vocational programmes from pre-entry to Level 2 in a variety of subjects from horticulture to carpentry and IT.
11. All FE colleges offer apprenticeships. They are available at intermediate or Level 2, Advanced and Higher. However, only 5.9% of 16 to 18-year-olds were on apprenticeship programmes in the 2013/2014 academic year (National Audit Office, 2014³²⁷).
12. The UKCES employers' report 2013³²⁸, draws attention to the demand for apprenticeships far outstripping the number of places on offer which can be demotivating and lead to a lack of engagement for those young people who wish to take this route. However, the new apprenticeship levy with its added incentives for employers to take on 16 to 18-year-olds who may require extra support to sustain a placement may have an impact on this current recruitment pattern.
13. Some professions such as accountancy, financial services, IT and engineering do not require a traditional three-year HE route. For example the Association of Accounting Technicians (AAT) provides a recognised qualification and a progression route to the highest levels of chartered accountancy.

14. Progression into Higher Education (HE)

The UCAS End of Cycle Report 2014³²⁹, notes that 6.7% of those 18-year-olds accepted for entry to university held BTEC qualifications, which is more than twice as many as in 2008. However, the Russell Group website indicates that for 'many courses' at their member universities 'BTECs are not considered suitable preparation'³³⁰. This only goes to exemplify that vocational qualifications do not have the kudos of A Levels despite being at the same level of study.

15. Extent of employer engagement with educational institutions

Employers are increasingly working with education providers, but this needs to be increased to ensure all young people have opportunities for work related learning and experience. The joint CBI and Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2015, Inspiring Growth 2015³³¹, of 300 organisations indicates that 73% of those employers who responded have some links with schools and colleges, but 60% would be willing to play a greater role. Ways of developing involvement are explored further in question 4.

16. Under funding

Colleges provide a link between school and employment at a critical phase of a young person's education, i.e. mid to late teens when they are most focussed on their career options. However, FE courses are funded at a lower rate than both schools or HE. In 2015/2016 the minimum Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU) will be set at a minimum of

³²⁶ <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/about-us/qualification-brands/btec.html>

³²⁷ <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/16-to-18-year-old-participation-in-education-and-training.pdf>

³²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ukces-employer-skills-survey-2013>

³²⁹ <https://www.ucas.com/sites/default/files/2014-end-of-cycle-report-dec-14.pdf>

³³⁰ <http://www.russellgroup.ac.uk/faqs/#11>

³³¹ <http://news.cbi.org.uk/business-issues/education-and-skills/gateway-to-growth-cbi-pearson-education-and-skills-survey-2015/>

£4,402 (Fairer Schools Funding: Arrangements for 2015 to 2016, DfE, 2014³³²), while college funding for 16 and 17-year-olds is £4,000 per student and for 18-year-olds, £3,300³³³.

17. **Opportunities for learners with disabilities and learning difficulties (LLDD)**

Colleges provide education and training for all young people and students with Special Educational Needs (SEND) can be funded to progress in education until the age of 25. The recent introduction of Supported Internships offer the opportunity for those SEND students with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) to receive support through coaching in a work placement which will lead to employment. This has proved a popular and successful route. However, there are many young people who do not have EHCPs, but have mild learning difficulties or emotional health issues who could benefit from mentoring as they progress into employment in order to help them sustain their first job.

18. **Opportunities for Care leavers**

The National Audit office report, 'Care leavers' transition to adulthood' 2015³³⁴, draws attention to the fact that in 2013-2014 41% of 19-year-old care leavers were not in education, employment or training (NEET) in contrast to 15% of all 19-year-olds and that only 6% of care leavers were in HE whereas one-third of all 19-year-olds had progressed to HE.

19. There is a group of young people aged 14 to 24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

20. Data in this section is taken from individualised learner record (ILR)³³⁵ and market intelligence data exchange service (MiDES)³³⁶ data sets for 2013 – 2014 and refers to 16 to 18-year-olds on Study Programmes.

21. **Key facts and figures**

- 75% of 16 to 18-year-olds in the college sector are on vocational programmes (not including apprenticeships)
- More than twice as many young people aged 16 to 18 undertake vocational qualifications at Level 3 rather than A Level (273,170 compared with 132,040) with an additional 50,860 undertaking a mixture of A Level and vocational subjects.
- 23% of 16 to 18-year-olds in college are on programmes at Level 2
- 14% are on programmes at Level 1 or below.

22. The majority on programmes at Level 1 and below will have achieved poor GCSE results at grades E (or below) or have no GCSEs. Many of this cohort have complex profiles

³³² www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/332652/Fairer_schools_funding_arrangements_for_2015_to_2016.pdf

³³³ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/433655/Funding_rates_and_formula_201516_v1.1_3.pdf

³³⁴ <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Care-leavers-transition-to-adulthood.pdf>

³³⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/individualised-learner-record-ilr>

³³⁶ <https://mides.rcu.co.uk/>

including learning difficulties and disabilities, emotional or behavioural difficulties and low level basic skills.

23. Age

- In the college sector, 80% of 16 to 18-year-olds are aged 16 or 17. At age 16, 68,760 young people take A Levels compared with 79,340 who take Level 3 vocational courses.
- However, at age 17, the number of students on A Level programmes decreases to 52,280, whereas the number on vocational Level 3 programmes increases dramatically to 117,140.

24. This could be due to a large number of young people changing their career plans at the end of their first year of A Level or as it currently structured, AS Level. The introduction of linear two year A Levels may see a decrease in this pattern as there will be no natural break at age 17, but may also lead to young people leaving A Level programmes after a year, dropping out without any qualifications to show for a year's work.

25. At Level 2 and below:

- 18-year-olds make 19% of the Level 1 and Level 2 cohorts
- 16-year-olds make up 54% of the Level 1 cohort
- 16-year olds make up 48% of the Level 2 cohort
- 17-year-olds make up 27% of the Level 1 cohort
- 17-year-olds make up 33% of the Level 2 cohort

26. The increase in the percentage of 17-year-olds at Level 2 and decrease in 16-year-olds indicates that those who embark on FE courses at 16 progress to Level 2 at age 17.

27. Gender

Lower level vocational programmes are highly male dominated; 66% of those on programmes at Level 1 or below are male. The same is true, but to a lesser extent at Level 2 where 56% of the cohort is male. At Level 3 vocational there is an even 50% split. 58% of those studying A Levels in colleges are female.

28. Deprivation

Overall, far more students from affluent backgrounds undertake A Levels or Level 3 vocational programmes than lower level qualifications. 76,210 of the most affluent students take A Levels compared with 8,690 from the same income group who are on programmes at Level 1 or below and 19,270 at Level 2.

29. Learning difficulty or disability (LLDD)

18% of students on college courses disclosed a learning difficulty:

- 10% on A Level courses,
- 31% Level 3 programmes,
- 4% on mixed A Level\ vocational programmes
- 27% on Level 2 programmes
- 27% on programmes at level 1 and below.

30. At Level 3 the differences in percentage of 16 to 18-year old students with specific disclosed LLDDs between A Level and non-A Level programmes is striking.

	A Level	Vocational Level 3
Aspergers	9%	32%
Autism	5%	24%
Dyslexia	7%	36%
Dyscalculia	4%	36%

31. At Level 1 or below a large number of students disclosed a profound, moderate or complex learning difficulty. Furthermore, 40% of students who disclosed autism and 27% who disclosed Aspergers and 47% who disclosed emotional behavioural difficulties (EBD) were on programmes at Level 1. In contrast, the percentage of students disclosing EBD on A Level programmes was 5%.

32. Ethnicity

The most significant feature is the ethnic breakdown between levels. Overall approximately 80% of Asian 16 to 18-year-olds in colleges are on Level 3 programmes (A Level, non- A Level and combination courses), whereas the figure for white British is 62%. This is in striking contrast to the numbers of black and mixed race 16 to 18-year-olds where the number on Level 3 programmes is 33% and 36% respectively.

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

33. Transitions

Clearer pathways are required for young people to better understand the route from school or college into work. Many people are very familiar with the progression from A Levels to university, less is known about alternatives to this route than can lead to successful work based learning or an apprenticeship that results in a job.

34. From 2002 to 2012 young people in Key Stage 4 (KS4) were able to access one-day-a-week vocational *Increased Flexibility* courses at FE colleges. This provided an opportunity for young people to experience the transition to college in a controlled way and gain skills prior to making decisions at 16. This opportunity is no longer funded and offered to very few young people. College ILR data shows that 2009/2010 63,000 KS4 students attended college for at least one day a week. In 2014/2015 this number was 24,000³³⁷.

35. One of the issues facing colleges is the lack of comprehensive transition data from schools to support young people who are progressing to college at 16. Transition information for students with LLDD is increasingly more comprehensive due to the introduction of EHCPs, but for others is patchy and generally reliant on schools sending through references on a voluntary basis. As colleges often work with young people progressing from more than 40 institutions it is challenging to ensure comprehensive transition information on all students. A nationally recognised online system to support application and transition would alleviate this.

³³⁷ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/individualised-learner-record-ilr>

36. Non-A Level routes provide a quality learning experience

Colleges have rigorous systems in place to ensure quality; a regular internal review process, observations, internal and external verification processes for qualifications.

37. Due to the more applied nature of vocational programmes it is difficult to track the progress individuals make from the GCSE benchmark, but does not indicate that they do not add value. In 2016 the Government is introducing new accountability measures for post 16 programmes at Level 3; A Level, Applied General and Tech Levels. For A Level and Applied General qualifications there will be a value added progress measure indicating the amount of progress against a bench measure post GCSE. The guidance document for these changes notes that a value added progress measure cannot be used for Level 3 Tech Levels 'because there is a weak relationship between students' average key stage 4 result, which is mainly made up of academic subjects and their results in these qualification types 2014³³⁸. Instead a combined completion and attainment measure will be used which will compare the attainment of students with the national average attainment for each qualification.

38. International comparisons

In order to improve outcomes there is much that can be learnt from other European systems. The UKCES briefing paper regarding education and training system in the Netherlands 2013³³⁹, identifies key features of Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands as:

- Clear route mapping
- High status of both vocational and non-vocational routes
- High employer engagement, involvement and work place training
- High levels of enrolment
- Longer length of programme

39. Pre-apprenticeship provision

For those young people who want to do an apprenticeship, but are not ready, the last Government introduced traineeships to address employers' concerns that young people who were applying for apprenticeships did not have the necessary skills, qualifications and work ready behaviours that were required. Traineeships programmes include work preparation training, English, maths and work experience.

40. Initial feedback on traineeships has been mixed. A BIS evaluation of the first year published in March 2015³⁴⁰ indicates that traineeships are perceived as working well by providers, trainees, employers and referral agencies. However, the 2014 Ofsted review of Study Programmes³⁴¹ states that in their sample take up of Traineeships was 'too low' (p7), that progression to apprenticeships/ work with training was poor and that the drop-out rate was high. Moreover, there was little IAG about traineeships in schools. Anecdotal feedback from colleges would support this viewpoint. Traineeships have been

³³⁸ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/359909/Technical_Guide_final_for_publication.pdf

³³⁹ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/303481/briefing-paper-vocational-education-system-netherlands.pdf

³⁴⁰ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/412424/bis-15-189-traineeships-first-year-process-evaluation.pdf

³⁴¹ www.gov.uk/government/publications/transforming-16-to-19-education-and-training-the-early-implementation-of-16-to-19-study-programmes

challenging to embed, possibly because it is not clear for whom they are best suited as most young people are either in education or NEET and yet guidance states that Traineeships are not aimed at NEET young people.

41. Traineeships are aimed at young people working below Level 3 without sufficient skills/qualifications/experience to gain employment or an apprenticeship, but who it is felt could realistically reach this goal within 6 months. However, only 30% of trainees were at Level 1 or pre-apprenticeship level. There needs to be consideration of a broader, more flexible offer based on a study programme model with an emphasis on addressing young people's barriers to work.

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

42. Improving transition

The new destination measures on schools and colleges mean that there is a great deal more emphasis placed on ensuring all young people have a positive destination at age 16 and 18/19.

43. 16-18 Study Programmes include work placements as one of the component parts and new Level 3 Tech Levels require employer engagement in design and delivery.
44. However, the most crucial factor is comprehensive CEIAG. The Gatsby report, *Good Careers Guidance 2014*³⁴², emphasises that '[g]ood career guidance is important for social mobility because it helps open pupils' eyes to careers they may not have considered' (p6).
45. Schools and colleges are required to provide CEIAG. However, the Ofsted survey on careers guidance in schools, *Going in the Right Direction? 2013*³⁴³, cautioned that only 12 of the 60 schools visited had ensured that all students received comprehensive careers guidance and that many schools focused on the A Level route. Their recommendations for improving practice emphasised four key features: a clear school strategy; monitoring of destination data; employer representation on school governing bodies; promotion of all post 16 progression routes including apprenticeships.

46. Employer expectations

Vocational qualifications are valued by employers. The joint CBI and Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2015³⁴⁴, notes that 37% of the employers surveyed value vocational and academic qualifications equally; 37% prefer recruits to hold a mix of both academic and vocational qualifications while only 20% prefer academic qualifications alone. However, the report also notes that 45% of employers would like greater simplification of the post 16 qualification landscape and an equal number would like to see high-quality vocational qualifications given the 'respected' and 'well-understood' (p43) A Level branding.

³⁴² www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf

³⁴³ www.gov.uk/government/publications/careers-guidance-in-schools-going-in-the-right-direction

³⁴⁴ www.news.cbi.org.uk/business-issues/education-and-skills/gateway-to-growth-cbi-pearson-education-and-skills-survey-2015/

47. The UKCES Employer Skills Survey 2013³⁴⁵, states that 27% of employers had recruited an employee directly from education in the 2 or 3 years prior to the survey. 74% of employers who had recruited students from FE colleges considered them to be well or very well prepared for employment. Less than 10% of employers who had recruited a school or college leaver considered that they lacked the required skills or training. The most commonly cited reasons for education leavers being ill-prepared for work was a lack of experience of the working world/life in general and poor motivation/attitude. Those young people who had attended FE colleges were considered to be better prepared in both cases than those young people employed directly from school.

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

48. Local authorities have the statutory responsibility for supporting young people to participate in education and training; schools and colleges are required to ensure impartial careers advice.

49. Despite the recent establishment by the Government of a new Careers and Enterprise Company, the current offer of careers advice for young people needs urgent reform as too many young people are leaving school at age 16 without being fully aware of the range of pathways available to them.

50. In order for pupils to be fully prepared for a vocational or academic course, apprenticeship, or indeed a traineeship, they must first have access to high quality, impartial and transparent careers advice on both academic and vocational routes. Improving careers advice will reduce the number of young people not in education, employment or training and encourage more 16 to 18-year-olds to consider an apprenticeship over going to university.

14 September 2015

³⁴⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ukces-employer-skills-survey-2013>

HOUSE OF LORDS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY
CALL FOR EVIDENCE

A response from Natspec: Association of National Specialist Colleges

Natspec is the membership association for over 70 specialist colleges nationally working with young people with complex learning difficulties or disabilities. They provide residential and/or day provision for young people who have an Education Health and Care Plan under the Children and Families Act 2014.

The young people we work with face many challenges in securing employment and appropriate accommodation. Colleges can prepare students well for living more independently and for work, but other agencies and employers must take responsibility for supporting them beyond college.

Our response therefore focuses on employment and accommodation for young people with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities and some of the barriers they face in achieving their goals of living more independently and working.

Within this group there are a few young people, predominantly with sensory impairments, physical disabilities or Asperger's syndrome, who might undertake A levels and go to university. As requested, this response does not over this minority.

Q1 – factors affecting social mobility

- a) The young people we work with are often ambitious to be in work and to live with greater levels of independence, and are encouraged to be aspirational by the Children and Families Act. A number of barriers remain however, largely because many of them will continue to require some degree of support throughout their lives, although we believe that the greater the input at an early stage in their lives, the more cost effective this will be for society in the longer term. This was endorsed by the National Audit Office report 'Oversight of special education for young people aged 16–25', which stated, 'We estimate that the cost to the public purse of supporting a person with a moderate learning disability through adult life (16–64) is £2–3 million at today's prices. Equipping a young person with the skills to live in semi-independent rather than fully supported housing could, in addition to quality-of-life improvements, reduce these lifetime support costs by around £1 million. Supporting one person with a learning disability into employment could, in addition to improving their independence and self-esteem, reduce lifetime costs to the public purse by around £170,000 and increase the person's income by between 55 and 95 per cent.' (NAO 2011)
- b) Unfortunately local authorities and services are not always willing to invest in young people in order to achieve these downstream benefits; their concerns are solely on saving current budgets. So in spite of the ambitions of the Children and Families Act, which Natspec continues to support, many young people are not able to attend the

college that will best meet their learning and support needs because they are unable to secure the necessary funding. For some young people with higher levels of need who wish to increase their independence, their preference is for a specialist college, but funding is often refused. However, young people choosing to go to a local college are also finding it increasingly difficult to get funding. Sometimes the only alternative offer is a social care placement that will not enable them to achieve their goals for adulthood; some of these have been particularly inappropriate, placing young people with elderly residents.

- c) Those who do get to the specialist college of their choice will have a curriculum geared towards their individual goals. This will include opportunities to further their levels of independent living and mobility, which will be essential skills for adult life. In addition, they will undertake work experience and develop a range of employability and vocational skills. While many aspects of their programme will not be accredited, we have some concerns about the range of lower level vocational qualifications that are likely to be available in the future. These often meet the needs of this group of young people, who are not cognitively able to study at higher levels, but are perfectly capable of doing a job and who need some basic industry linked knowledge.
- d) Whilst we get good support from employers who offer work experience placements, securing and sustaining paid employment remains a challenge, especially for those with learning difficulties, where the data shows that just over 7% are in work. The benefits of employing disabled people are increasingly well known and are publicised on the gov.uk website, yet it remains a challenge to persuade some employers that they should be seeking to employ disabled people. The support that is available, such as job coaching and Access to Work funding, is not sufficiently well publicised. This is a great waste for the economy, for society and not least for disabled people themselves who are not able to reach their full potential or become economically independent.
- e) We have some concerns that young people with learning difficulties or disabilities who get into work – with or without support from a job coach or with Access to work funding - are not always encouraged to consider a career route. Instead they often stay in the same role for many years and are not given training or encouraged to seek promotion.
- f) There is a further issue about young people with learning difficulties or disabilities being able to choose where they wish to live. Even if they move out of their own LA area for further education (as is the case for many young people without disabilities because of the spread of further education providers), those with any degree of personal support needs have very little freedom to live beyond their 'home' LA borders once their course is over. They often have significant difficulties in securing accommodation that is suitable and age appropriate, and because of these challenges may spend quite some time after leaving college finding their

accommodation before they can even consider work. As well as their personal rights which are infringed through this inability to move freely, these young people do not have the flexibility to move to where there is work, which is something the rest of the population might take for granted.

Q2 - the 14-24 year old cohort

- a) As stated previously, this response focuses entirely on those young people who have more complex learning difficulties or disabilities, in particular those who need additional time in learning and specialist support to achieve their goals. This group is more likely to arrive later into further education, often at 17, 18 or 19 in order to make the best of the time available to them. There is a growing body of data about the numbers and their needs, and this will increase as the Children and Families Act becomes embedded and covers the age range from 0-25. However, collated data about their outcomes is poor, and while individual colleges often track students for up to 5 years, currently there is limited data available about the longer term experiences of this cohort. It is therefore difficult to gauge the extent to which successful outcomes are sustained over time, or if they find work in the longer term.
- b) These young people are unlikely (with the exceptions noted above) to pursue academic qualifications; instead they seek practical courses that will build on their individual strengths. These courses will not always be accredited, although they will be rigorously monitored through systems that are in place in each college. These young people may also follow lower level qualifications, which nevertheless represent a high level of achievement for the individual.

Q3 – the current system

- a) The current system for these young people - Education Health and Care plans supported by high needs funding - in principle could serve them well. It is rightly focussed on aspirations and improved outcomes for adult life, including work, living, participation and health and well-being. In practice, there is a great deal that needs improving before the new system works in the best interests of young people and Natspec welcomes the DfE's acknowledgment of some of these issues. As well as a number of process issues which have created confusion and delay, the overarching role of the local authority in assessing, planning, commissioning and funding places all the power in their hands and is conversely very disempowering for young people and parents.

Q4 – possible improvements

- a) With regard to the implementation of the Children and Families Act, we would like to see impartial and well informed guidance for young people, so that assessment and planning is not overly influenced by funding decisions. Many skilled and experienced advisers were lost to the system when Connexions reformed, and it is crucial that their replacements have appropriate expertise and understanding of the

needs of young people with learning difficulties and disabilities, together with a good knowledge of the range of provision that is available. They must encourage young people to be ambitious and at the same time set realistic expectations.

- b) From early on in school, particularly in special schools, young people should be encouraged to think positively about their adult life and to develop a broad understanding of the options that are available to them. Sometimes disabled people are only portrayed in the media when they are deemed exceptional, for example as Paralympians; there are not enough role models of disabled people leading 'ordinary' lives as employees, friends and family members. This makes it difficult for young people who need concrete examples to have clear ideas of what they can do in life.
- c) Natspec member colleges work very hard to build good links with employers and ensure that students have high quality work experience. Colleges share ideas through the employment forum, participate in Work Experience Week, have instigated and participate in inclusive skills competitions, and survey employers to determine their views about work experience. Some colleges offer supported internships. Many colleges have levels of success significantly above the national figures for getting students into work; for example at Foxes Academy, 79% of leavers from 2014 are now in work, with 55% being paid and 45% working on a voluntary basis. However, the pool of employers who are positive about employing disabled people is still not large enough, and there is not enough awareness amongst employers of the kinds of support that are available. Colleges are particularly grateful to those employers who promote and support their work.
- d) The new EHCP system requires LAs to identify long term outcomes with young people. It is therefore important that they play their part in helping them to reach these, for example by ensuring there is suitable accommodation and by working with supported employment organisations, housing associations and others. Colleges can only do so much in preparing them for work and living more independently, and others in the system must also take responsibility.

Q5 – responsibility for improvement

Responsibility has been indicated in Q4 above, but in summary:

- a) LAs must make the Children and Families Act work in the best interests of young people.
- b) We would like to see the provision of impartial and well informed advice and guidance by organisations at arm's length from local authorities.
- c) The government must do more to encourage higher levels of employment of disabled people and ensure that the range of support through Access to Work is better known and used.
- d) Young people with learning difficulties or disabilities should have the right to live where they choose and not be tied to their 'home' LA

- e) DfE should undertake monitoring of long term outcomes, and commission a follow up report on value for money, similar to that undertaken by the NAO

Alison Boulton, Chief executive, Natspec

14 September 2015

Call for evidence: Select Committee on Social Mobility

**Response from the Association of Teachers and Lecturers
14 September 2015**

1. About the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL)

ATL, the education union, is an independent, registered trade union and professional association, representing approximately 160,000 teachers, head teachers, lecturers and support staff in maintained and independent nurseries, schools, sixth form, tertiary and further education colleges in the United Kingdom. AMiE is the trade union and professional association for leaders and managers in colleges and schools, and is a distinct section of ATL. We recognise the link between education policy and members' conditions of service.

ATL exists to help members, as their careers develop, through first rate research, advice, information and legal advice. Our evidence-based policy making enables us to campaign and negotiate locally and nationally. ATL is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC), European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) and Education International (EI). ATL is not affiliated to any political party and seeks to work constructively with all the main political parties.

2. Summary

2.1. ATL welcomes the House of Lords' recognition that there are concerns around social mobility amongst this group of young people. The key factors that prevent social mobility for this group include socio-economic background. This cohort of young people are more likely to be from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with special educational needs and disabilities are over-represented, compared to the rest of the country, as are those from ethnic minority backgrounds.

2.2. This cohort's experience of school also affects their social mobility. The radical and far-reaching reforms to education policy by the current and previous governments have made the experience of school worse for this group of young people. The curriculum has narrowed and vocational qualifications have been undermined by an increasing focus on academic subjects in schools, and savage cuts to further education funding.

2.3. The social mobility of this group of young people is also been disadvantaged by the lack of adequate careers advice education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools and colleges. Work experience is no longer mandatory and, whilst schools now have a new statutory requirement to provide CEIAG, this is neither funded, not properly resourced. Employers do not engage sufficiently with schools, for example to support CEIAG provision, yet complain that school leavers do not have the skills required for the workplace. Apprenticeships are not available in the quantity or quality required.

2.4. To support these young people, further education colleges and CEIAG should be properly funded. Employers should engage with schools and colleges and invest in

the training and development of their staff. In addition, learners' needs and voices must be central to the education and skills policy changes that affect them.

3. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace?

- 3.1. Many of these young people are unable to follow the traditional A-Level route due to the lack of GCSE grades that are needed with that failure an almost inevitable outcome of their broader circumstances; as the RSA noted in 2011, 'social class is the strongest predictor of educational attainment'.³⁴⁶ The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission recently produced a report on social mobility in schools, which showed that gaps in cognitive development between better-off and disadvantaged children open up early on.³⁴⁷ Those from the poorest fifth of families are on average more than 11 months behind children from middle income families in vocabulary tests when they start school. Over the years that follow, these gaps widen rather than narrow. The overall result is that nearly six out of ten disadvantaged children in England do not achieve a basic set of qualifications compared to only one in three children from more advantaged backgrounds. The story is broadly similar in Scotland and Wales. The consequence for these children is a lifelong struggle to gain basic skills, avoid unemployment and to find and hold down a good job.
- 3.2. Government education policies have perpetuated the struggle for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, resulting in an increasing number of young people becoming disengaged in school. The majority of these young people enter further education colleges and do not take A-Levels nor go on to university. The curriculum is a major factor in young people's engagement in school. Offering a curriculum that is rich in knowledge, skills and understanding, and that is also relevant and engaging to children and young people, helps keep them engaged with school and broadens horizons.
- 3.3. The new national curriculum, however, has come under much criticism for being limited, prioritising the learning of fact over offering a rounded curriculum. In addition, vocational and non-Ebacc qualifications have a low status in school accountability measures. Of the four headline measures for schools that were introduced in 2013, these qualifications can only contribute as part of one, the progress 8 measure.³⁴⁸ We are already seeing less curriculum time given to subjects such as drama, music, art, design and technology and dance. These subjects can function as a hook that keeps a young person engaged with school and enables them to achieve across many subjects, not just the subject of special interest.
- 3.4. Accountability measures have resulted in a further narrowing of the curriculum within subjects. Recent research commissioned by the NUT shows that children in England today are experiencing a narrower curriculum than in the past because of

³⁴⁶ *Not Enough Capital? Exploring Education and Employment Progression in Further Education*, Emma Norris, RSA, 2011

³⁴⁷ *Downward mobility, opportunity hoarding and the glass floor*, Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2015

³⁴⁸ *Reforming the accountability system for secondary schools*, Oral statement to Parliament, David Laws, 2014

high-stakes testing.³⁴⁹ The use of those test results to judge the quality of schools and teachers as well as pupils, and the sanctions imposed when targets are not met have increased the stakes around testing, the result of which is that teachers ‘teach to the test’, narrowing the curriculum in their subject area.

- 3.5. Employers have deplored this trend for an increasingly narrow curriculum as not preparing young people for life beyond school. Research by the British Chamber of Commerce showed that 88% of firms believe that school leavers are not prepared for work.³⁵⁰ Of these, 57% of employers believe that this is because of a lack of soft skills such as communication, team working and resilience. Teachers say that the biggest challenge to their ability to teach 21st-century skills was a lack of time within a strictly regulated curriculum.³⁵¹
- 3.6. Whilst many firms believe that educational establishments should focus on the skills needed for work, over three-quarters of them believe that lack of work experience is the reason young people are unprepared for the workplace. It is unfortunate therefore, that the coalition government removed the statutory requirement for 14 to 16-year-olds to carry out a two-week work placement.
- 3.7. Employers however, should also take some responsibility. Whilst complaining that young people lack workplace experience and skills, a 2012 survey by the UK Commission for Employment and Skills showed that less than a third of UK businesses had offered a work experience placement in the previous year.³⁵² In an ATL survey of members in 2014, 40% reported poor access to and involvement of national employers in their schools’ careers education provision, and 10% said that it was non-existent. In addition, employers must understand that the purpose of education is not to train individuals for their specific workplace. Currently, 47% of employers offer no training.³⁵³ Rather than expect schools to do their job for them, employers should invest in developing the skills of their workforce.
- 3.8. In 2014, a report commissioned by the Sutton Trust found that the quality of careers education, advice, information and guidance (CEIAG) that young people receive affects social mobility.³⁵⁴ In 2011, the coalition government placed a legal duty on schools and colleges to provide careers guidance. However, this was accompanied by ‘weak statutory guidance and little help or support’.³⁵⁵ As a result, there has been a decline in the quality and quantity of the careers guidance available to ‘young people in England and the emergence of a ‘postcode lottery’ where some young people have access to much better career guidance than others.’³⁵⁶
- 3.9. In the 2014 survey of ATL members working in secondary schools, only 5% responded that the coalition government’s policy changes had resulted in improved

³⁴⁹ *Exam Factories: The impact of accountability measures on children and young people*, Merryn Hutchings, London Metropolitan University, 2015

³⁵⁰ British Chamber of Commerce Workforce Survey, July 2014

³⁵¹ *Driving the skills agenda: An Economist Intelligence Unit report sponsored by Google*, 2015

³⁵² *Employer Perspectives Survey*, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2012

³⁵³ *Employer Perspectives Survey*, UK Commission for Employment and Skills, 2013

³⁵⁴ *Advancing ambitions: The role of career guidance in supporting social mobility*, Tristram Hooley, Jesse Matheson, A.G. Watts, 2014

³⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

CEIAG. The reasons given for the decline in CEIAG provision included a lack of expertise in careers guidance, leaving schools struggling to buy in resources which were previously provided for free, for example by Connexions which was axed in 2011. A recent Unison survey showed that 83% of schools do not have trained careers advisors.³⁵⁷ One of the major challenges reported by the ATL members surveyed was the suitability and effectiveness of the CEIAG provision for a diverse range of people. Government policy changes to CEIAG provision of schools has led to criticism from wide-ranging quarters, including Ofsted, the CBI, and the Education Select Committee.³⁵⁸

3.10. The financial pressures faced by further education colleges increasingly puts at risk the social mobility of 14-24 year olds who do not take the A-level and university route. Further education budgets have decreased by 35% since 2009, with an additional cut to adult learning of 24% from September 2015. The resulting college mergers, restructures and curriculum rationalisation have inevitably reduced the opportunities available for this large group of young people looking for good quality vocational pathways.

3.11. In addition, the limited availability of good quality apprenticeships the potential for social mobility for this group of young people. In May, research commissioned by IPPR found that whilst there were 1.8 million applications for apprenticeships, just 166,000 apprenticeship vacancies were advertised last year.³⁵⁹ Furthermore, the majority (65%) of apprenticeship places are at the intermediate level (level 2) and in sectors such as hospitality and retail, where there is little scope for progression.

4. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

4.1. The majority of 16-18 year olds are studying in further education colleges; 773,000, compared to 442,000 in school and academy sixth forms.³⁶⁰ Having failed to achieve the GCSE grades required to study A-Levels at school, the majority of these young people apply for vocational courses at further education colleges. Only 6% of 16-17 year olds are on apprenticeship programmes.³⁶¹

4.2. For many young people gaining vocational skills and qualifications, either through further education, or an apprenticeship programme, is the most appropriate route. Some of these young people have good GCSE profiles but do not want to pursue a traditional academic route. They thrive in the vocational or employed environment and develop many skills and their knowledge in a suitable way for them. It is vital therefore, that the range of vocational options remains open to this cohort of young people.

³⁵⁷ *The Careers Service: the Government's Elephant in the Room*, Unison, 2014

³⁵⁸ *Careers guidance in schools: going in the right direction?*, Ofsted, 2013. *Education and Skills Survey*, CBI and Pearson, 2015. *Careers guidance for young people: The impact of the new duty on schools*, House of Commons Education Committee, 2013.

³⁵⁹ *Learner Drivers, Local Authorities and Apprenticeships*, Luke Raikes, 2015

³⁶⁰ *Key Further Education Statistics*, Association of Colleges, 2015/16

³⁶¹ *Ofsted Annual Report, 2013/14, further education and skills*

- 4.3. There are however, a proportion of these young people who became, as discussed above, disengaged by the narrow, academic curriculum at schools, with the continuous high-stakes testing also having a negative effect on their self-esteem and reinforcing feelings of failure. This will be further exacerbated by the pressure associated with the single end of course assessment required by the reforms to GCSEs, which do not truly reflect many students' skills levels. These young people often believe that they will 'fail again' when entering further education or employment.
- 4.4. The government's requirement for students to re-sit GCSE English and maths until they achieve a grade C or above will further engender feelings of failure amongst this cohort of young people. In some cases, it will be necessary to devote such a large amount of time to developing maths and English skills to the detriment of the vocational skills the young person is keen to gain. This will result in disillusioned learners who drop out of programmes. Following devastating cuts to further education budgets, and the continued turbulence and insecurity within the sector, it is become increasingly difficult for colleges to recruit maths and English teachers.
- 4.5. Many of the young people who do not take the A-Level and university route are from disadvantaged backgrounds; 56% of further education learners are from the bottom three socio-economic groups.³⁶² During 2013-14, 17% of 16 to 18-year-olds in colleges were eligible for and claiming free school meals at the age of 15, compared with 10% in maintained school and academy sixth forms. We also know that people from an ethnic minority background are over-represented in further education colleges. Whereas 22% of 16 to 18-year-olds in colleges are from an ethnic minority background, compared to 17% of the total population in this age group, which classified themselves as non-white. Similarly 29% of over 19 year olds in colleges are from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to 14% of the total adult population, which classified themselves as non-white.
- 4.6. Within further education colleges, 15% of students have a learning difficulty and/or disability. It is very likely that young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are over-represented amongst those aged 14-24 years who do not pursue the A-Level and university route. This is because the population in further education colleges is skewed towards the more disadvantaged, and families caring for disabled children are much more likely than those with non-disabled children to live in poverty. It is estimated that 27% of disabled children in the UK (just over 200,000) live in poverty – that is in households with an income below 60% of the national median. If we take into consideration the disproportionate burden of housing costs on families with low incomes and adjust for the contribution of Disability Living Allowance (a benefit designed to offset the additional costs of caring for a disabled child), the number of children living in poverty rises to over 300,000 or 40%.³⁶³ Recent research on families with vision-impaired children shows a similar picture. Over a quarter of families with vision impaired children aged 11 were found to be living in poverty compared to just under 20% of those with non-visually impaired children.

³⁶² *Not Enough Capital? Exploring Education and Education Progression in Further Education*, Emma Norris, RSA, 2011

³⁶³ *Children's Society Report*, 2013

4.7. Given that most of this cohort of 14-24 year olds are likely to be from the bottom three socio-economic groups, the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission's report on social mobility in schools presents longitudinal data that helps to inform their trajectories. LSE researcher Abigail McKnight looked at the 20% lowest performers and 20% highest performers in five cognitive tests at age five, and assessed how they fared in terms of job status and earnings 37 years later, at a time in their lives when they are likely to have settled down in terms of their work. The research further analysed the impact of the subjects' family background, measured by social class and income, their later cognitive development, their social and emotional skills, and their educational experience, on their trajectory during those years.

4.8. The findings of the researchers can be summarised as follows:

- Children from higher family income or higher social class backgrounds are more likely to perform better in cognitive tests at age five, and these tests are related to labour market success at age 42
- Such children are more likely to be in high income groups at age 42 (40% from social class I go on to be in the top 20% of earners, compared with 7% of social class V)
- The converse applies to children performing less well at age five.
- Less able, better-off children are 35% more likely to become high earners than bright poor children.

5. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

5.1. The current transition system does not support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes. As discussed above, young people face challenges choosing appropriate career pathways and routes to employment as a result of inadequate careers education, information, advice and guidance. Drop-outs from those who have chosen the wrong post-16 education path costs the economy £814 million per year.³⁶⁴ The splitting of responsibility for careers education between two government departments (Nick Boles, Skills Minister is responsible for post-18 careers guidance, and Sam Gyimah, has responsibility for under 18 year olds at the Department for Education) does not allow for a coordinated response to this situation and also created confusion.

5.2. Accountability measures for schools also discourage students from taking vocational qualifications and therefore missing the potentially most appropriate routes to employment. Schools are encouraged to enter pupils for academic examinations, which sends out a message to parents, young people and teachers that vocational qualifications are of lower value. It also runs the risk of these qualifications becoming increasingly low profile within schools and therefore under-resourced. In addition, the entry of students for academic examinations, regardless of their needs, aptitudes or interests, contributes to disaffection.

³⁶⁴ *Achievement and retention in post-16 education*, Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, 2015

5.3. Lack of availability of apprenticeships, which provide opportunities for a job on completion, or progression to higher levels, also results in young people facing difficulties transitioning into the workplace. The availability of apprenticeships varies greatly by region and sector. In particular, young people are not able to access apprenticeship programmes in many rural and coastal areas. Furthermore, women and people from ethnic minority backgrounds are under-represented in apprenticeships.³⁶⁵ There are concerns that the government's fixation on achieving three million apprenticeships by the end of this parliament will risk the quality of the programmes offered to young people.

5.4. Furthermore, there are a number of issues surrounding the employer-designed trailblazers programmes to be introduced from 2017, including a lack of standardisation and regulation. Most significantly, recognised qualifications, such as BTechs and NVQs, are not a requirement of employer-designed programmes. Unless these trailblazers become widely recognised and highly regarded in their own right amongst employers, young people who have completed apprenticeships will face difficulties or progressing within sectors, and moving between sectors.

5.5. The recent SEN reforms are supposed to address weaknesses in pre-existing transition arrangements for young people with SEN or Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD). Entry-level courses and foundation learning programmes at further education colleges were often the default destination after compulsory education for young people with low to moderate needs, but these were not always well suited to young people's needs and may not provide an appropriate level of challenge. The barriers to many young people with SEN/LDD getting work include low expectations, a lack of opportunities and support to develop essential skills, and employer discrimination. There have also been concerns that young people's wider needs, such as independent living and social relationships, are not adequately recognised and supported.

5.6. The SEN reforms recognise that the meaningful involvement of young people and parents or carers is the key to successful transition planning. Differences in willingness, ability and expectations across parents, carers, young people themselves and professionals can prevent or impede this involvement. While some local authorities have successful supported-employment projects, these can often only accommodate small numbers of young people and, due to a reliance on time-limited funding streams, have uncertain futures, particularly at a time of severe local authority cuts.

6. How can transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

6.1. Mandatory work placements for 16-18 year olds must be reinstated, so that young people can experience the world of work. Employers must engage with schools and colleges more consistently and sustainably. In addition to offering work experience, employers should support the delivery of CEIAG to young people. This can happen

³⁶⁵ *Under-representation by gender and race in Apprenticeships*, Becci Newton and Joy Williams, Institute for Employment Studies, 2013

in a variety of ways, for example through attending careers fairs, delivering talks, providing engaging role models from the workplace, organising site visits, and offering mentoring schemes. Employers should also engage with schools to better understand the skills that young people can bring to their organisations and how they can support transition.

- 6.2. In 2014 The Gatsby Foundation produced 'The Good Careers Guide', which presented eight benchmarks of good careers guidance, which were fully costed by PWC.³⁶⁶ This should be used as the basis of a model of properly funded CEIAG provision for young people in schools and colleges. CEIAG must be embedded in the curriculum to demonstrate the links between subject content and its application in working life. It must also be coordinated by specialist careers teachers, and supported with whole school CPD. CEIAG works best when delivered in a variety of ways, including face-to-face, one-to-one meetings. The current telephone based support provided by the National Careers Service is inadequate. In a survey by the TUC, 75% of young people responded that they preferred face-to-face guidance.³⁶⁷
- 6.3. The cuts to further education must be ceased and reversed in order that young people can access the full range of vocational courses and receive support for their individual needs. The sector has been subject to far-reaching reform and now needs a period of stability in order to focus upon learners' needs. The learning environment created by qualified teachers and support staff in further education is key to successful outcomes. Strong teamwork, an ethos of professionalism, a clear career structure, and access to high quality CPD, are some of the key elements that profile a vibrant learning environment.
- 6.4. Expansive learning environments are the key to introducing and making visible high quality vocational education and training professionals and their associated occupational sectors. The casualisation of the workforce (25% of zero hours contracts are now in education with most in further and higher education), the fragmentation of the workforce (68% are on fractional posts in further education), and the deregulation of qualified status in order to teach are all factors that demote the area of vocational education and training, decrease the resources and status of professionalism in the sector, and so lower the aspirations of staff and, in turn, students.
- 6.5. Learners must be central to policy changes in education, to ensure an inclusive and varied provision that enables all young people to develop their interests and aptitudes. The reform of apprenticeship programmes must be refocused upon young apprentices, rather than developed for the benefit of large businesses. Unionlearn has produced a 'Charter for Apprenticeships' that sets out the hallmarks of high quality provision.³⁶⁸
- 6.6. Historically students with SEND have been well provided for within the further education sector, although the dramatic funding cuts are putting this provision at risk. In terms of how to meet the post-16 needs of those with learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD), there is a need to ensure sufficient capacity and specialism to meet the rising volume and changing needs of these young people. This includes

³⁶⁶ *The Good Careers Guide*, John Holman, University of York, 2014

³⁶⁷ TUC survey, 2014

³⁶⁸ *Charter for Apprenticeships*, Unionlearn, 2013

developing local 16-25 learning provision for them with integrated access to supporting services, such as care, health services and housing, to allow young people to remain in their local community and minimise the number of out of county residential placements required.

7. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

7.1. The government must fund a genuine partnership between schools, colleges, higher education institutions, local government, employers and social services, with the aim of engaging learners, parents and carers.

14 September 2015

British Chambers of Commerce – Written evidence (SMO0103)

House of Lords Social Mobility Select Committee: Transition to work for 14-24 year olds inquiry

British Chambers of Commerce Submission

The British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) sits at the heart of a network of 52 accredited Chambers of Commerce across the UK, plus a fast-growing Global Business Network. In the UK, our network brings together over 70,000 member businesses, and engages with a further 200,000 non-member companies each year. Overseas, our Global Business Network offers practical, on-the-ground help to UK exporters, and supports two-way trade.

Context

Long term trends show unemployment falling and currently sits at 5.6%. However, a high proportion of young people are affected by worklessness with 12.7% of people aged 16-24 not in education, employment or training (NEET). Around half of these young people are unemployed, and the rest are inactive (not seeking work).

Whilst the proportion of young people not in work or education has reduced somewhat, it still remains high compared to other OECD countries. It has been identified that poor qualifications, health problems and a lack of work experience all play a role. In particular, almost half of those without work have had no paid work experience.

The BCC [2014 Workforce Survey](#) (see attached factsheet) shows businesses are concerned about young people's preparedness for work, with an overwhelmingly 88% concluding school-leavers are unprepared for work. Reasons for this include identified by firms include lack of work experience (76%), soft skills (57%), and careers advice (46%).

Issues with the current system

A consultation with our membership has highlighted the following issues that relate to the terms of reference of this consultation.

Apprenticeships need to be high quality and more focused at young people

The government's target to increase apprenticeships starts to 3m could support social mobility, if the apprenticeships delivered are of high quality. The risk with chasing an arbitrary numerical target is that it can incentivise prioritising quantity over quality. Furthermore, apprenticeships must be better targeted at young people, as Table 1 below shows the number of apprenticeships for young people under the age of 24 has stayed flat over the last three years.

Table 1: Apprenticeship starts by age, thousands

	11/12	12/13	13/14
Level			
Under 19	130	115	120
19-24	161	165	159
25+	229	230	162
Proportion			
Under 19	25%	22%	27%
19-24	31%	32%	36%
25+	44%	45%	37%

Source: FE BIS Data Library - Apprenticeships

There is a lack of incentives for schools to promote apprenticeships and vocational pathways at age 14, 16 and 18

Accredited Chambers of Commerce and businesses report a lack of willingness from some schools to signpost students to apprenticeships. This is because the per pupil school funding system favours encouraging pupils down the A-level route as it is a source of funding for the school, if it has a sixth form. For similar reasons, there is no incentive for schools to promote Studio School and University Technical College pathways at age 14. This is often compounded by a lack of knowledge in schools about non-academic, vocational pathways which are often held in low regard. A recent BCC school engagement project run by five Chambers, supporting young women to into science-based careers, revealed that there is a lack of knowledge from teachers (who often undertook the academic/university pathway) about vocational routes.

There is a lack of incentives for SMEs to take on apprentices

Government policy is currently too focused on the major employers, and equal effort ought to be put on encouraging and supporting smaller businesses to offer apprenticeships. Our research shows micro, small and medium sized employers are significantly more likely to want to take on an apprentice (see Table 2). The cost of employing an apprentice is higher for SMEs who often do not have well-resourced HR departments. For this reason, SMEs need more financial support from the government to support with the cost of training apprentices. This can be done by making the apprenticeship grant for employers available to all SMEs, regardless of whether they are hiring apprentices for the first time.

Table 2: Proportion of businesses not offering apprentices, who would consider offering them in the future, by business size

	Micro (0-9)	Small (10-49)	Medium (50-249)	Large (250+)
Proportion of business	35%	34%	29%	20%

Source: BCC Workforce Survey 2014

Lack of access to professional networks hinders social mobility, particularly for young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds

Young people from lower-socio economic backgrounds often lack social capital - they are less likely to have connections with people in careers they may want to pursue, who can provide informal support and advice (Future First, 2011).

Our members tell us, and research suggests, that interactions with employers can be pivotal in helping inform and guide a young person during their transition to work (Education and Employers Taskforce). However, there is currently a lack of integrated and national support to help young people interact with business. This is why the British Chambers of Commerce is aiming to unleash the hundreds of thousands of business connections that it has across the UK, to better support schools, colleges and their pupils. We are doing this by launching a new membership offer for schools called Young Chamber (see further details under *Who's Responsibility*).

Improving the transition from school to work

The above issues have led us to propose the following measures to improve young people's transition to work, which in turn will help improve social mobility.

Ensure secondary schools are assessed on employment outcomes to better prepare young people for work – focusing schools not just on 'teaching to the test', but also on developing the employability and life skills needed to get into, and get on in the workplace. The increase in the number of Academies has led a more devolved system where schools have greater autonomy. In such a system we feel schools need sharp incentives to focus on preparing young people with the skills and attributes to lead productive lives and find employment. This can be achieved if the schools inspectorate takes into account pupil destination data when making a quality judgement on a school. We would recommend the data considered should be three years after the pupil has left the school, rather than the existing six month period.

Guarantee universal 'experience of work' in all schools UK-wide to improve employment prospects – ensuring all pupils leave school with high-quality exposure to business and the core skills needed for work.

Promote enterprise modules for all higher and further education students – ensuring students have the opportunity to build up their knowledge of business during academic and vocational studies, better preparing them for work or to set up their own firms.

Guarantee a business governor in every school to increase business engagement in education – making schools more aware of local business needs and supporting schools to develop healthy relationships with their local business community.

Extend the £1,500 apprenticeship grant for employers beyond 2016, and make it easier for businesses to access it. We would also advise the Committee to look at whether the AGE Grant can be made more widely available to small employers, even if they have previously taken on an apprentice in the past. This would recognise the greater costs smaller businesses incur (often due to lack of HR capacity) when employing apprentices.

To encourage schools to promote more vocational pathways, **we would urge the Committee to further explore how schools can be incentivised, either through compensation or otherwise, when they refer pupils to apprenticeships.** This could potentially be delivered through greater collaboration, where schools, colleges and other relevant providers form local clusters. This could help schools and colleges pool resources – allowing greater referrals across educational and training institutions with different specialist curricula, in particular at age 14 and 16.

Who's responsibility?

We believe it is a joint responsibility between business, education and government, to improve the transition from school to work.

Business can do more - We recognise that while businesses strongly value work experience, only 48% offer it. Accredited Chambers of Commerce across the country are currently working to improve business engagement with schools. 30 Chambers of Commerce are currently piloting a new type of membership aimed at schools and colleges – the Young Chamber Membership. Through this bespoke membership schools can access a wide range of services linking them to their local business community (e.g. support in recruiting governors from the business community, business speakers in schools, visits to local firms,

labour market intelligence etc.). Chambers of Commerce currently have 1,500 schools in membership and we aim to significantly increase this over the coming years, in turn supporting thousands of pupils connect with their business community and gain valuable skills.

Positive partnerships are best enabled at a local level. Chambers have the local knowledge to leverage resources and make real change. We therefore feel Chambers of Commerce can provide the backbone infrastructure to unleash support greater support from business for schools and colleges. Chambers across England are also about to embark on a series of 250 Your Future careers events, reaching 70,000 pupils.

Schools can do more - See proposals in the *'Improving the Transition from School to Work'* section above.

Government can do more - Tackling these issues requires a joined up approach, whereby different government departments (e.g. DWP, BIS, DfE) work together. The recently announced 'Earn or Learn' government taskforce should be used to increase greater cross-departmental collaboration to tackle issues relating to social mobility.

The new Careers and Enterprise Company has a role to play in promoting more widespread employer engagement with schools. However, as yet, it is unclear whether the Careers and Enterprise Company will have enough political and spending clout to bring about the transformative change that is needed. **We would therefore urge the government to explore how the National Careers Service – which has an annual budget of £100m – might optimise the deployment of its resources, perhaps in partnership with local organisations, to improve the transition from school to work, particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.**

The BCC would be keen to engage and give oral evidence to this inquiry.

15 September 2015

Careers England – Written evidence (SMO0044)

SUBMISSION TO THE SOCIAL MOBILITY COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS REGARDING THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK FOR 14-24 YEAR OLDS.
SUBMITTED BY CAREERS ENGLAND SEPTEMBER 13TH 2015.

INTRODUCTION

Careers England is the national trade association for organisations involved in the provision of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG) products and services in England for people of all ages. Our members provide aspects of some, or all, of the four components of CEIAG:

- Careers education (that is ‘career learning’)
- Careers information
- Careers advice
- Careers guidance

Our members comprise the majority of prime and sub-contracted deliverers of the National Careers Service. They also deliver careers guidance services for local authorities, schools and colleges across England.

Our associate members include a growing number of smaller partnerships and sole traders in the careers profession, as well as a number of organisations not directly providing CEIAG services but wishing to be associated with Careers England.

Full details of all Careers England members, our activities and our publications can be found at www.careersengland.org.uk

We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the Social Mobility Committee of the House of Lords. As the informed employer voice of careers guidance organisations in England our contribution is from the perspective of the impact high quality CEIAG makes to social mobility and the economic health of the nation.

QUESTION 1 – What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

A major component of successful transition and progression of young people into the labour market is good quality Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CEIAG). Essentially this is made up of:

- Careers information on courses, occupations and career paths (including labour market information)
- Careers education, as part of the curriculum in which attention is paid to helping groups of individuals to develop their awareness of the world of work, their self-awareness (strengths, interests and values) and competencies for managing their career development. This should include work experience and other activities with appropriate preparation and follow up.
- Career counselling (advice and guidance) conducted on a one to one basis or in small groups in which attention is focused on the distinctive issues faced by individuals.

Good quality careers preparation of young people is made up of all three elements. However currently there is growing concern that our young people are not receiving the careers help and support that they need. This is evidenced by the concerns raised by employers relating to the poor preparation for employment of young people whilst still

in compulsory schooling. As the Director General of the CBI John Cridland stated: “Careers help in schools is currently on a life support machine”.

This downward step change in careers preparation came via the Education Act 2011 when the Coalition Government introduced the biggest change in careers support for young people in almost 40 years. Local authorities were no longer required to provide a universal careers service – instead schools and colleges were given a new statutory duty to secure access to independent and impartial careers guidance for their pupils and students. Schools and colleges were expected to fund the provision of careers guidance from their existing delegated budgets and were free to commission services from any provider of their choice.

A survey undertaken by Ofsted in 2013 found that the policy was not working well and only 20% of schools were effective in ensuring that all their pupils were receiving the level of careers information, advice and guidance they needed to support decision making.

A further survey commissioned by Careers England and the Career Development Institute in March 2015 found [similar results](#). A survey into the views of parents on the career preparation of their children conducted by GTI highlighted strong [concerns by parents](#).

In addition to these changes to careers preparation there was a further change introduced by the Government in 2011. This was the decision to remove the duty to deliver work related learning and careers education at Key Stage 4. This was despite views to the contrary including clear evidence of the benefits of pre-16 work experience (*Mann.A (2012) Work Experience Impact and Delivery – Insights from the evidence. London Education and Employers Taskforce*).

These regrettable changes to the careers and employment preparation have affected the economic and social mobility of many young people especially the group highlighted by the Select Committee.

QUESTION 2 – THERE IS A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 14-24 WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THE A-LEVEL AND HIGHER EDUCATION ROUTE, AND ARE NOT CLASSIFIED AS NEET. WHAT IS KNOWN ABOUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE GROUP – WHO ARE THEY, WHY ARE THEY IN THIS POSITION AND WHAT ARE THEIR CAREER TRAJECTORIES?

The Department for Education’s National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS) provides the best source of information about this group during their progression up to age 19. This is despite the fact that in some local authority areas there are high levels of unknown destinations of some 16-18 year olds (120,000 at the June count).

We know that:

- The overwhelming majority of year 11 students progress into learning at school, college or with an employer (apprenticeship).
- Only a small number of year 11 leavers enter an apprenticeship at aged 16.

- Those students who do not achieve Maths and English at GCSE grade C or above (or equivalent) have huge challenges to overcome in securing a level 3 learning opportunity and a quality employment offer.
- There are large numbers of young people who do not complete A-Level courses and leave after a year. The Local Government Association estimated the cost of 6th form drop out to be £800 million per annum. Many of these young people would have benefitted from careers support to assist them to find a more suitable employment/learning opportunity; e.g. an apprenticeship.
- Many young people feel unprepared for the world of work and have low employability skills. This inhibits their ability to compete successfully in the job market
- The number of 19-24 year olds in jobs with no training are receiving low wages and have very few job progression opportunities. This group does not receive any help from Jobcentre Plus or the National Careers Service as they are in employment. If they were able to access good career advice and guidance they would be greatly assisted in developing the skills to move up the job market.

QUESTION 3 – DOES THE CURRENT TRANSITION SYSTEM SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE WHO DO NOT FOLLOW THE A-LEVEL AND HIGHER EDUCATION ROUTE TO PERFORM BETTER IN TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT OUTCOMES? IF NOT, WHY NOT? WHAT CHALLENGES DO THESE YOUNG PEOPLE FACE IN THEIR ABILITY TO TRANSITION SUCCESSFULLY INTO THE WORKPLACE?

The current system to support young people aged 14-24 to make the right career and learning choices is complicated and confused. Currently there are five Government Departments involved in some aspect of careers guidance. These are:

- The Department for Education
- The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills
- The Department for Communities and Local Government
- The Department for Work and Pensions
- The Ministry of Justice

In addition there is the new Careers and Enterprise Company which is developing its role in the careers agenda.

This complicated landscape has resulted in wasteful duplication and confusion and at the same time many young people in the group identified and focused on by the House of Lords Select Committee are not receiving the help they need. The Careers England position paper [‘The Future of Careers Guidance’](#) advocates a radical rethink about how we can better deliver accessible high quality careers education and guidance to people of all ages. It provides recommendations on the stepping stones to improving the current system.

From an individual’s perspective, there is an abundance of website information which is very valuable for those who are very motivated, confident and have good research and decision making skills.

For those young people who are NEET or in Higher Education, there are careers and employment services available. However, for the group identified by the Select

Committee, the availability of a service such as Connexions or the careers service before that is dependent on where an individual lives and whether there is local funding to provide such a service.

Here are case studies of real young people who have had their lives changed by contact with such services:

1. 'B' is a 19 year old single mother. 'B' approached Routes as she was considering going back to college to undertake a hairdressing course. I encouraged her to contact the College for more information. Once this additional information from College arrived we supported 'B' in completing the application forms as well as looking into the best form of childcare available for her situation. 'B' was successfully accepted onto the course but was still concerned about funding for childcare, transport and course equipment e.g. hairdressing kit. We supported 'B' with writing letters to various local charities and trusts to see if they can help/support 'B' financially, enabling her to start course. After lengthy discussions with the College we were granted a bursary for childcare costs. Alongside this 'B's application to the Bridge Educational Trust was successfully which meant receiving a grant of £500 to pay for travel and equipment. This support meant 'B' was able to apply and succeed in gaining a place at college and pursue a career to support herself and her child.
2. XX joined a Careers South West programme aimed at supporting young people who were not realising their potential, after dropping out of her qualification. She had started a L2 Health & Social Care qualification at the local FE College but as she did not enjoy college was looking for employment instead. After discussing all of Client XX's options she decided that the best options for them would be to look at employment or an apprenticeship in Retail or Health and Social Care. Client XX also showed an interest in Hospitality when we looked at the similarities of skills/experience in this field compared with Retail and Care. She explored and registered on the National Apprenticeship Vacancy Matching Service and we contacted Training Providers. She attended appointments regularly and made several apprenticeship applications via NAVMS for Retail and Care. Client XX's attendance and engagement dropped during the end of January to mid-March. Her sporadic engagement was due to a family member having medical treatment coupled with Client XX being unwell. She had been due to attend an open day with a Hospitality Training Provider and attend a 5 day short course in Customer Service, both of which were missed. When I met with Client XX in mid-March she felt she was in a much better place and were keen to engage to find employment or an apprenticeship. She continued to use NAVMS to apply for apprenticeship vacancies and look on various job searching websites. At the end of March they had an interview for a Customer Service apprenticeship; we worked on interview skills and preparation. She was unsuccessful in gaining this position. Client XX continued to apply for various vacancies when we met on a weekly or fortnightly basis. Through NAVMS in mid- April she applied for a Care Assistant apprenticeship, was invited for an interview, she attended the interview and was

successful. Client X then had to complete two trial days within the care home. Client X completed this and felt it went well and really enjoyed the experience. Client X was successful in gaining the position and once her DBS check was completed she started in her new role of Care Assistant Apprentice.

3. I recently worked with 2 young people (a couple aged 18 and 19), they had been LAC young people and had moved about a lot and unsuccessfully tried several college courses in Dorset and other areas. I started working with them as they had just moved back to Wimborne and wanted to look at their options. R was keen to start doing customer service or childcare and S was interested in an apprenticeship possibly in motor vehicle or something practical and outdoor such as gardening, etc. S was from a traveller background and both were living together and DWP were keen for them to get support as they were relying exclusively on benefits including housing, JSA and ESA.

We looked at this and discussed their options, they weren't keen on college as they had both tried it and not enjoyed it.

They didn't have CV's and hadn't worked before. Together we produced CV's and applied for several jobs and apprenticeships. This included helping them complete the additional information on the application forms about previous experience and the reason for applying for specific jobs, etc. which they found very difficult and often explained that they missed out entirely before because they didn't know what to write and didn't want to spend the time completing.

They were both really happy with their CV's and S commented that looking at it all on paper he felt like he'd achieved more than he realised and he felt more confident looking for work. We also discussed interview techniques and spent time looking at possible questions, etc.

R got an interview for a customer service sales role at a local charity and was offered the job straight away, which she was very excited about. It was full time and a good wage and after her first week rang to tell me how much she was enjoying it. I continued to work with S and a couple of weeks afterwards he found a job in Environmental Services which he sent his CV off for with a cover letter we wrote together. The manager rang the next day to say he was very impressed with both, he offered him an interview and following that he got the job. He was very excited and again has kept me updated with his work, which he seems to be enjoying. DWP were also happy because they had been so reliant on benefits that both having full-time paid work was a real bonus to them.

4. L is 16 years of age and has recently left school, she is keen to go to college and would like to work with animals. L lives at home with her mum and dad and has a good relationship with them. L left school in June 2014; she didn't particularly enjoy school as found school work a struggle particularly understanding and processing information. She achieved 6 GCSEs at grades D-G. L has suffered with anxiety/panic attacks in the past and is waiting for a GP referral to a counsellor to help with this.

L was able to identify that she would like to go to Sparsholt College as they offer a L1 animal care course that she was really interested in. KC approached college and an interview was set up for L to attend and find out more about the course. The

college were able to offer L a place on the L1 animal care course with additional support with her English and maths.

L was able to progress quickly onto a college course which I felt helped her as she was worried that she wouldn't be able to go because of her low grades. I felt that because of her anxiety issues this was useful as she was able to have a smooth transition therefore not causing any further upset for her.

QUESTION 4 – HOW CAN THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK BE IMPROVED FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE, PARTICULARLY FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT GO ON TO STUDY A-LEVELS AND HIGHER EDUCATION? HOW CAN EMPLOYERS BE ENCOURAGED TO EMPLOY MORE YOUNG PEOPLE FROM THIS GROUP?

Good quality Careers, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance is a major contributor to social mobility and economic development at an individual level, a locality, a regional perspective and for the nation as a whole. This is demonstrated in the Careers England sponsored publication, [‘The Economic Benefits of Careers Guidance’](#) produced by Professor Tristram Hooley of the Centre for Guidance Studies at the University of Derby.

Currently whether a young person receives the help they need to be clear on their chosen career path and help to develop their employability skills to demonstrate their value to a prospective employer depends on whether the school or college they attend has invested in providing this service. In short there is a national postcode lottery in careers and employability support for our young people.

One recent development which seeks to resolve this issue on a regional basis is the announcement from the London Mayor's Office relating to the Careers Offer for young people in London. Known as [London Ambitions](#), it sets out the basic entitlement every young person in London can expect in terms of careers and employability support and how this should be delivered.

In the short term a review of the roles of key organisations in the careers field such as the National Careers Service, Careers and Enterprise Company, local authorities, schools, colleges and Jobcentre Plus should be undertaken to reduce duplication and ensure there is clarity and focus on all young people, especially including the group that the Select Committee is highlighting.

In the medium term a more detailed rethink is required along the lines detailed in the Careers England Position Paper – The Future of Careers Guidance.

In terms of encouraging employers to employ young people there is a great deal more to be done to improve the job readiness and employability of young people. This needs to happen whilst young people are still in full time education as discussed in question 1, but also whilst young people are still in post-16 employment and/or learning. For many young people in a job without training there is no service they can turn to for careers and employability help.

QUESTION 5 – WHO SHOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPROVING THE SYSTEM TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION INTO WORK FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS?

Given that the legislation relating to the provision of Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance lies with the remit of the DfE, Careers England believes this is the Government Department that should drive forward change. Indeed we are encouraged by the recent demonstration of interest in revisiting this agenda by the DfE. Longer term improved arrangements would emerge from a much needed radical review of the current arrangements as advocated in our position paper.

There must also be recognition of local and regional arrangements such as LEPs and combined authority proposals which are developing strong strategies relating to skills which include CEIAG. The DfE should develop the careers offer, framework and legislation (if required) and the regional structures should oversee delivery and assess the impact and review progress against targets relating to social mobility in LEP and combined authority skills strategies.

An immediate challenge is to help teachers, lecturers and other key influencers of young people understand what apprenticeships are, and the difference they can make to a young person's life. Employers have a role to play in this alongside careers advisers, teachers, etc.

11 September 2015

Emfec – Written evidence (SMO0113)

Inquiry into transition from school to work for 14 to 24-year-olds

Introduction

emfec is a membership body with charitable status that provides a wide range of high-quality services and impartial support to colleges, providers and partners within the further education and skills sector.

As part of the wider emfec group, we work closely with ABC Awards, a national awarding organisation with a long-established reputation for high-quality support and services to the educational sector.

We are committed to helping members, employers, organisations and learners cultivate the relevant skills for learning, skills for employment, and skills for life.

emfec and ABC Awards welcome the Select Committee on Social Mobility's inquiry into transition from school to work for 14 to 24-year-olds, in particular the Committee's focus on young people who are not NEET and do not follow the traditional academic pathway of A-Levels and Higher Education.

It is often the case that the needs of young people within this group are overlooked in policy. Young people who form this cohort have a range of experiences, motivations, support and challenges which influence the pathways they choose to make their achievements and their progression towards active and independent adult lives as employees, parents and citizens.

This grouping typically experiences some level of disadvantage which often impacts upon their transition, pathways and long-term chances. It is due to this disadvantage that often these young people become NEET, but many others follow the 'school to work' transition. It is important to note that, for some young people, this transition pathway is an informed choice, which is driven by the enthusiasm and drive to develop vocational skills, to get a job, earn money and become independent. However, this is not always the case and for many other young people who follow this route, the situation is more complex.

In this response, we aim to provide some context to the questions and to identify some policy recommendations for the Committee to consider in their deliberations as part of the inquiry. Both emfec and ABC Awards would welcome the opportunity to further discuss any of our suggestions with members of the Committee.

Our response

It is a well-known fact that employers have consistently reported that young people lack the necessary employability or soft skills (attitudes and aptitudes) to undertake their first job. This is compounded by poor literacy and numeracy skills, as evidenced by low A to C grades in GCSE English and mathematics.

In response to calls to improve young people's skills and preparation for work, the Government raised the Participation Age to 18, brought in Study Programmes for 16 to 19-year-olds, Traineeships and have made it mandatory for 16 to 18-year-olds to re-sit GCSE English and maths until they achieve a grade C. Whilst our members fully support the Government's aims to raise aspiration, this decision comes with its challenges.

Low achieving learners struggle to achieve the required grade and it leaves them feeling vulnerable. It impacts on their self-esteem, results in unwanted stress and very often ends in learners giving in and leaving education with no grade in English and maths. Some of these

learners may have previously chosen to leave school at 16, and would not have chosen to undergo further education beyond GCSE at all were it not for a change in policy.

Statistics show that out of the 222,117 young people (34%) who failed to achieve a C in their English GCSE by age 16 in 2010, 92% failed to achieve a grade C by the time they were 18 in 2012 and 85% did not even take English GCSE in their post-16 education. For maths the figure was slightly higher with 244,231 young people (34%) failing to gain a C grade in their GCSE by the time they were 16 in 2010. This resulted in 93% failing to achieve a grade C by the time they were 18 in 2012 and 83% did not take maths GCSE in their post-16 education.

Colleges and other providers should be given the ability and flexibility to do what is best for the learner; they should be allowed to enter low achieving learners onto Functional Skills courses that better suit their abilities in order to equip learners with the basic skills to enable them to enter employment at the appropriate level. The Government should seriously consider removing the current funding condition whereby colleges lose funding for those learners who are not entered into GCSE up until 18.

Research shows that if low achieving learners are encouraged to undertake and achieve a pass in Functional Skills courses in English and maths, they are likely to stay on in further education and access further training at higher levels, meaning that when learners do make the choice to leave education they are equipped with sufficient skills for the workplace.

Another significant factor affecting social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school to the workplace is the low quality of careers guidance. Analysis from the National Careers Service has highlighted the need for a major rethink around careers guidance in schools.

Effective careers advice and guidance is crucial for all young people in making the right choices about future qualifications and/or careers, particularly in an economy which is changing rapidly and in which career opportunities are evolving.

We feel that the Government should introduce systematic careers education for 11 to 18-year-olds and facilitate a careers hub between schools, colleges and universities in each area, led by its Local Enterprise Partnership and we therefore welcome the Government's Careers Company.

However, there are still major challenges concerning information, advice and guidance throughout the country and colleges are continually battling with schools which often provide learners with misinformed information on the vocational options available to them, in favour of promoting their own offer which is not always right for the learner.

Young people are restricted by their schools' subject options to allow them to explore alternative careers at a young age and by their schools', often poor careers advice provision. Unless young people can identify a preferred academic or vocational career path before completing their GCSEs, the current transition system allows them to be pushed into enrolling into AS and A-Levels which they may not enjoy, or may find difficult to turn into a vocational career if not progressing to higher education. If schools engaged equally in

academic and vocational career pathways, young people may find it easier and quicker to transition into employment by taking suitable qualifications in the first instance.

There is evidence that some schools are also encouraging students to stay and take A Levels when they may be more suited to a vocational training pathway, consequently increasing the number of young people transferring from academic to vocational pathways at an older age when funding is more limited.

We have a number of case studies whereby learners in schools are offered incentives to continue their provision. One school in Boston, in Lincolnshire, for example, offers underperforming learners a free iPad or laptop to stay on in school. Unfortunately the learner ends up being shunned by the school a year later, when they are unable to achieve the school's desired grades in English and maths. It is then left to the local FE college to pick up the pieces and to help that learner achieve the fundamental basic skills they need for their chosen career path.

Colleges are then left short changed by the Government's policy on 16 to 18-year-old funding rates as it often takes learners two years to complete a vocational course. Had that learner received the right information, advice and guidance in the first place, the learner would have most likely flourished in a college learning environment.

Schools who fail their students should be penalised by the Government and colleges should receive additional funding, as Policy Exchange recently stated, in order to help institutions finance the additional costs of supporting those learners to achieve the appropriate grades they require for future career prospects.

Furthermore, many employers across the UK feel the quality of careers advice young people receive in schools is not good enough, and handing the entire responsibility to schools in England without extra resource or support has not produced a system which has effectively supported young people into future education or employment.

From the perspective of these young people, the key ages make decisions about their career trajectories are currently, with the addition of Career Colleges, 14, 16 and 18. Students have the opportunity at these ages to study at a sixth form college, further education college, or in a training role such as an Apprenticeship and should be provided at each stage with relevant advice.

However, according to Department for Education Key Stage 4 data, only 5% of 14 to 16-year-olds in 2012/13 chose an Apprenticeship. By age 19, only 1.4% of Level 3 qualified students in a DfE longitudinal study had achieved an Advanced Apprenticeship and 17.7% achieved an alternative vocational qualification. The statistics show that HE continues to be the most common route for continued education in this age range.

Apprenticeships are expected to increase over the coming years with the Government's target of 3 million new starts by 2020. Skills Funding Agency data suggests that almost 58% of all Apprenticeships in 2013/14 were undertaken by those aged 24 and under. However, despite Apprenticeships generally attracting more young people, the increase of the National Minimum Wage will only extend to those over 25 and young apprentices will still receive as little as £2.73 per hour. While Apprenticeship funding is secured for young people, the low wages for apprentices can hinder uptake and discourage this route into employment.

For many young apprentices, their work experience will be supported with invaluable qualifications at a further education college or other training provider. However, the introduction of Trailblazers, placing more responsibility in employers' hands, threatens the

career trajectories of some of these young people if their Apprenticeship is not fully supported with recognised qualifications and continued professional development. They may find future employment prospects more difficult without recognised or expected qualifications to pursue their intended career change.

One of the main factors affecting social mobility in this demographic is the restrictions they face in accessing an alternative education or training route away from home. Young people enrolling in further education colleges or training providers for vocational qualifications are more likely to attend their local college than venture further afield. Ofsted Inspection reports provide a “contextual information” section, which gives an overview of the area that learners come from, and this indicates that learners are mainly local (i.e. attend the institution closest to them).

Those wishing to take niche qualifications may find their options are limited locally and are therefore either unable to transition into preferred employment or are unable to compete with students able to access providers with more competitive qualifications and employer contacts.

Additionally, an increase in Apprenticeship wages may encourage more learners to move away from the home to find employment in relevant sectors where they can afford to pay for rent and transport, rather than continuing to rely on relatives or friends. In contrast, many students in higher education courses are moving away from home to take qualifications in areas of interest and expertise with funding to support their living costs to achieve this.

In conclusion, our members feel that in order to improve education and employment opportunities and transitions for young people, there must be a cross-Government approach. The Department for Education should amend its 16 to 19 Bursary policy in order to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged learners. There also needs to be greater effort to improve careers advice and guidance once and for all. Schools should be required to work collaboratively with colleges and universities in order to ensure every learner has the right access to impartial advice and guidance.

Secondly the Education and Skills Funding Agencies, with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills and the Department for Education, should also concentrate on doing more to level the playing field so that Apprenticeships and Traineeships can be as visible and as attractive an option for young people as going to university.

Lastly Local Enterprise Partnerships should support the development of careers hubs within their boundaries. We would also like to see Local Enterprise Partnerships drive the creation of more pathways to employment in key growth sectors in their areas through encouraging Traineeships and Apprenticeships.

17 September 2015

Federation of Small Businesses – Written evidence (SMO0096)

Re: FSB response to the Social Mobility Committee of the House of Lords’ inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds.

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) welcomes the opportunity to respond to this inquiry.

The FSB is the UK’s leading business organisation. It exists to protect and promote the interests of the self-employed and all those who run their own business. The FSB is non-party political, and with approximately 200,000 members, it is also the largest organisation representing small and medium sized businesses in the UK.

For businesses to be successful and achieve their growth potential they must have access to appropriate skills. Despite more people going to university than ever before there is currently a skills deficit. We welcome this inquiry as it recognises that not all young people will transition into work via the A-level and higher education route. Consequently, there must be credible alternative routes for young people to take that will equip them with the skills businesses need.

In our submission we raise issues around: the development of workplace skills, the importance of vocational education alongside academic study options, engagement between businesses and young people, and the role local and national government, employers and education and training providers have in creating a local skills framework that meets their needs.

Employers are important stakeholders and it is imperative that their views are heard to inform interventions linking education with the labour market. Our submission draws on our recent education and skills survey, in which over 2,000 small businesses provided responses on their skills needs, engagement with young people, and what they feel could be done to support the transition from education into the world of work.

We trust that you find our comments useful and that they will be taken into account.

Yours sincerely,



David Pollard
Chair, Education, Skills and Business Support Committee
Federation of Small Businesses

FSB response to the Social Mobility Committee of the House of Lords' inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds.

September 2015

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Lack of exposure to the workplace

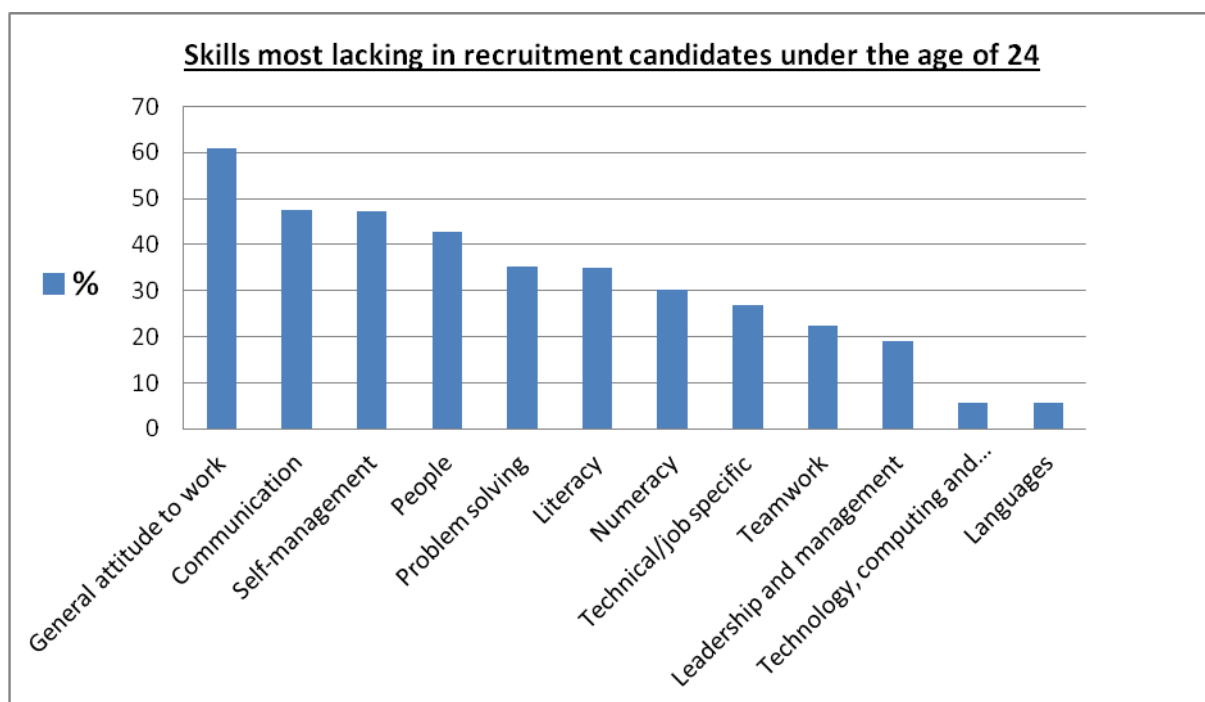
- i. There are a number of factors that impact on employment outcomes for young people once they leave school and, by extension, their social mobility. While these can vary depending on local conditions, there are nevertheless common features that affect the school to work transition for many young people.
- ii. Small businesses tell us that the young people they encounter are often not sufficiently prepared for the workplace. This includes not understanding how to present themselves, poor communication skills, and lack of time-keeping. To some extent the problem is one of awareness: young people may not have been exposed to the expectations of employers, so may not understand the importance of demonstrating these basic labour market 'signals'. However, it is also the case that the education system does not sufficiently equip young people with these soft skills or prepare them for the world of work
- iii. The FSB is concerned that education institutions are not guiding young people to sufficiently understand the workplace environment or develop the basic skills employers require. This was highlighted by Lord Young in his *Enterprise for All* report, which noted the need for, and current lack of, context in teaching relating to how skills are applicable to the workplace. This is a particular issue in schools as academic subjects take preference and employer engagement at all levels of education is not universally applied across the country.
- iv. The education system is largely focused on getting young people into university, which is evident from the rising number of young people taking A-levels and entering higher education³⁶⁹. The FSB welcomes the increasing focus on apprenticeships and vocational education but believes that the culture of the school system must change to give better guidance to non-university education and training.
- v. The decline in the number of young people undertaking work experience or taking on a part-time job³⁷⁰ demonstrates that students are becoming less exposed to a working environment from a young age. The FSB argued against the abolition of compulsory work experience at key stage 4 and subsequent reviews, including from Ofsted and the Education Select Committee, have found that this has had negative consequences for work experience up-take and the provision of quality careers guidance. In Germany and Switzerland, where youth employment rates are higher than in the UK, schools participate in a programme of work experience where companies sign up to national and local programmes to provide opportunities for

³⁶⁹ Department for Business, Innovation and Skills, *Statistical First Release: Participation rates in higher education 2007/07 to 2012/13*, August 2014.

³⁷⁰ UK Commission for Employment and Skills, *The death of the Saturday job: The decline in earning and learning amongst young people in the UK*, June 2015.

young people throughout their school life; not just one structured work experience that is the preferred method in the UK³⁷¹.

- vi. According to the FSB’s own research over half of all small firms have never engaged with a school or college despite over 90 per cent believing that it is important for businesses to work with education institutions³⁷². One reason for this is the belief that institutions are too focused on academic success at the expense of teaching workplace skills. As a result, employers can be reluctant to seek out opportunities to engage with local schools and colleges. The FSB therefore welcomed the formation of the Careers and Enterprise Company, with its network of regional coordinators, as one way to facilitate engagement between education institutions and employers and will be looking to work with the Company as it implements this.
- vii. Alongside academic subjects small businesses tell us that the skills they need to grow are character-based traits: a positive attitude, communication, people skills, teamwork and self-management. Coincidentally, these were also skills that employers found to be most lacking in young people under the age of 24. It may be that limitations in their social networks mean that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have fewer opportunities to develop these skills outside the school setting. The survey also found that university leavers were the most prepared for work, whilst 18 year old school leavers were the least well prepared³⁷³.



- viii. The FSB is concerned by the education system’s focus on achieving qualification grades at the apparent expense of developing character skills, and believes this is a reflection of a performance and inspection system that does not prioritise character skills. This is restricting the employability of, and business confidence in, young people.

³⁷¹ Partnership for Young London, *From school to work in London: Learning from Germany – education and employers working together*, June 2015.

³⁷² FSB education and skills survey 2015.

³⁷³ FSB education and skills survey 2015.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

Data shows an even spread in employment of 18 year olds between school/college leavers, apprentices and university graduates. Examples of young people who do not follow the A-level route include:

- Apprentices training at different qualification levels.
- Young people engaged on courses other than A-levels at further education colleges. This includes students enrolled on FE course, but who participate on a limited basis.
- Young people on Traineeships
- Young people in employment. According to our survey data, eight per cent of small firms have employed a 16 year old school leaver in the past two years.
- Young people doing part-time work
- ‘Off the radar’ groups, for instance young people who are not in receipt of out-of-work benefits or engage in Government programmes and therefore do not feature in official NEET statistics.

The future career trajectories of these individuals will vary significantly, depending on their circumstances and the support networks around them. Those in apprenticeships or traineeships may go on to higher level apprenticeships and secure employee jobs in the same firm. Others may drop in and out of the labour market.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Routes in to employment: Understanding and recognising different qualifications

- i. Small businesses recruit candidates with different skills, qualifications and backgrounds depending on their needs. We do not have evidence that suggests that employers disproportionately hire young people with certain educational backgrounds over others. Instead, recruitment outcomes depend on the skills being sought and the ability of the candidate to perform the role..
 - ii.
 - iii. As we have identified above, there are many routes in to employment and when recruiting employers value different skills sets, qualifications and experiences based on the role they are recruiting for. They may require generic levels based qualifications, such as GCSE, HNC/HND or degree qualifications whilst others may want technical qualifications such as particular NVQs.
- i. There are, however, certain courses and qualifications that employers are more familiar with than others; success in which could improve a candidate’s employment prospects. A-levels and GCSEs appear to be the most recognised subjects, while

other qualifications, such as BTECs and Nationals, are not as well-known³⁷⁴. Furthermore, young people may be offered the chance to study qualifications that employers do not recognise or understand what skills are expected from them; a point raised by Alison Wolf in her 2011 review³⁷⁵. Consequently, further education institutions and training providers should provide better support to learners through offering courses that have currency with employers.

- ii. Apprenticeships are being revitalised to encourage employers to have more confidence in the quality of provision. The FSB welcomes employer involvement in the creation of apprenticeship standards and believes that this will provide apprentices with more appropriate and relevant skills. It is important that young people and their parents recognise the growing value of apprenticeships too. More could be done to provide information within schools so that young people and parents can see that an apprenticeship is a viable route to employment from an early age. In some parts of the country the number of apprenticeship candidates is lower than apprenticeship vacancies. Part of the reason for this is a lack of understanding among teachers and parents about the opportunities available and the career prospects an apprenticeship can bring.
- iii. The availability of vocational education in schools is mixed, despite evidence from other countries demonstrating that vocational study can be beneficial for future employment prospects³⁷⁶. Similarly, two thirds of small business owners in the UK say they value practical and vocational qualifications when making recruitment decisions³⁷⁷. Lack of vocational education may also mean that schools have fewer incentives to reach out to the business community.
- iv. There is currently a lack of incentive to teach vocational subjects, both financially as schools budgets are restricted and because vocational subjects can be resource intensive, and academically as schools are not held accountable for the provision of vocational learning in league tables. Vocational studies are not a precondition for embarking on an apprenticeship - indeed, continued academic study will be more important for many higher-level apprenticeships e.g. levels 6 and 7 in accountancy or law. However, it may be that improving the vocational education offer in schools could lead to an increase in the number of young people aware of and interested in apprenticeships, as well as improving the visibility of non-GCSE and A-level qualifications among employers.
- iv. **How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?**
- v. We have touched on a number of ways in which the transition from school to work can be improved for young people throughout our response. Below we identify three key areas where improvements could be made to boost the employment prospects of this group.

³⁷⁴ YouGov, *Perceptions of A-levels, GCSEs and other qualifications in England – Wave 13, Version 2, July 2015*.

³⁷⁵ Alison Wolf, *Review of vocational education*, March 2011.

³⁷⁶ IPPR, *Vocational education in English schools: Protecting options for pre-16 pupils*, May 2013.

³⁷⁷ FSB education and skills survey 2015.

Barriers to engagement

- vi. The focus on academic learning over workplace skills within the education system has already been identified in our response. While the government's commitment to publish destination data and learning outcomes is a positive step in encouraging institutions to support the transition from school to work, the national focus remains on qualification success. As a result, schools lack incentives to provide employment or vocational-related activity. The FSB believes that direct references to employability skills in the grade characteristics of the Ofsted common inspection framework should ensure that institutions across the education levels devote sufficient efforts to engaging students with life post-education.
- vii. Engaging with employers can have a significant effect on the life chances of young people. As data from the Education and Employers Taskforce found, increased engagement can reduce the likelihood of a young person becoming NEET³⁷⁸. Our research suggests that one reason for a lack of business engagement could be as simple as not knowing how. Over a third of small business owners have told us that they would be more likely to work with schools or colleges if better guidance was available, while a fifth of owners say they would not know who to contact if they did want to get involved. Our evidence suggests that over half of small firms would offer more employment and work experience opportunities if they themselves had more engagement with young people³⁷⁹. It is important therefore to plug the information deficit at the local level to connect education institutions with local employers.

High quality careers guidance

- viii. Since responsibility for the delivery of careers education was transferred to schools during the previous Parliament the quality of provision has worsened. This is deeply concerning because young people are not being supported in to further education and training opportunities that can fulfil their ambitions. For businesses it can have an effect on the ability to recruit and to utilise the skills of the workforce effectively. It could also have a financial effect as businesses seek to cover their skills shortfall through investing in training, including remedial training to mitigate skills gaps.
- ix. This could be addressed early on through the provision of high quality careers education throughout the education system, and from a much earlier age. As stated above, engaging businesses in the delivery of careers education can be effective. Small firms told us that work experience was the most important factor when recruiting³⁸⁰, demonstrating the impact it could have on employment opportunities.
- x. The UK could learn lessons from Germany where school age pupils have work experience opportunities over several years. The Keim Abschlusss Ohne Anschluss (KAOA) – or 'no exit without a prepared next step' – system consists of a '2 year career orientation phase including 3 experiences of work, STEM awareness and training, school and employer networks, sophisticated and valid apprenticeship opportunities, and pre-apprenticeship vocational training'³⁸¹. Engaged employers are

³⁷⁸ Education and Employers Taskforce, *It's who you meet: why employer contacts at school make a difference to the employment prospects of young adults*, June 2012.

³⁷⁹ FSB education and skills survey 2015.

³⁸⁰ FSB education and skills survey 2015.

³⁸¹ Partnership for Young London, *From school to work in London: Learning from Germany – education and employers working together*, June 2015.

key to this and schools have a career orientated focus incentivising them to work with local businesses. By contrast, employer engagement in the UK is disparate and work experience opportunities are a post code lottery³⁸². This results in many young people not having the opportunity to understand the world of work and the education system not recognising the skills employers are looking for from it. The FSB believes the system in England would benefit from a structured careers education and transition to work model, beginning in primary school up to 18. This would include regular three way discussions between the student, their parents/carers and the school on routes into employment and the steps necessary to achieve career goals..

- xi. The FSB has four recommendations to improve the quality of careers education. These are as follows:
1. **Incentivise schools to engage with, and support, work-related learning** through the inspection framework and more stringent collection and analysis of destination data.
 2. **Champion education to business partnerships** at the local level through regional bodies, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships, Ofsted regional offices, and Enterprise Advisers delivered through the new Careers and Enterprise Company.
 3. **Embed careers education in teaching and learning** from the age of 11 at the latest so that young people are exposed to the concepts of business, employment and the wider economy.
 4. **Educate both schools and businesses** in how to administer effective work experience so that it is targeted, effective and a positive experience for both parties and for young people.

Employer engagement in qualification design

- xii. Increasing opportunities for employers to work with the education system can have positive outcomes for course relevance with industry. A good employer-led system would include consultation with employers around course content to achieve this. The apprenticeship trailblazer groups have been successful in engaging employers and awarding bodies have been required by Ofqual to demonstrate employer engagement in qualification design. These are positive steps that will also expose businesses to the education system in a way they have not been before. Businesses can play a role at all levels of education to provide context and relevance to teaching and learning, and efforts must be made to facilitate these links. The goal ultimately is to create a system that is valued and understood by employers, young people and parents.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- xiii. The question of who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers is not easily answered. Instead, as we have demonstrated throughout our response, the FSB believes different organisations have a role to play. The education system has a primary responsibility to prepare

³⁸² UK Commission for Employment and Skills, *The death of the Saturday job: The decline in earning and learning amongst young people in the UK*, June 2015.

young people for life beyond education. Government must play its part also by setting the overarching policy objectives for educational institutions and the profession and providing the sector with the appropriate tools and incentives to deliver. Employers have a responsibility to highlight and promote the skills they need in each sector and industry, and work with education providers to engage with young people as part of efforts to help young people develop workplace skills. Local government has a significant part to play in ensuring that the skills needs in their regions are fulfilled, not least as skills funding is devolved down to combined authorities within England.

- xiv. There are two areas we would like to highlight in addition to the comments made above:

Basic standard of training

- xv. Level 2 skills are widely considered as the basic level necessary to enter further training or employment. Although teaching to this level forms part of the compulsory education offer, there are individuals that leave compulsory education without these skills. As a result, employers may need to invest in remedial training to get employees up to a suitable standard. However, the time and resource implication can often deter employers from doing this.
- xvi. The FSB welcomes the inclusion of level 2 English and maths training as part of the apprenticeship framework and we recommend that further thought is given to identifying how to reach those young people that are not accessing this type of training as part of a funded framework.

Identifying and accessing local skills

- xvii. An increasing number of local authorities are obtaining responsibility for parts of the skills budget through the process of devolution. Greater control over how this money is spent should in theory allow local government to respond better to local skills needs. While it is too early to assess the extent to which this is happening, it would appear that regions where funding has been devolved are seeing greater collaboration on skills between a range of partners including local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and combined authorities, local businesses and education and training providers.
- xviii. These organisations can be instrumental in supporting a transition framework in their regions. This could include supporting the delivery of careers education in schools and creating links and networks between education institutions and employers to create more work experience and recruitment opportunities.
- xix. Key to this is the ability to access accurate labour market information and have the capacity to act on it³⁸³. Partnerships are crucial to this, and to be effective local authorities may require support to help them get the most out of the data. We understand that the Education and Training Foundation is currently looking in to how such partnerships could be developed and we will be closely following how this develops.

³⁸³ Centre for Cities, *City deals and skills: How have City and Local Growth Deals supported the development of employment and skills policies that reflect local demand?*, July 2015

We trust that you will find our comments helpful. Please let us know if you would like any further information on any of the points raised.

14 September 2015

Forum of Private Businesses – Written evidence (SMO0048)

We anticipate that as in past economic recoveries, the majority of jobs will be created by SMEs (following the last recession it was 65%) yet our members tell us that not enough is being done to support them in recruiting the right people and in particular de-risking the recruitment process so that micro businesses or pre-employers can be confident to recruit potentially high risk employees (young people, long-term unemployed etc).

There is a need to put youth employment and social mobility in its European context, UK companies are actually employing a greater proportion of young people than businesses in other European companies. This suggests to the Forum that there is something seriously wrong with the European model and has to be resolved at this level as Europe is the key exporting market for our members.

Overall our feeling is that nothing has really changed in the issues to employing young people, the big change will be the direct access to training budgets for SMEs that will help with transition from a supply based skills model to one where supply and demand is balanced. Currently we feel that the issues are:

- **A positive attitude towards work is as important as technical skills** – 63% of our members felt that this was crucial for SMEs compared to (51%) who cited practical skills as these could be learnt on the job. Overall 67% of our members wanted a greater focus on employability in schools and universities and a more responsible attitude towards employment in the wider media. 21% of members stated that they would only take on individuals who had been employed at other organisations first.
- An **entrenched view of young people as feckless and a liability** rather than offering enthusiasm and dynamism to employers. Three years ago we contacted the CITB to highlight our concerns when one of our members was told that if they tried to bring someone under the age of 18 onto a construction site they would be deluged with paperwork. We have yet to hear back.
- **Complexity of employment law**, businesses who take on an initial employee are saddled with the equivalent of £3,000 worth of compliance legislation. The Forum has become so concerned about this that we have launched our own pre-employment package to help smooth this step but it remains a key practical and psychological issue for non-employers.
- **The wrong sort of skills** – recent UKCES surveys have highlighted the need for increased skills in process optimisation such as CNC operating skills or advanced IT skills but not all educational establishments keep up with such changes and employers often have to pay for expensive courses in addition to apprenticeships.
- **Lack of incentives for employers to take on young people** – the biggest concern for small businesses in taking on a new employee is whether or not they have enough work to justify it – increasing the base cost of employment (National Minimum Wage and pensions auto-enrolment) without a connection to increased productivity has raised the bar, whilst changes to employers National Insurance Contributions have confused matters.
- Allied to the point above, **cash flow issues** if an individual does not complete the apprenticeship or course – micro employers in particular invest a great deal of time in training up individuals and an apprentice who is wrong for the business damages it at a time when it is weakest financially as outgoings (including the salary of the individual) have increased but the productivity of the business has temporarily reduced.

- Greater use of **other business models** has made employing higher risk categories less attractive – freelance costs have declined by 12% over the last few years making a more flexible arrangement attractive to potential employers.

14 September 2015

The National Association of Special Schools (NASS) – Written evidence (SMO0110)

Submission to the Select Committee on Social Mobility from the National Association of Special Schools (NASS)

The challenge of the school to work transition for those pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

NASS was delighted to receive an invitation to submit evidence to the Select Committee on Social Mobility. We would also like to extend an offer from our Chief Executive, Claire Dorer, to appear as a witness to give evidence on the issues you have raised in your call for evidence.

As we are all aware, the barriers to social mobility within the UK are significant. Issues including limited financial resources, lack of aspiration and discrimination are all well-known factors which limit the ability of school pupils to make the transition from education to employment in a way that allows them to maximize their potential. Another major issue for a significant numbers of pupils in both mainstream and specialist education is that of overcoming their SEND. These can range from ‘invisible’ challenges such as dyslexia and depression, to more outwardly conspicuous issues encompassing physical disability.

Children and young people with SEND: stuck in the middle

It is of course not true to say that all children with SEND fall into the post-16 ‘over-looked middle’, as it is defined by the 2012 Institute for Education report, cited in the Committee’s call for evidence. Depending on the nature and severity of their challenges, children and young people with SEND can at this point in their life also take the conventional A-level/higher education route or, at the other extreme, be unable to participate in the mainstream educational or work paths at all.

However, a significant number of children and young people with SEND will fall into the ‘middle’ of being neither classified as not in education, employment or training (NEET), nor likely to gain higher-end post-16 qualifications. Children with SEND are four times more likely not to achieve 5 or more A*-Cs at GCSE – traditionally considered the passport to A-levels – when compared to children not facing such challenges. It is likely that this trend will be further exacerbated by the ongoing shift to more exam-orientated assessment, which will make it harder for children with SEND to attain formal qualifications.

The deficiencies in the current system are made even more pronounced if the young people in question are both burdened with SEND issues and suffer from more 'mainstream' social mobility handicaps. Often, the same deficiencies that hamper children and young people's social mobility in general also influence the level and effectiveness of support received by those with SEND. In 2004 the Department for Health concluded that people with learning disabilities living in private households are much more likely to live in areas characterised by high levels of social deprivation. People living in private households were also much more likely to experience material and social hardship than people in supported accommodation services.

Research published by New Philanthropy Capital in 2007 highlighted issues faced by family members of disabled children:

- 84% of mothers of disabled children do not work, with 10% in part-time employment and only 3% in full-time employment. This may be compared to part-time employment among the wider population of mothers of 39% and 22% in full-time employment.
- Families with disabled children are around four times more likely to live in poverty than the wider population, and forty per cent of families reported problems with cold, damp and poor repair in their house.
- Mental health issues including anxiety and depression are common among carers. 32% of parents of disabled children reported a significant level of neurotic symptoms compared to 15% of the wider population.
- Siblings of disabled children are at least two times more likely to exhibit behavioural and emotional problems than the wider population.

Even with recent initiatives, it often remains those families who 'shout the loudest' (and most coherently) that get the best for their children: socio-economic status is one of the main variables that affect post-16 transition outcomes for both the general and SEND populations according to British and international studies.

To give some context, the National Audit Office estimated in 2011³⁸⁴ that supporting just one person with a learning disability into employment could reduce lifetime costs to the

³⁸⁴ National Audit Office (2011), *Oversight of special education for young people aged 16-25*; available via <http://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/841303f2-e9b3-4916-b217-583edffe633a1.pdf>

public purse by around £150,000 and increase the individual's income by between 55 and 95 per cent. Given the estimated cost of supporting a person with a moderate learning disability through adult life (16-64) is £2-3 million, this figure represents a significant saving. This is of course not to mention the improvement in a person's self-esteem and independence that will also be gained.

It is vital that further measures to ensure that the life chances of children and young people with SEND are not determined by the circumstances in which they are born. While the Government's pledge to halve the disability employment gap in this parliament is welcome, a sustained improvement in the unemployment rate will not be possible without investment in careers and skills support within the current SEND system.

Conclusion

As a member's organisation supporting schools that cater for children who frequently have significant SEND challenges that severely impact upon their lives, NASS accepts that there will always be individuals whose needs are so profound that they will never be able to live independently or integrate into a traditional work environment.

However, the vast majority of school pupils with SEND – even those whose disabilities may superficially appear to dominate their lives – do not fall into this category. We recognise that positive steps have been taken by the Government in recent years. The replacement of statements of special educational need with Education and Healthcare plans that run until the age of 25 was a helpful recognition that the challenges young people with SEND face do not end when they leave school. We are also encouraged by the ongoing programme of supported internships for young people with SEND. But it is still vital that the committee take into account the need to support children with SEND in their transition from school to work as part of its work into social mobility if this progress is to be built upon.

About NASS

The National Association of Independent Schools and Non-Maintained Special Schools is a membership organisation catering for approximately 10,000 very vulnerable children and young people. It provides information, support and training to its members in order to benefit and advance the education of children and young people with SEND.

NASS is the only national organisation representing special schools in the voluntary and private sectors. NASS works in partnership with key national and regional organisations and acts as the voice for Non Maintained and Independent Special Schools (NMISS). NASS has 263 members, spread over the whole of England and Wales. Non-maintained and Independent Special Schools cater for around 13,000 of the most vulnerable children in the country with very wide ranging, but complex, needs. Over 99 per cent of places in NMISS are funded indirectly by the public purse, through Local Authorities making placements.

16 September 2015

National Union of Students – Written Evidence (SMO0080)

NUS response

How can young people be best placed for the world of work?

Summary

NUS (National Union of Students) is a voluntary membership organisation which makes a real difference to the lives of students and its member students' unions. We are a confederation of 600 students' unions, amounting to more than 95 per cent of all higher and further education unions in the UK. Through our member students' unions, we represent the interests of more than seven million students nationally. Our mission is to promote, defend and extend the rights of students and to develop and champion strong students' unions.

Our key recommendations for young people and work are summarised as follows:

- A reduced rate of public transport for apprentices equal to the travel support available to full-time further education students
- The government should invest in a Universal Careers Service, focused on delivering tailored careers Information Advice and Guidance
- School league tables should include reporting of employment and education destinations other than higher education and including apprenticeships
- That there is more done by education providers to ensure the curriculum is more representative of women's contributions and successes in a wide range of industries to address gender inequalities in apprenticeships and other work
- The government should work with business to do more to encourage women to take up traditionally male dominated placements.
- The government should raise wages in low wage sectors like health and social care that women dominate
- That recent drastic cuts to adult skills budget be reversed and re-considered to enable non-graduates to reskill and find new careers in the 21st century jobs market.
- A model to track how different apprenticeship policy is impacting participation across different types of learners
- That Information Advice and Guidance available to young people involves making them aware of trade unions
- That a government department takes on more direct responsibility for young people and work

Response to consultation questions

We will now respond to all questions from the consultation.

Question 1

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

There are a number of significant factors which impact the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people transitioning from school to the work place. Their location and the quality of public transport is an important factor, as is the employment market and the quality of Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) which they have access to. In addition, there is a link between gender and race and the types of opportunities which young people take up after school, and their career paths.

Youth jobs market:

Fundamentally, the UK's economy is failing to provide enough good quality jobs for non-graduates, and successive governments have failed to correct the structural collapse of the youth labour market.³⁸⁵ John Goldthorpe of Oxford University has convincingly argued that rates of absolute and relative social mobility are fundamentally determined by the structure of the jobs market, and is little prospect for improvement in either without a change in the pattern of economic development.³⁸⁶ Too many policy responses to the problem of social mobility and young people's prospects have focused on 'supply side' reforms: improving the work readiness of the workforce. This will not reverse the lack of demand for full-time, well paid labour that is the fundamental barrier to young people's social mobility prospects.

The employment market since the 2008 financial crash has had an impact on the types of jobs available to young people. Lower skilled, low paid work which would typically have been undertaken by young people as starting jobs, or as weekend work to gain money and experience, is now being carried out by older people with low skills set. This means an important opportunity to gain their first experience of employment is no longer available to many young people.

As the New Economics Foundation (NEF) has highlighted, the majority of the non-graduate workforce is employed in ten 'super-sectors', the best paying of which are forecast to decline, whilst growth is only expected in those sectors which pay the lowest wages and the fewest progression opportunities, such as social care and retail. The squeeze on the middle level jobs of the labour market 'hourglass' is set to widen the gap between those at either end and the prospects for both absolute and relative social mobility. Upskilling the labour force can only achieve so much, as the sector one enters is as much of a determinant of pay and progression opportunities as one's skills-level.

³⁸⁵ Alison Wolf, 'Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report' (2011).

³⁸⁶ John Goldthorpe, 'Understanding – and Misunderstanding – Social Mobility in Britain: The Entry of the Economists, the Confusion of Politicians and the Limits of Educational Policy' (2012).

Government's focus on providing training qualifications for those in the 'low skills trap' has done little to alter their prospects, with low-pay sectors synonymous with dead-end work, high staff turnover, and frequent horizontal movement within the sector.³⁸⁷ The NEF's overview of the labour market structure for non-graduates further underlines this point.

There are also trends in graduate employment which are impacting on non-graduate young people. On average, non-graduates are twice as likely to be unemployed than those who have been to university, and more likely to get stuck at the lower end of the labour market for years after study³⁸⁸. In addition to this, in terms of graduate prospects, the traditional entry route for graduates has changed, with more graduates starting out at a lower level than historically as 'GRINGOs' (graduates in non-graduate occupations). This is creating further downward pressure on the prospects of students who do not go to university or study A-levels, as over-qualified graduates are forced to settle for 'associate professional and technical' work which could conceivably be done by non-graduates.³⁸⁹

There is also a need for the UK to further develop level 4 technical provision to better match the skills and roles needed in the UK jobs market. The dramatic expansion of higher education in recent decades has created an artificial divide between 'higher' academic provision in universities and 'lower' vocational provision in colleges. This has left "falling through the gap", while the critical role of higher technical STEM education where the UK is facing its most significant skills shortages.³⁹⁰ Whilst the government has identified apprenticeships as a route to improving this situation, at present level 4 apprenticeships in STEM areas make up a miniscule number.³⁹¹ Expanding the range of opportunities for non-university students to enter higher technical education, such as through a local FE college, could drastically impact upon non-graduates' social mobility prospects.³⁹²

Location and transport:

Where a young person lives can hugely impact the opportunities available to them in transitioning from school to the work place. A key example of this is how the cost of transport and the availability of public transport has a huge impact on young people's decisions about where to work, or undertake further study or training. For example, National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) research in 2014 into transport and apprenticeships found that, almost half of apprentices surveyed (47%) said that the cost of public transport had influenced their decision on where to do their apprenticeship, with a further 20% saying that poor public transport infrastructure had had an impact on their choice of apprenticeship.

³⁸⁷ New Economics Foundation, 'Good Jobs for non-graduates' (2012).

³⁸⁸ Resolution Foundation, 'No snakes, but no ladders: Young people, employment, and the low skills trap at the bottom of the contemporary service economy' (2012).

³⁸⁹ Edge Foundation, 'The graduate labour market: an uncomfortable truth' (2015). CIPD, 'Over-qualification and skills mismatch in the graduate labour market' (2015).

³⁹⁰ IPPR, 'Winning the Global Race? Jobs, skills and the importance of vocational education' (2014).

³⁹¹ SMF, 'Fixing a Broken Training System: The case for an apprenticeship levy', (2015).

³⁹² AoC, 'Breaking the Mould: Creating higher education fit for the future' (2014).

A key recommendation from NSoA is that a reduced rate for public transport for apprentices should be introduced, equal to the travel support which is available to full-time FE students. Whilst some local authorities have reduced fares for apprentices – such as the apprentice oyster card in London – this is not standardised across the country.

It is also the case that region where a young person will live will dictate the types of opportunities available to them. NUS-NEF research reveals that, splitting the types of jobs into four different qualification levels from low to high, 34 per cent of jobs in London were in the high qualification group compared to Yorkshire and The Humber with 23 per cent of jobs requiring high qualifications³⁹³. In areas of regional deprivation, with entrenched unemployment and restricted industries, young people transitioning from vocational education into employment will find their options limited by the local economy. It is also likely that this is compounded by restricted social capital and networks provided by the institution or family.

Quality of careers information, advice and guidance (IAG):

The quality of careers IAG available to young people hugely determines their employment prospects and the decisions they make in transitioning from school to the work place. As the job market becomes increasingly complex and competitive, young people need quality advice in order to have the best chance of securing the careers they want and which are right for them.

However, NUS research 'Informing the Reforms' found that almost half of the students surveyed believed they did not receive enough information about career choices and choice of study before they made their A level subject choices. Additionally, almost one in seven said that 16 is too early to be making choices which will define their future career path.

Since the loss of funding to local authorities to provide careers advice to young people, schools have had a statutory duty to provide it. For young people teachers are a key source of advice, with research from the Association of Colleges³⁹⁴ showing that 57 per cent of young people turn to their teachers for careers guidance. However, research from Pearson UK³⁹⁵ shows that since the statutory guidance has been introduced teachers are reporting that they do not have the right expertise or resources to adequately carry out effective IAG. Indeed, only 1 in 3 teachers are confident they are fulfilling their statutory duty.

Careers IAG in schools is particularly poor on vocational routes. In 2013 NUS carried out a survey of apprentices, exploring the role of careers guidance in informing people about their available opportunities which showed that twenty one per cent of apprentices had never received any information about apprenticeships from a careers service in a school, college or university. Forty six per cent of students who did receive IAG rated it as either barely

³⁹³ NUS-NEF (2013) The Modern Jobs Economy

³⁹⁴ <http://www.aoc.co.uk/news/fresh-look-careers-guidance>

³⁹⁵ <http://uk.pearson.com/home/news/2013/june/a-third-of-young-people-get-careers-advice-from-tv.html>

acceptable or very poor. Many students who did receive IAG felt that they had been guided away from apprenticeships towards other education and training.

There is concern that teachers, as one of the main points of contact for IAG, can often be influenced by their own personal biases. This means that they may often direct students down the traditional path of study (GCSE, A-Level, University), as opposed to the more vocational route. There is also a lack of incentive, and even a disincentive, for schools to deliver IAG which might direct some students away from the traditional academic route, due to the outcomes upon which league tables are based.

NUS recommends that the government should invest in and deliver a universal careers service which focuses on delivering tailored careers IAG at key intervention points during a person's education and working life. Timely interventions include the points in a person's life when they are: choosing their next level of study; leaving education at any level; preparing to return to work after parental leave; during any time spent in prison; after major life changing events; and preparing to retire. The detail of these interventions and services should be designed by a cross section of stakeholders including careers professionals and the relevant representation and advocacy organisations for each group mentioned.

This should be coupled with substantive careers education linked to the National Curriculum and the focus of all new provision should address skills, not just careers. Young people should be taught about what to expect from the world of work, from understanding employment contracts, terms and conditions and the rights of workers, to different career pathways and progression routes. Careers education should also be focused on skills development and transferable skills, and it should be designed with careers and educational professionals.

A further recommendation is that school league tables should include reporting of employment and education destinations other than higher education and including apprenticeships. This would ensure that schools are properly recognised for supporting their pupils into vocational education as well as higher education.

Gender gap

There is evidence to suggest that, whilst entry at level two apprenticeships might be balanced between men and women, progression rates and training opportunities are higher for men. Analysis of available data on gender and apprenticeships in Scotland for example reveals inequalities in terms of occupations segregation, the number of apprentices, programme levels and investment per individual³⁹⁶. Although this evidence is drawn from

³⁹⁶ Equality and Human Rights Commission, Sosenko and Netto, Scotland-focused analysis of statistical data on participation in apprenticeships in four UK countries (2013)

Scotland, the patterns of participation are not significantly different in other parts of the UK. Furthermore, there is significant gender segregation by apprenticeship sector. Women are over-represented in sectors that most likely to have lower-level apprenticeships, lower pay and fewer progression prospects (e.g. social care, hair and beauty, business administration), while by contrast men dominate in sectors likely to have higher pay prospects (e.g. engineering and electro technical).³⁹⁷ A recent ComRes poll commissioned by the Young Women's Trust has found that while female apprentices earn £4.82 per hour, their male colleagues earn almost a pound more with £5.85³⁹⁸

The gender inequities in apprenticeships mirror those found in the wider labour market³⁹⁹. The best paid non-graduate work is typically dominated by men, while women are over-represented in the lowest paid sectors. Many women remain in sectors such as retail, health and social care industries, and childcare, all of which attract lower earnings than other sectors. It is the latter sectors that are expected to see further growth in aggregate job numbers. NUS recommends that the government work with business and do more to encourage women to take up traditionally male dominated placements. Furthermore in expanding low wage sectors like health and social care that women dominate⁴⁰⁰, NUS recommends that the government raise wages.

To further address gender inequities in the labour market, NUS would also recommend that there is more done by education providers to ensure the curriculum is more representative of women's contributions and successes in a wide range of industries. Further and higher education institutions should also be encouraged to develop targets within their equality and diversity strategies to increase the proportion of women in STEM subjects. For instance, in 2011, a Girlguiding UK survey found that 43% of girls said they were put off by science and engineering careers because they did not know enough about the kind of careers available. As mentioned before, improved IAG can be effective in supporting the transition from school to work for young people.

Finally, gender inequality and resultant barriers to accessing apprenticeships can be addressed through greater employer investment. One recommendation, as outlined by NIACE, would be for the government to use Apprenticeship Levy to form an Apprenticeship Quality & Access Fund which in turn could drive greater demand for businesses and help the government achieve their 3 million target⁴⁰¹. Additionally, extension of the Care2Learn funding to cover apprentices aged 16 – 19 could support more young people who require childcare support to complete apprenticeships.

Question 2.

There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in

³⁹⁷ TUC and YWCA, 'Apprenticeships and gender' (2010).

³⁹⁸ Young Women's Trust (2015)

³⁹⁹ Equality and Human Rights Commission, Sosenko and Netto, Scotland-focused analysis of statistical data on participation in apprenticeships in four UK countries (2013)

⁴⁰⁰ NEF (2012) Good jobs for non-graduates

⁴⁰¹ NIACE/ Inclusion – 2015 [Spending Review](#) Representation

this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

Non-Graduates:

Who are they and why are they in this position?

The NUS & NEF have interesting findings on the disparities in employment outcomes between graduates and non-graduates; career prospects for these people are shown in the figure below.

No or below Level 2 qualifications

- Unemployment level: 33% (no qualifications), 23% (Level 1)
- Job prospects: primarily in unskilled work in distribution, retail, business support and hospitality.
- Pay prospects: Poor. Only distribution sector likely to offer a starting salary of above £15k, whilst in hospitality starting salaries are typically at £10k.
- Progression prospects: Poor, particularly in hospitality.

Level 2 qualifications (e.g. 5 GCSEs)

- Unemployment level: 12% (15% if apprenticeship)
- Job prospects: Social care, hospitality, distribution, retail, construction and manufacturing
- Pay prospects: Only marginally better than those with no qualifications. Manufacturing and construction offer better chances of higher pay.
- Progression prospects: Poor in hospitality and social care, but better in distribution. Better prospects for future learning in either A-levels or apprenticeships.

Level 3 qualifications (can include A-levels but also GNVQs, advanced apprenticeships)

- Unemployment level: 12%
- Job prospects: Social care, sport and personal services, construction, hospitality and retail
- Pay prospects: Decent and best in wholesale, distribution, or associate professions
- Progression prospects: Sector dependent, but best in construction and manufacturing.

Source: NUS-NEF joint report (2013) *The Modern Jobs Economy*

What are their career trajectories?

For those who do not follow the Further Education/ Higher Education route and are more likely to work in sectors with low pay, their annual income will grow more slowly and peak at a lower amount than those who have a degree.⁴⁰²

Research commissioned by the UK Council for Employment and Skills (UCKES) found that in the ten super sectors where non-graduates are most likely to work, efficiency gains as a result of automation will lead to “continuing sharp declines in employment”, particularly for skilled and semi-skilled manufacturing workers⁴⁰³. Opportunities available for non-graduates

⁴⁰² NUS-NEF (2013) *The Modern Jobs Economy: trends in employment for study leavers*

⁴⁰³ Shaheen, F., Seaford, C, and Chapman, J. (2012) *Good jobs for non-graduates*. London: NEF.

are therefore limited and where available, have poor pay and progression prospects or risk declining levels of employment. This also has negative implications for opportunities for adults who want to pursue a different career and/or reskill.

In a new environment of increasingly insecure work and change to available jobs, adult's education and reskilling is going to become more important than ever. NUS recommends that recent drastic cuts to adult skills budget be reversed and re-considered to enable non-graduates to reskill and find new careers in the 21st century jobs market.

Apprentices:

Who are they, why are they in this position:

Broadly, an apprenticeship is harder to secure than a full time equivalent full-time job or college place, and the testimony of apprentices on the leadership team at the National Society of Apprentices demonstrates the hard work and determination required to secure and succeed in an apprenticeship. Most young people who have taken up an apprenticeship have chosen this career trajectory – and, as the previous evidence on careers advice in the response to question one shows, this is often a choice made in spite of the information advice and guidance available, not because of it.

The National Society of Apprentices has carried out research on the impact which travel costs and financial stress has on apprentices' wellbeing and personal life. This research showed that whilst the overwhelming majority of respondents said they were overall satisfied with their life (75 per cent), a significant number expressed concerns over their financial situation⁴⁰⁴. Forty per cent said they felt they have little control over their financial situation and 41 per cent said they regularly worry about not having enough money to meet their basic living expenses such as rent and utility bills.⁴⁰⁵

The level of financial stress also had an impact on whether apprentices are able to take up volunteering opportunities. Forty-two per cent of those who did receive financial help said they had time to volunteer, compared to 30 per cent of those who received no help. Similarly those who received financial help with their travel had more time to play sport and pursue their other hobbies. This may be because they are working fewer hours as they spend less money on travel, or because they save time by receiving lifts to their college/ training provider or work.

What are their career trajectories?

Current evidence base on apprenticeships in terms of outcomes and careers trajectories is lacking. Although undertaking an apprenticeship has a proven impact on pay for the first job upon completion (90% of apprentices stay in employment after completion), evidence around the impact on life-time earnings is currently lacking. This is mainly because the current model of apprenticeships is relatively new. Similarly, there is not currently enough adequate data segmenting career destinations of apprentices by demographic. For example, the EHRC reports that there is currently no data held on LGBT participation in apprenticeships. This means we are not able to analyse the impact of apprenticeships education policy on particular groups, such as BME, LGBT and migrant group.

⁴⁰⁴ National Society of Apprentices Travel Research (2014)

⁴⁰⁵ National Society of Apprentices Travel Research (2014)

NUS would recommend a model similar to that used in the Australia, the NCVET, which tracks how different apprenticeship policy is impacting participation across different types of learners.

Young people in FE:

Who are they and why are they in this position?

The Association of Colleges offers important statistics on demographics of students in colleges, and what kind of courses they are undertaking in its report 'College Key Facts 2014-15'.⁴⁰⁶

The quality of information, advice and guidance has an important impact on a students' choices, and the decisions they have taken to study further education. Where IAG has been poor, this can contribute the students making the wrong choices about the further education course they study. The incentive structures in schools can lead to students being pushed into A levels which they are unsuited to, or conversely encouraged to leave the school to study a vocational course instead where the school does not want particular students enrolled. This means that the opportunity to retake a course, or re-start the first year is absolutely essential to ensuring the students are studying the courses which are right for them. The cuts to the education budget for 18 year old learners have made these kind of second chances more difficult to secure.

What are their careers trajectories?

Currently the evidence base around the outcomes of BTEC and vocation learners in terms of career prospects are not widely mapped. In addition to this, FE colleges tend not to have the same established alumni systems which keep track of former students and the kinds of careers they have ended up in, as are commonly found in HE institutions.

Similar to the previous recommendation, NUS recommends that better data is collected on the destination of FE leavers over the long term, in order to deepen our understanding of the career trajectories of those in FE and apprenticeships

Question 3.

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

The current transition system does not support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better. As stated before, a significant challenge that young people face when transitioning into the work place is poor IAG. This can contribute the students making the wrong choices about the further education course they study, or the career path they choose to pursue.

An additional challenge for young people who do not pursue the further and higher education route is an unstable labour market. The lack of stability and security in an already

⁴⁰⁶ AoC, 'College Key Facts 2014-15' (2014).

precarious labour market for young people leads to high levels of churn and a high likelihood that young people will change occupation in their first years of employment. 62% of employed young people change sector between the ages of 17/18 and 18/19, and so are very likely to end up in a field very different to their subjects of study. Between a third and a half of study leavers are likely to spend the first three years out of study moving in and out of education and employment and between very different kinds of education and employment. This is likely a reflection of the limited opportunities for stable and fulfilling work or education available to those who do not follow the A-level and higher education route, and again the lack of effective information, advice and guidance. This is only accentuated by England's distinct system of early educational specialisation.⁴⁰⁷

A key area to examine in terms of improving transition to the workplace is the system of work experience which is available to young people. Currently, there is no standardised experience or expectations from work experience placements. Many students will be restricted to taking up work experience within a small radius to where they live or study. In addition, gaining work experience in many industries often requires family connections or resources, or school networks. Where these are lacking, students will struggle to gain impactful work experience in the industries they are interested in. A key example is in fashion or creative industries, where most of the employers who could provide work experience would be based in larger cities. In this way, for many young people their exposure to the jobs market is restricted by their locality or the access which is afforded to them by their background.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Improving the transition for apprentices – traineeships:

Many colleges or training providers provide traineeships lasting for up to 6 months prior to a young person starting an apprenticeship. This system works very effectively to ensure that young people are ready for the world of work. In particular, the requirement that traineeship contracts are only offered to training providers judged as outstanding has largely ensured high quality training programmes. Traineeships work best in big cities where there are larger numbers of employers, and where public transport infrastructure is most developed.

Encouraging employers to take on apprentices – Group training agencies

Group training agencies (GTA) are designed to support small, medium and micro businesses to develop apprenticeships. The GTA employs the apprentice and carries out their training and manages the qualifications, and the apprentices are connected to smaller businesses in the local area. There is flexibility to switch between different businesses depending on particular skills development. This model should be encouraged and expanded.

Apprenticeships for over 24 year olds

⁴⁰⁷ Alison Wolf, 'Review of Vocational Education: The Wolf Report' (2011).

Only half of the current apprenticeship numbers are young people, and a large part of apprenticeship funding is directed to large employers to train their existing staff. Apprentices over 24 years old tend to be those who are already employed, but need specific skills development or training. In some instances, the type of training should already be carried out by the employer – leading to funding of ‘dead wood’ apprenticeships, where training and development should have happened anyway. Whilst NUS fully supports systems which enable adults to re-train, our concern is that adult apprenticeships carried out in this way are impacting on the reputation and experiences of apprenticeships for under 24 year olds.

The type of apprenticeship required for an over 25 year old currently in work is very different from a 16 -18 who is experiencing their first work place. Therefore there is a danger that there is often very limited new learning for over 25 year olds, rather the purpose is to recognise and validate skills that already exist. This has a knock on effect of devaluing the perceptions of the skills that would be learned as a new apprentice, which are important for young people entering the work place for the first time.

Improving the transition from further education

Effective careers IAG and work experience is essential to supporting young people through the transition from further education. A key part of this is supporting young people to be able to articulate their skills set to employers by drawing on other experience they have through volunteering, or through being a course rep

The critical analysis skills which are often developed through a higher education course are very important to participation and success in the work place, however vocational education does not necessarily provide this. Therefore many young people will enter the work place without the skills to think critically and creatively in their job. Developing critical analysis skills throughout vocational learning is essential to providing young people with the skills they will likely need in the work place.

NUS also calls for all teachers in further education to be qualified. Having a teaching qualification enables teachers to not just impart their knowledge and skills, but also support people with different learning abilities and styles.

Wage subsidies for jobs:

It has been argued that the introduction of subsidies for young workers may be the best way to encourage employers to employ young people⁴⁰⁸. Apprenticeships can also be viewed as a form of wage subsidy, allowing employers to employ apprentices on a lower wage. However, evidence shows these wages can be too low, with apprentice minimum wage even less than minimum wage and with those in hairdressing (69 percent), child care (43 percent) and construction (42 percent) most likely to be exploited⁴⁰⁹. These low wages can have the converse effect of being a dis-incentive to young people who are looking to pursue apprenticeships.

Without fundamental restricting of the economy that creates greater demand for labour employers will always be more likely to want to take on more experienced and older workers - while that is the case all other solutions will be papering over the cracks/ won't achieve much.

⁴⁰⁸ A. Wolf (2005) Does Education Matter? Myths about Education and Economic Growth

⁴⁰⁹ GOV (2013) Apprentice pay survey 2012 <https://www.gov.uk/Government/publications/apprenticeship-pay-survey-2012>

Recommendations for employers

Whilst substantial change on the employment of NEET young people would require re-balancing of the economy and labour market to improve the prospects of young people, there are certain small things that can be done to address the issue.

For employers, a key recommendation in employing more young people from further education, is to ensure that different pathways of progression through an organisation are mapped and communicated to new and potential employees from further education. This helps young people coming in at a junior level to see how their career might progress within that organisation, and that without a higher education degree, there are still options for developing new skills and increasing responsibility. Employers should also ensure they are investing in upskilling their employees, through internal and paid for training.

Employers should also ensure they are talking on work experience commitments, and they should be proactively going into further education colleges to offer these opportunities. In the NUS Work Commission report we recommended IAG sessions for young people, led by qualified careers professionals and delivered within a wider system of careers education⁴¹⁰. These can inspire young people and support them to achieve their ambitions, encouraging them to consider a wide range of career options and thereby support greater diversity in the work force.

There is also a need for employers to better understand the qualification landscape that exists. For example, many employers will be unaware of the level which vocational education reaches – which is equivalent to that of a PhD. In part this requires a simplification of vocational pathways, and a better articulated

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

LEPs and Local Government:

There should, at the very least, be an expectation that local government they publish what youth provision is available in terms of youth services. This will support young people's transition to work.

Local government:

There is an opportunity for young people to receive excellent training and personal development through apprenticeships in public procurement. An existing example of this is the Surrey County Council who run an apprenticeship scheme for 16 to 23 year olds in local government that leads to an NVQ qualification. Furthermore, those on the scheme are supported to find a permanent position, therefore supporting school leavers the find and apply for available opportunities.

⁴¹⁰ NUS (2014) Work Commission Report

Employers:

Employers can support the transition from school to work for the young (16 -24) by publishing the number of young people they employ. A gentle name and shame of the organisations that are less proactive at employing young people could help young people make choices about where they want to work and improve the employment of youth where it is lacking. This in turn could lead employers who do take on a large number of young people to come together in a large body to recommend, discuss, and develop and publicise good practise.

Schools:

Improved careers guidance in schools is essential to supporting the transition into work for school leavers. Schools have a large responsibility when it comes to creating and delivering effective IAG that enables young people to have access to good information on the world of work, schools and colleges. However, it must be noted that schools cannot create jobs for school leavers and therefore it cannot be expected that their performance is assessed based on employment rates. There are a series of other factors involved and this therefore calls for a more collaborative approach.

Collaboration:

It is important that a collaborative approach, involving the Confederation of British Industry and trade unions, is taken to support school leaver's transition into work. A national collaboration of young people employers should involve trade unions and NUS recommends that the IAG they access involves making young people aware of trade unions. Furthermore, NUS would recommend that trade unions are brought into the conversation about the transition from school to work early, and that this continues within the organisations where school leavers are employed.

Better communication between different government departments around what support is available to young people who do not follow the A-level/ University route is also essential. An example of the effect of poor collaboration between government departments currently is the gaps that exist between the education and benefits system. A lot has changed in apprenticeship policy however, because an apprenticeships are not officially recognised as education, the parent of a 16 year old apprentice will not continue to receive benefits unlike their counterparts in college.

Furthermore, policy surrounding Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) for apprentices means that those on the minimum wage who do not meet the minimum requirement of £111 a week are not entitled to SSP⁴¹¹. This is evidence of poor communication and collaboration between government departments which has implications for apprentices on the lowest pay. To address this and improve education benefits policy there should be better collaboration between the Department for Education and the Department for Work and Pensions. Finally, NUS recommends that a government department, ideally BIS, takes on more direct responsibility for young people and work in general, particularly for those classified as NEET.

15 September 2015

⁴¹¹ NUS (2013) Forget Me Not

SEPTEMBER 2015

NHS EMPLOYERS' RESPONSE TO THE SOCIAL MOBILITY COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS' INQUIRY INTO THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK FOR 14-24 YEAR OLDS

Background

NHS Employers was recently invited to respond to a call for evidence from the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility, following its launch of an investigation into the complex choices young people are faced with when considering career options.

The terms of reference for the inquiry are “to consider social mobility in the transition from school to work” and to report by 23 March 2016. The Committee has decided to set its inquiry in the context of a changing youth labour market, for those within the age range of 14-24.

Submissions made to the Committee will guide their deliberations in oral evidence sessions later in 2015, and inform the Committee’s final conclusions and recommendations which aim to be reported to the House in late March 2016.

Our response

This response has been compiled by NHS Employers, following engagement with employer organisations in the NHS.

In relation to the recruiting young people and apprenticeship agenda, NHS Employers has a national leadership and influencing role to play with employers in the NHS. We encourage the spread and sharing of best practice and provide employers with access to the latest thinking in relation to apprenticeship policy and 16-24 year old recruitment practice. In this role, NHS Employers works with Health Education England and the 13 Local Education and Training Boards, which determine education and training investment in their localities. NHS Employers also works strategically with a range of national organisations including The Department of Health, The Department for Work and Pensions, The National Apprenticeship Service, and Skills for Health.

Apprenticeships and recruiting young people in the NHS

The number of apprenticeship posts in the NHS has grown significantly in recent years and apprentices are currently employed in the NHS across more than 60 different frameworks. Between 2008/09 and 2009/10 the number of new apprenticeships in England rose by 500 per cent from 1,300 a year to over 8,100, and 14,660 apprenticeship starts delivered across the NHS in 2014/15.

Within the Health Education England Mandate from The Department of Health, there exists a target to double the number of apprenticeships delivered across the NHS by March 2016. To achieve the ambitions set out in the Mandate, Health Education England has launched ‘Talent for Care’ and ‘Widening Participation’ strategies that set out the mechanisms by which the NHS will secure a diverse, talented support workforce fit for the future – bringing

young people into the NHS workforce through apprenticeships, or other routes, is key to meeting this aim.

Q.a) How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education?

Careers and options information, advice and guidance

It is clear from the feedback received from employers that the key element which facilitates a smoother transition from school to employment is ensuring that the expectations of the young person about their employment meets the reality. To achieve this it is paramount that school leavers are armed with relevant, effective and impartial Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) about career opportunities and apprenticeship options available to them. It is agreed by employers that this is happening in schools however, there are doubts about the extent to which the statutory duties regarding apprenticeships that came into force in September 2012 are being met.

It is felt that schools should conduct more face-to-face guidance and money for IAG should be ring-fenced by Government for this purpose. Face-to-face guidance is seen as particularly important given the complexity of the choices that young people and their parents face, relating to the different routes and pathways into apprenticeships, higher education and employment.

Careers fairs and events such as National Apprenticeship Week and skills competitions are all seen as valuable ways of strengthening the apprenticeship brand and promoting apprenticeship opportunities to young people, as is publicity about apprenticeship achievement and graduation ceremonies etc. Employers within the NHS would also particularly welcome improvements to web-based information, such as The National Apprenticeship Service and National Careers Service websites, which are seen as an excellent way of engaging with young people.

Finally, the NHS believe that young people and their parents/carers want to be able to make choices based on their likely employment prospects and earning potential. It is felt that the evaluation material which is starting to come through (in terms of apprenticeships) about employability, long term earnings and status with employers compared to graduates/other qualifications is what will attract/appeal to parents/young people.

Training and support for employers

Employers in the NHS have suggested that in order to ease the transition for young people from school to employment, further training for staff in employing organisations to enable them to better understand and support young people into roles would be beneficial. Suggested models include a 'train the trainer' package, where trusts would be up-skilled to train their managers to support new, young employees in their organisations.

Q.b) How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Feedback on this question from employers spanned a large range of topic areas, with a greater focus on apprenticeships than any other route into employment for school leavers. This range of feedback has been grouped into the following themes:

Funding and policy

Additional Government funding to cover the salary of new apprentices (plus overheads) and support for existing employees to undertake apprenticeships has been cited across our networks as key enablers which would encourage NHS employers to commit more resources to apprenticeships. A further suggestion put forward would be to provide additional funding to train apprentices alongside employees that are nearing retirement.

During discussions with employers on this topic, many raised the proposed changes to the apprenticeship levy as a barrier to bringing school leavers into their organisations. There was a strong feeling that the proposed changes would disadvantage larger organisations (such as NHS trusts), in favour of small to medium-sized enterprises.

Many employers also felt strongly that the culture of apprenticeships targets is unhelpful, leading to 'lip service' being paid to the agenda, rather than supporting high quality apprenticeship opportunities.

Return on investment (ROI) for apprenticeships

Employers having a clearer idea of the benefits and being able to easily quantify the ROI for apprenticeships (both financially and in terms of impact on patient care) has been cited as essential if they are to be encouraged to commit additional funding and resource. More involvement from Treasury and The Chamber of Commerce could be beneficial in this context, as whilst some of the documents produced by these agencies are excellent, there is a feeling that they are somewhat poorly communicated. It has also been suggested that Local Enterprise Partnerships need to be more joined up with the apprenticeship ambassador scheme and place a greater focus on business to business discussions.

Linked to a clearer understanding of the ROI, we have also received feedback that NHS employers need to see the value and cost-effectiveness of the new apprenticeship qualifications over the QCF qualifications. This is something that will undoubtedly take some time to achieve, although is seen as central in making the argument for expansion across the sector.

Advice and guidance for employers

A number of suggestions for resources have been put forward which could assist employers with committing to the delivery of more apprenticeships. The development of structured career pathways for the various job roles within the NHS would permit a broader understanding of how the use of apprenticeships could be used to satisfy demand for certain roles and address future skills gaps. In addition, having clear guidelines for recruiting managers would help them consider the potential to make use of apprenticeships when positions become vacant. The ThinkFuture programme at NHS Employers is looking to produce toolkits of advice and guidance for employers and managers on bringing young people into their organisations and the considerations required.

Continued sharing of best practice (e.g. via case studies/National Apprenticeship Week) would also assist with improving the perception of apprenticeships and showcasing the benefits of these programmes in developing the skills and knowledge required to improve service delivery.

There is clear acknowledgment by many employers across the NHS that apprenticeships make good business sense, can improve staff retention rates, and have a positive impact on patient care. However, it has also been highlighted that more still needs to be done to raise the profile of apprenticeships, make clearer links to emerging healthcare policy, and gain a more universal acceptance of their use across the sector. In the midst of all the recent changes to apprenticeship policy, it has been highlighted that Government need to give a

greater commitment to communicating better with employers, so that they are fully informed as to the proposed role out, salary costs, on-costs, increase in salary dependent on the age, and the funding available by age group.

National communications and messaging

Employers have indicated that national work to communicate key messages to employers across all sectors would help to encourage organisations to take on more school leavers.

Feedback suggested that further messaging based around the 'grow your own' theme, on a national basis, would stimulate employers to view recruitment of young people differently and more positively. The 'grow your own' angle for the promotion of employing school leavers is certainly one that resonates with employers across the NHS. Even more so given that this action meets engages with the local community, promotes social mobility, goes some way to enhancing the diversity of the workforce and also targets the challenges the NHS faces around workforce supply, particularly during this time of difficulty in recruiting healthcare staff from overseas.

In discussions with employers there was also significant debate about the common misconceptions regarding employing young people. Employers suggested that communicating specific information to tackle these misconceptions (particularly around the health and safety and legal requirements) would help to change perceptions and opinions of employers about school leavers.

The recruitment pool

When discussing the key factors that would encourage employers to bring more school leavers into their workforce, employers were clear that the quality and appropriateness of applicants for roles (including apprenticeships) was a fundamental element to explore. Many employers cited the number of graduates applying for entry level roles and apprenticeship places as an issue which can result in a reduction in the number of school leavers being recruited into these posts. The proposed action from this suggestion was to limit or prevent altogether the number of graduate applicants able to apply for apprenticeships.

Employers also stressed the importance of employability and life skills in potential applicants, and cited this as an essential factor in encouraging employers to bring school leavers into their organisations. It is becoming increasingly accepted that, especially in the NHS, good practice is to recruit for values and train for skills, however this does not detract away from the attractiveness of employability and life skills to a recruiting manager or employer. Suggestions have also been made that the current functional skills curriculum should be reviewed with employer input, again to ensure that school leavers have the skills employers are looking for in their recruitment exercises.

NHS Employers

The NHS Employers organisation is the voice of employers in the NHS, supporting them to put patients first. Our vision is to be the authoritative voice of workforce leaders, experts in HR, negotiating fairly to get the best deal for patients.

We help employers make sense of current and emerging healthcare issues to ensure that their voice is front and centre of health policy and practice. We keep them up to date with the latest workforce thinking and expert opinion, providing practical advice and information, and generating opportunities to network and share knowledge and best practice.

We work with employers in the NHS to reflect their views and act on their behalf in four priority areas:

- pay and negotiations
- recruitment and planning the workforce
- healthy and productive workplaces
- employment policy and practice.

The NHS Employers organisation is part of the NHS Confederation.

15 September 2015

REC submission to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee

1. The Recruitment and Employment Confederation is committed to building a diverse and inclusive jobs market. Our monthly jobs market surveys feature original data from recruiters providing the most up-to-date information on recruitment, employment and pay trends. Our data is often seen as a lead indicator by organisations like the Bank of England and we are keen to share these with the committee.
2. In spite of higher tuition fees, the number of A-Levels students securing university places this summer reached 426,070, a four per cent increase on last year.⁴¹² At the same time the number of young people Not in Employment Education or Training (NEET) has fallen to 922,000: a decline of 21,000 from the first quarter of this year.⁴¹³ In terms of youth employment, these figures reinforce the fact that these groups have been the main object of government policy, while those who do not fall into either one of these groups, the so-called ‘missed middle’ – aged 14-24 and neither take up A-Levels or are not NEET – have been largely neglected.
3. In recent years, politicians, business and educators have recognised the importance of the improving the route to work for the ‘missed middle’, both in terms of their contribution to the workforce and their ability to have successful careers. Official figures show that those aged 16-24 are three times more likely to flow from employment to unemployment than those aged over 40.⁴¹⁴ Improving the route to work for this category is vital to improving their social mobility and their chances of having a successful career.

Improving the Route to Work

1. *Skills Crisis*: Improving the social mobility of young people in this group must start with addressing the chronic skills shortage that exists in the UK. Each month, the REC produces two jobs market surveys: *Report on Jobs*⁴¹⁵ and *JobsOutlook*.⁴¹⁶ The latest Report on Jobs, published last week, shows that permanent and temporary placements have grown at the slowest rate for 27 months. This is happening because, in response to worsening skills shortages, employers are unable to source the skilled people they need. As the availability of candidates continues to decline, employers struggle to find candidates with the skills they need to grow their businesses. In JobsOutlook, 95% of employers told us they had little or no spare

⁴¹² *Daily Clearing Analysis: Overview*, UCAS, 14 August 2015.

⁴¹³ Labour Force Survey, April to June 2015 and January to March 2015

⁴¹⁴ *Moving between Unemployment and Employment*, ONS, 2013.

⁴¹⁵ *Report on Jobs* ([latest published 7th September 2015](#)) is a monthly publication produced by Markit for the REC and KPMG. The report features original survey data from recruiters to provide the most up-to-date information on recruitment, employment and pay trends. As this is a monthly publication, it is seen as a lead indicator by organisations like the Bank of England.

⁴¹⁶ *JobsOutlook* is a monthly survey of employer hiring intentions by the REC ([latest published 19th August 2015](#)).

capacity. Sectors consistently suffering from a shortage of skilled workers range from engineering and IT to accounting and medical care. The Royal Academy of Engineering estimates that the UK needs an additional 60,000 Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) technicians and apprentices every year.⁴¹⁷ Figures from the King's Fund indicate that there will be a shortfall of one million workers in health and social care by 2025.⁴¹⁸ One long-term solution is encouraging more young people to pursue careers in STEM, healthcare and other areas where the skills crisis is most acute. Introducing schemes which match young people to jobs in sectors with skills shortages will help them establish their crucial first footing on the career ladder and in the long-term will improve their social mobility.

2. *Skills Strategy*: To build on these schemes, there needs to be a comprehensive skills strategy to underpin industrial policies and identify the specific skills required by these young people in order for them to take up the jobs of the future.
3. *Improving educational and vocational training*: Improving the social mobility of young people aged 14-24 who do not take up A-Levels or are not NEET must be combined with improving the take-up of vocational qualifications. To a large extent this requires the expansion of employer-led, higher apprenticeship opportunities in high-demand sectors such as IT, engineering and life sciences. The recruitment agencies can play a key role in this and many already do. For instance, one of our members, F1 Recruitment, operates in the marketing and media industries. Their 'F1 Academy' connects students with work experience and apprenticeships – over 75% of participants have gone on to work with the businesses where they were placed. Additionally, government must ensure that new training needs can be met quickly. They should do this by providing small-scale training funds which could help thousands of people get into work and 'earn whilst they learn' in sectors such as construction and logistics which are in urgent need of staff and where rising training and licensing costs are preventing new entrants. Overcoming these sorts of barriers to vocational training essential to improving the social mobility of this group.
4. *National Minimum Wage*: Ensuring young people in this category receive a decent wage for the work they do is an essential part of improving their social mobility. With the National Living Wage due to be implemented in April 2016 it will be important for the Government to assess the impact of any future increase on those in this category. The Low Pay Commission has played a vital role and been successful as an independent agency in determining matters in relation to low pay and should be tasked with assessing the impact on this.
5. *Providing world-class careers advice*: Establishing an understanding of the world of work early is crucial to help young people make informed choices about their careers

⁴¹⁷ *Jobs and growth: the importance of engineering skills to the UK economy*, Royal Academy of Engineering, September 2012.

⁴¹⁸ Candace Imison and Richard Bohmer, *NHS and social care workforce: meeting our needs now and in the future?*, The King's Fund, 2012, p2.

and helps to boost social mobility. Young people entering the jobs market have limited exposure to the realities of work and potential career pathways. To help these young people succeed in their careers, government must make employability a core element of the school curriculum, ensure work experience is provided for all and create a world-class careers service that gives all young people access to the ever-changing jobs market. Helping individuals succeed through work and facilitating social mobility must also focus on boosting access to the professions and dismantling latent barriers. Professional bodies are already playing a key role here. As part of our partnership agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions, the REC is leading a new work experience campaign, called WE can, pairing 12,000 young people with over 30 businesses helping the latter to get work experience in order to secure jobs are crucial to their social mobility. This type of scheme should be extended more broadly and we are keen to share further details of our work with the committee.

6. *Good Recruitment Practices*: embedding good recruitment practices is essential to improving social mobility giving young people an understanding of the skills required for the jobs available and in turn giving local employers the ability to attract and retain talent. The REC's Good Recruitment Campaign is already establishing a community of HR and procurement professionals to champion the importance of good recruitment to both organisational success and workplace inclusion. Encouraging employers across all sectors to review current hiring procedures and become advocates of the REC's Good Recruitment Campaign is starting to make a difference.

Responsibility for improving the route to work

7. Responsibility for improving the route to work for this work must be a tripartite responsibility, and reside equally with business, government and educators; all of whom must play a part in helping young people understand the world of work so they can secure the jobs being created. At a national level this should be delivered by BIS, DWP and the Department for Work and Pensions, and their appropriate agencies. If this cannot be delivered within the current framework then it should be coordinated through the development of a single Department for Learning and Work, bringing together the various parts of those Departments and whose remit specifically included improving social mobility for this age group.
8. Recruiters, in concert with Local Enterprise Partnerships and local employers, should also play an important role in the route to work for this age group. Recruiters know their local jobs markets and supply chains like no one else but as yet have been an untapped resource in local strategies which aim to boost regional enterprise and growth. By partnering with the recruitment industry in future workforce planning, LEPs and local decision-makers can better develop strategies that work for the hardest to reach jobseekers and are responsive to local employers' needs. The REC's partnership agreement with the Department for Work and Pensions is a model which LEPs could replicate and includes regular regional events for local Jobcentres

and recruitment agencies to discuss local jobs market trends and improve employment services for jobseekers. Using existing initiatives such as the Good Recruitment Campaign to encourage local employers to prioritise social mobility and diversity in their hiring practices.

9. Finally, local politicians should be encouraged to support 'good recruitment' with MPs acting as 'good recruitment' champions in their constituencies and hosting jobs fairs that bring together local employers, jobseekers and specialist recruiters.

About us

The Recruitment and Employment Confederation represents 3,349 recruitment businesses – 80 per cent of the UK's £28.5 billion industry by turnover – and 5,759 individual recruiters through its Institute of Recruitment Professionals. REC member agencies supply workers into every sector of the UK economy. All members must abide by a code of professional practice and must take a compliance test to enter and stay in membership. The REC is committed to raising standards and highlighting excellence throughout the recruitment industry.

14 September 2015

**How can young people be best prepared for the world of work?
House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility**

1.0 About us

- 1.1 The Royal British Legion was created as a unifying force for the military charity sector at the end of WWI, and still remains one of the UK's largest membership organisations. We are the largest welfare provider in the Armed Forces charity sector, providing financial, social and emotional support, information, advice, advocacy and comradeship to hundreds of thousands of Service personnel, veterans and their dependants every year. In 2014, we responded to over 450,000 requests for help— more than ever before – and spent £1.4m every week on welfare support. For further information, please visit www.britishlegion.org.uk
- 1.2 The Legion also provides a number of specialist welfare services to wounded, injured and sick Service personnel and veterans, and other working age disabled individuals. As well as investing in the Battle Back Centre at Lilleshall and MOD Personnel Recovery Centres, we also assist disabled beneficiaries with accessing statutory benefits to enable independent living and with War Pensions and compensation claims.

2.0 General Comments

- 2.1 The Legion is grateful for the opportunity to provide written evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility. We would further welcome the opportunity to provide oral evidence to the Committee if requested.
- 2.2 In response to this call for evidence, the Legion's submission will focus on the needs of those leaving Service aged 24 and younger and transitioning to the civilian jobs market ("civvy street").
- 2.3 For further information on the transition process in general, we recommend that interested parties read the Forces in Mind Trust 2013 report "*the Transition Mapping Study*". The report contains significant quantitative and qualitative research in this area.

3.0 Background and context

- 3.1 In addition to the standard annual outflow of Service personnel leaving the Armed Forces, the last few years have witnessed large numbers of Service Leavers re-entering the jobs market as the UK Armed Forces reduces in size. Over the last three years, the UK Armed Forces has seen an outflow of nearly 68,000 Service personnel (21,370 in 2011/12, 23,520 in 2012/13 and 23,000 in 2013/14)⁴¹⁹. Many of these will be aged over 24 and therefore outside of the scope of this inquiry, however it is safe to assume that within the 68,000 there is a significant number of those leaving before a full 22 year Service and aged under 24.

⁴¹⁹ Ministry of Defence, *UK Armed Forces Monthly Personnel Report*, 2015

3.2 The Legion's UK Household Survey of the ex-Service Community 2014 found through comparison with the ONS Labour Force survey that working age veterans were less likely to be in full time work than the UK male population (57% full time employed vs 68% in full time employment).⁴²⁰

3.3 The vast majority of personnel leaving the Armed Forces below the age of 24 are likely to fall within one of three categories:

1. **Those who leave having completed training, undertaken duties, yet decide not to stay for a full 22 years Service.** This cohort will be undertaking transition voluntarily and are able to prepare for re-entering the civilian world of work. There are still barriers faced by this cohort, however they are likely to be the best equipped of their age group leaving Service.
2. **The Wounded Injured and Sick (WIS)** who have been medically discharged due to injury. These personnel may only start to prepare for transition when the medical board has signed them off. This group risk multiple barriers to entering work, both due to their disability and a lack of preparation.
3. **Early Service Leavers (ESL).** ESL covers those who are discharged compulsorily or at their own request from Service having completed less than 4 years Service. Many don't complete basic training before leaving the military. This cohort traditionally present with the most barriers to progressing into stable employment.

3.4 It is vital that, in order to counter the damaging narrative of Service leavers being classed as "mad, bad and sad", the committee notes that many of those who transition out of the military go on to successful careers where they can put into practice the many skills a military career can impart. For most, their military career is an asset that employers welcome. However, there remains a small yet significant group within the younger cohort of leavers who encounter multiple barriers to successful transition. With that in mind, this submission will focus on highlighting the risks and problems encountered for this cohort who need Government intervention rather than those who transition successfully.

3.5 When discussing the prospects of Service leavers, it is important to view initiatives with reference to the Armed Forces Covenant. Following a Legion campaign, the Government enshrined the Armed Forces Covenant in statute in 2011. The Covenant is the nation's recognition of its moral obligation to members of the Armed Forces and their families, and establishes how they should be treated, stating that the Armed Forces and their families "deserve our respect and support, and fair treatment". The two key principles underlying the Covenant are:

- 'No disadvantage': the Covenant commits the Government to removing, where possible, disadvantage experienced as a result of Service. For example, when Service personnel and their families are posted somewhere new, they should not experience difficulty in getting their children into local schools

⁴²⁰ The Royal British Legion, *A UK Household Survey of the ex-Service Community, 2014*

- ‘Special treatment’: for personnel and veterans who are injured as a result of their Service, or for families bereaved by Service, it is sometimes appropriate for the principle of ‘special treatment’ to be applied e.g. the provision of higher grade prosthetics to those who lose limbs as a direct result of their Service.

3.6 The Legion welcomes decisions taken by recent governments that support the Armed Forces community across the UK, as well as the work done by the devolved administrations, and will continue to work with all administrations to ensure the principles of the Covenant are upheld.

4.0 Qualifications and skills

4.1 Those who join the UK Armed Forces at a young age as an alternative to pursuing higher education or gaining civilian employment experience are reliant on the training and skills provision within the Forces to be able to enter the civilian job market once they leave. As the Army tends to recruit for infantry from more deprived areas of the country, appropriate education and training support is vital. Up to 50% of Army recruits have literacy and numeracy skills below Entry Level 3, equivalent to the standard expected of primary school leavers at age 11.⁴²¹

4.2 Low literacy and numeracy skills can constitute a serious barrier to social mobility. The Department for Education commissioned 2011 *Wolf Report on Vocational Education* places significant emphasis on the need for numeracy and literacy skills, stating “English and Maths GCSE (at grades A*-C) are fundamental to young people’s employment and education prospects.”⁴²² Wolf describes English and Maths GCSE qualifications as the “gatekeepers” to employment and consequently social mobility outside of the Forces. Those in Service are able to study to obtain GCSE and A-Level qualifications, or their equivalents. Indeed, in order to progress up the ranks to Sergeant (or Service equivalent) comparable grades are required and considerable resources are put into encouraging training to take place. Yet how many take up this opportunity is unclear, especially when looking at the younger age range of Service leavers who may not have enlisted with a defined career path in mind.

4.3 As well as standard academic qualifications, a career in the Armed Forces brings with it exceptional training in valuable transferable skills. The focus on teamwork (especially in combat roles where relying on team members can regularly be a matter of life or death) and leadership that the military instils should be assets to any civilian recruiter. However it is likely that much of this training is not recognised both by the personnel themselves and by potential recruiters as being transferable and skills acquired in service are not routinely taken into account when applying for jobs. Only four in ten of veterans aged 16-34 report an ability to use their acquired skills at least quite a lot. Within the ex-Service population, younger veterans are particularly less likely than their national equivalent to say they can use most or all of their skills.⁴²³

4.4 A major factor for skills being seemingly “lost” in transition is that many leave the Armed Forces without ever even having written a CV, let alone understand how to

⁴²¹ Vorhaus, J, Swain, J, Creese, B et al, *Armed Forces Basic Skills Longitudinal Study*, 2012

⁴²² Wolf, A, *Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report*, 2011

⁴²³ The Royal British Legion, *A UK Household Survey of the ex-Service Community*, 2014

recognise what aspects of their military training will be beneficial for civilian employment. The Career Transition Partnership (CTP) and external agencies such as the Legion are able to offer advice and support to Service leavers on job applications and CV writing, however many will never adequately engage with the support available. It is vital that not only do personnel undertake further training in this area, but employers do more to recognise how a military background and training can be beneficial within a civilian workplace. This is a prime example where the Armed Forces Covenant principle of special treatment may be appropriate, especially for those businesses that have signed a Corporate Covenant, pledging to offer enhanced support to the UK armed forces community.

5.0 Time to prepare

5.1 Successful transition from Service to the civilian jobs market greatly benefits from sufficient preparation. As has been pointed out many times from various commentators, the most successful transition arrangements will involve preparation for leaving service starting on day one of enrolment. For example, Forces in Mind Trust's Transition Mapping Study states, "Making sure individuals are aware that they need to take responsibility for their own futures and make the most of the opportunities in the Armed Forces is hard to enforce. Nonetheless, communicating this message from the start of the individual's career is critical, so that Service personnel have time to acquire skills to position themselves better for transition"⁴²⁴. However, despite encouragement, this level of preparation rarely happens in practice.

5.2 Where someone has prepared for transitioning out of the Forces, the main focus of resettlement support is delivered through the Career Transition Partnership. The CTP is available to provide support to Service leavers up to two years before discharge and for two years following. Historically this support was not provided in full to ESLs, who may need it most due to their lower average educational profile, but welcome amendments have recently been made in line with Royal British Legion recommendations: "From 1 October 2015, all elements of delivery will be brought within the new CTP contract to provide more seamless support and for the first time all Service leavers, regardless of how long they have served or their reason for discharge, will benefit from the scheme."⁴²⁵

5.3 The majority of Service Leavers who enrol with the CTP find employment within six months of leaving the Forces (82% in 2013/14).⁴²⁶ The numbers are lower for those with restricted access due to being Early Service Leavers, but as outlined above, we expect this to improve. However, CTP is not mandatory and the results experienced by those who take up the support is not reflected across the breadth of Service leavers. In 2012/13, one in ten Service leavers who were eligible to resettlement support did not register with the CTP.⁴²⁷

⁴²⁴ Forces in Mind Trust, *The Transition Mapping Study*, 2013

⁴²⁵ Ministry of Defence Press release, *MOD awards multi-million pound resettlement contract*, June 2015

⁴²⁶ Ministry of Defence, *Career Transition Partnership quarterly statistics: UK Regular Service Personnel Employment Outcomes 2009/10 to 2013/14 Q1*, 2014

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

5.4 As alluded to in paragraph 3.3, when looking at those aged between 16 and 24, significant numbers of leavers will not have had a chance to prepare fully for discharge. This may be because they are ESL's being discharged on disciplinary grounds, or because they have become WIS and a significant change in physical health leads them to be medically discharged. Both categorisations can result in accelerated transitioning periods and a feeling of being cut off from Armed Forces/Ministry of Defence support structures. If transition is unexpected, the sudden removal of the identity that being a member of the Forces imparts can also lead to a 'symbolic-loss' that may have secondary implications for the mental health of the Service Leaver. This upheaval of identity can hinder adequate preparation for entering the world of civilian work and therefore lead to Service leavers returning to their previous environments and lives, reducing the potential to capitalise on the opportunities for social mobility that Services could have provided..

5.5 Successfully entering work after Service can also be reliant on sufficient training in, and understanding of, budgeting and business practices. CTP and external agencies provide this training, however it is not always enough to counter ingrained issues with financial management that Service life can risk producing. During life "behind the wire", daily living costs are either subsidised or deducted at source from wages, and many personnel will have left the Armed Forces without understanding the financial implications of budgeting for utilities and rent. This in turn can lead to wages that reach the personnel being seen purely as disposable income. Entering the civilian world of household budgeting and a possible reduction in earnings can therefore come as a financial culture shock that can eat up savings and lead to debt. Currently one in twenty 16-34 year olds within the ex-Service community has taken out a payday loan – equivalent to around 20,000 people.⁴²⁸ The Legion supports members of the ex-Service community who find themselves in debt, and have heard of ex-Service personnel who have used loans and grants to start businesses upon leaving work, only for the business to collapse due to insufficient planning and financial acuity.

6.0 Engagement in support services

6.1 There can be no doubt the UK armed forces sector, both statutory and charitable, offers an extensive range of resources for members of the Armed Forces seeking advice and support. In addition to the Ministry of Defence providing up to £100million towards resettlement support via the CTP, third sector organisations such as the Legion provide further support, advice and loans.

6.2 Between June 2010 and 2013, the Legion worked with the Department of Business Innovation and Skills to deliver the "Be the boss" scheme to support self employed Service leavers. The scheme provided 250 loans for either starting up or growing businesses and had 2,921 registrations for support, of which 22 percent were from applicants aged between 18 and 30. Since 2013, when the scheme closed to new registrations, the Legion has allowed individuals to express an interest in case the scheme was to reopen. To date there have been 836 expressions of interest. The Legion also jointly runs CivvyStreet, an online resource and support hub for the

⁴²⁸ Royal British Legion, *A UK Household Survey of the ex-Service Community, 2014*

serving and ex-Service community looking to prepare for the world of civilian work.⁴²⁹

6.3 For some, anecdotal feedback points towards this landscape of help being too varied, nebulous and unclear, leaving individuals to fall through the gaps even if they want to engage.

6.4 Subsequently, there are questions over whether the support that is available is being accessed, especially amongst ESLs who may not associate themselves with agencies specifically promoted at supporting veterans. The UK Household Survey found that of those in the ex-Service community reporting employment difficulties, only 17 percent say they have used work-related support. This implies there is large unmet need amongst those accessing work despite the wealth of support available.

7.0 Moving into a job vs. a career

7.1 There are many who successfully transition out of the Armed Forces and into employment. The high rates of employment recorded six months after leaving for those who have accessed CTP support bear testimony to that. Unfortunately there is little evidence collected on the longer term employment of veterans, whether they are under-employed or for various reasons less socially mobile. What evidence there is suggests that this is an area that needs further investigation.

7.2 As outlined in paragraph 4.4, only four in ten of veterans aged 16-34 report an ability to use their acquired skills at least quite a lot in their current employment. This statistic indicates that many Veterans are unable to capitalise on their experience and therefore may be under-employed for their abilities. The transition into the civilian jobs market, bringing with it a shift in culture, greater financial responsibilities and uncertainty as to whether training and skills are transferrable, risks resulting in veterans settling for just “any available job” rather than entering into an appropriate and sustainable career path.

7.3 Frustration at being pigeonholed into jobs by the vocational support and training in the Armed Forces is captured in the Transition Mapping Study:

7.4 “The whole CTP job finding process is quite targeted on doing what you’ve done in the forces. So for instance, they give you a lot of companies who are recruiting for offshore jobs where you go away for months at a time and come back for a bit of time off. You’ve been doing that for years on end...Also there are a lot of companies that go to them and will say, ‘We want this ex-Navy engineer for this job in a dockyard on a ship.’ Why would you want to do that if you’ve been on a ship for 15 years and want to get away from it?”⁴³⁰

7.5 This is in contrast to the applications for support the Legion received through the Be the Boss scheme (see paragraph 6.2), which were for starting businesses in sectors both directly related and unrelated to the previous military career such as plumbing, landscaping, locksmiths, health and fitness, and hospitality.

⁴²⁹ Further information on CivvyStreet can be found at: <https://www.civvystreet.org/>

⁴³⁰ Quote taken from: Forces in Mind Trust, *The Transition Mapping Study*, 2013

7.6 The Career Transition Partnership only follows those eligible for the scheme for up to two years after leaving Service. It can take longer than two years for a Service leaver, especially one who has left due to being WIS or an ESL, to find their feet and settle into steady employment. Further research into long term employment rates is necessary to establish whether the support currently available is adequate for enabling sustainable and progressive careers amongst Service leavers.

8.0 Families

8.1 18-24 year olds leaving the Service community are, of course, not solely veterans. Although partners and spouses may well have had access to further mainstream educational facilities and work experience outside of a military context, they will be affected by similar barriers to those their spouses experience on leaving Service.

8.2 In part due to the housing allocation process within the military where marriage and co-habitation provides benefits for young personnel, it is not uncommon for partners and spouses to join the Serving individual in Military accommodation, and participate in the mobile and unsettled lifestyle base life entails. Many spouses therefore will find that their lifestyle is not conducive to retaining full time employment outside of the Armed forces, and equally many employers may be reluctant to offer full time work to a military spouse who they believe may be required to move at short notice.

8.3 Evidence suggests that on leaving the Service community, spouses and dependents are unprepared, unable or unwilling to enter civilian full time employment. Legion research has found that working age dependants within the ex-Service community, of whom the vast majority are female, are less likely than women of same age to be in full-time work (28% vs 39%) and much more likely to be economically inactive (41% vs 28%).⁴³¹ With the barriers to work that their serving partner may experience during transition, it's vital that spouses and partners are able to successfully enter the jobs market and provide much needed income for a household adjusting to civvy-street.

8.4 As with the extension of Career Transition Partnership support to Early Service Leavers, the Legion is pleased to note that the new contract for the CTP programme starting in October will contain a pilot of enhanced support for forces' spouses:

8.5 "The new contract also provides additional elements which will initially run as two-year trials, the details of which are now being developed:

- Partner Employment Programme - designed to offer employment support for eligible Service partners, it will be run as a trial by Joint Forces Command and the Royal Air Force."⁴³²

8.6 We will be monitoring this closely and recommend that the Select Committee does likewise, as this could potentially provide significant improvements for preparing spouses for the world of work.

⁴³¹ Royal British Legion, *A UK Household Survey of the ex-Service Community*, 2014

⁴³² Ministry of Defence Press release, *MOD awards multi-million pound resettlement contract*, June 2015

9.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

9.1 Poor transition out of the Armed Forces, especially for Early Service Leavers, has inevitable knock on effects. The link between being in work and good health is well documented, as is the converse link between unemployment and poor mental and physical health. The Department of Work and Pensions commissioned 2006 report *“Is work good for your health and wellbeing?”* stated that, “there is a strong association between worklessness and poor health. This may be partly a health selection effect, but it is also to a large extent cause and effect. There is strong evidence that unemployment is generally harmful to health, including:

- higher mortality;
- poorer general health, long-standing illness, limiting longstanding illness;
- poorer mental health, psychological distress, minor psychological/psychiatric morbidity;
- higher medical consultation, medication consumption and hospital admission rates.”⁴³³

9.2 The Transition Mapping Study carried out by Forces in Mind Trust, sought to estimate the cost of poor transition out of the UK Armed forces of all ages:

9.3 “In the base line year, 2012, with 19,950 Service Leavers, the model assess the costs of poor transition as being £113.8 million. Alcohol misuse has the largest single effect, with costs of £35m, followed by mental health issues (“common neurotic disorders” together with PTSD) at £26m. Unemployment costs are £21m and family breakdown at £16m.”⁴³⁴

9.4 In addition the study goes on to list the cost of homelessness and prison, which have low incidence, but nonetheless high costs attached to individuals.

9.5 It is clear that the MOD, the single Services and the Government must do all they can to ensure that young Service leavers are as prepared as they can be for the world of work. As outlined at the beginning of this submission, many of those who exit the Armed Forces as Early Service Leavers are from poorer and less educated backgrounds, seeking an alternative to mainstream further education. There is significant risk that on leaving the Armed Forces and failing to find civilian employment, some will find themselves back at square one.

9.6 Skills and qualifications gained in Service must be more readily transferable to civilian life and, for this reason, the Legion believes that the MOD should do more to encourage Service personnel to sit GCSEs, AS and A-Level examinations in a wide range of subjects, which will stand them in good stead for future employment. For those personnel who leave Service without such qualifications, it is essential that more is done to ensure that the value of through-Service courses is better understood within the civilian sector.

9.7 The Corporate Covenant scheme, which sees employers and businesses sign a pledge to support the UK Service community, has been widely taken up by a wide range of

⁴³³ Waddell, D, Burton, A K, *Is work good for your health and wellbeing*, 2006

⁴³⁴ Forces in Mind Trust, *The Transition Mapping Study*, 2013

businesses. More should now be done to ensure that those who sign a Corporate Covenant are provided with appropriate guidance on employing and recognising the skills of ex-Service leavers.

9.8 The extension of CTP support to spouses and partners should be expanded beyond an initial pilot, with the specific needs and requirements of this group being taken into account in delivery of support. The Government and MOD must monitor how the pilot study progresses, and encourage take up by all those eligible, to ensure that it delivers on its aims.

9.9 Finally we recommend that more should be done to follow up on those who have left Service more than two years previously. It would be greatly beneficial to the understanding of the ex-Service population and the effectiveness of current support provision to know whether employment outcomes are sustainable and appropriate for the Service leaver. Currently this data is not collected.

14 September 2015

The Science Council – Written Evidence (SMO0120)

House of Lords Social Mobility Committee

Transitions from school to work for 14-24 year olds

Submission by the Science Council – September 2015

The Science Council

The Science Council is a membership organisation of learned societies and professional bodies drawn from across science and its applications. Collectively our members represent almost 500,000 individuals including scientists, teachers and senior executives in industry, academia and the public sector. There are currently 41 member organisations: a list is attached. In addition to providing a mechanism for the sector to work collectively, the Science Council develops and leads collaborative projects working with member organisations and the wider scientific community: examples include LMI analysis of the UK Science Workforce and Diversity, Equality and Inclusion.⁴³⁵

The Science Council's principal area of work is to advance the professional practice of science across the breadth of the science workforce, including non-graduate and technical roles in science. A key aspect of this is professional registration and having introduced Chartered Scientist (CSci)⁴³⁶ in 2004, the Science Council has added Chartered Science Teacher (CSciTeach), Registered Scientist (RSci) and Registered Science Technician (RSciTech).⁴³⁷ RSci and RSciTech aim to raise the profile, aspirations and retention of scientists at graduate and technician level.

The Science Council is committed to supporting a more diverse science workforce and therefore welcomes the Committee's inquiry. Fostering greater social mobility into the science professions is key to achieving a more diverse science workforce and to meet anticipated skills demands across the UK's knowledge and science-based sectors.⁴³⁸

Factors affecting young people's social mobility and employment outcomes

No single organisation or intervention can tackle the issues that constrain young people's social mobility. The complex nature of the issues requires a long-term and joined-up effort involving multiple partners.

We recognise that there are a range of factors that influence young people's transition, successful or otherwise, from school to work. The transition can be highly demanding when young people are required to make often career-defining choices, particularly at an early age when they are rarely well-informed or ready to decide on their future education, training or career options. We address some of these below. We appreciate that these will not all be unique to science.

⁴³⁵ <http://www.sciencecouncil.org/content/diversity-equality-and-inclusion>

⁴³⁶ <http://www.charteredscientist.org/>

⁴³⁷ <http://www.sciencecouncil.org/professional>

⁴³⁸ <http://www.smf.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Publication-In-The-Balance-The-STEM-human-capital-crunch.pdf>

The role of good careers guidance

Science is now ubiquitous in modern life and young people need to understand the relevance of science and mathematics to their lives and their future careers, whether or not they go on to further study in these subjects.

Research has shown that young people's career aspirations are already well developed at an early age, and that many young people and parents have a narrow view of the range of post-16 routes and where science can lead.⁴³⁹

Often accessing and assessing information or advice relies on an individual's awareness of their information needs, for example, knowing that there are many different education, training and career opportunities, and that they may not necessarily need a degree to work in science. Increasing careers awareness is not only relevant to students, it plays a role in supporting the influencing environment around individuals (teachers, parents, peer groups) and broadens the base from which they can explore a wider range of career options.⁴⁴⁰ When added to the traditional elements this gives rise to Careers Awareness, Education, Information, Advice and Guidance (CAEIAG). It is important to understand the distinct role of each element, how they fit together and to consider which bodies and individuals are appropriate to deliver each.

The Gatsby Charitable Foundation has identified 8 career guidance 'benchmarks'⁴⁴¹ that provide school leaders with a framework on which to base their careers strategy. Science Council members provide a wealth of information that supports both teachers and careers professionals to provide young people and parents with information about a wide range of science careers.⁴⁴²

Subject choices are particularly key for science, but the qualifications landscape can be hard to navigate. This has been acknowledged recently by the Business Secretary.⁴⁴³ If a poorly informed choice is made by a young person, they may find at a later stage that the qualifications they have chosen close down potential career pathways. It is often the case that young people that do not flourish in academic subjects are very often driven towards vocational qualifications and pathways within which there is little or no opportunity to change direction.⁴⁴⁴

At a time when young people are expected to make an increasing financial contribution towards their education and training, it is crucial that they are able to access accurate information, advice and guidance to inform their choices.

Science capital and young people's perceptions of science

There has been much work undertaken to explore what influences the likelihood of a young person aspiring to a science-related career. The Aspires Project,⁴⁴⁵ a longitudinal study looking at young people's aspirations and education outcomes, identified the concept of

⁴³⁹ Archer et al, "Doing science versus being a scientist: examining 10/11 year old schoolchildren's constructions of science through the lens of identity", *Science Education*, 94 (2010), 617-639.

⁴⁴⁰ <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20121205091100/http://scienceandsociety.bis.gov.uk/careers/files/2010/03/bis-r9199-urn10-767-faw.pdf>

⁴⁴¹ <http://www.gatsby.org.uk/uploads/education/reports/pdf/gatsby-sir-john-holman-good-career-guidance-2014.pdf>

⁴⁴² <http://www.futuremorph.org/>

⁴⁴³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/fixing-the-foundations-boosting-britains-productivity>

⁴⁴⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/180504/DFE-00031-2011.pdf

⁴⁴⁵ <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/education/research/aspires/ASPIRES-final-report-December-2013.pdf>

'science capital' as a key factor affecting the likelihood of a student aspiring to study science beyond 14 and pursue a science-related career.

Science capital refers to a young person's science-related qualifications, understanding, knowledge about science and 'how it works', interest and social contacts. The research found that science capital is unevenly spread across social groups, with those from middle-class backgrounds tending to have higher levels of science capital, and are therefore more likely to aspire to science and STEM-related careers.

Other key factors in young people's take-up and continuation of science subjects are home support, good teaching and a long-term relationship with an adult (often a teacher or family member) who believes that the subject is of value and that the student can succeed in the subject.⁴⁴⁶

Other research has shown that the perceived image of science and scientists is a barrier to many young people's aspiration to pursue a science-related career. Whilst many young people enjoy science they cannot visualise themselves working in science in part because they do not consider themselves as being among the 'brainiest' in the class, and are therefore unlikely to see science careers as achievable, even if they find science interesting and attain well in the subject.⁴⁴⁷ This will be particularly the case for young people that do not have the connections to exploit opportunities.

Work-experience placements can provide a valuable insight to the world of work as well as raising awareness of the range of roles undertaken within any sector. Yet it can be hard for schools to source science placements and too often are reliant on a personal contact which disadvantages those lacking in social capital. Expanding the breadth of role models in science beyond traditional academic, research and HE can help to illustrate the wide range of exciting careers in science.⁴⁴⁸

The inclusion of practical work is a key component of attracting young people into science and is particularly important for those learners who may consider a future working in science.⁴⁴⁹ We have previously expressed concerns that the removal of practical assessment in science in schools may have the consequence of turning many young people off science. Without the opportunities to experience hands-on science, young people will not be able to visualise themselves in a science career.

The Science Council calls for Ofqual to undertake regular reviews of the impact of the changes to practical assessment in science to identify what effect reforms are having on student uptake of science at school; the impact on recruitment of science teachers and their enthusiasm for science; and the long-term impact on the availability of practical and technical skills in the workforce.

Geographical barriers

There is a strong geographical bias for some qualifications with many vocational qualifications remaining sector and employer specific. Most young people now appreciate that they are unlikely to have a single employer and that their employment and career is

⁴⁴⁶ <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/my-esrc/grants/RES-179-25-0013/read/keyfindings>

⁴⁴⁷ Important but not for me, Jenkins and Nelson 2005 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02635140500068435>

⁴⁴⁸ <http://www.sciencecouncil.org/content/role-models-and-case-studies-report>

⁴⁴⁹ http://www.wellcome.ac.uk/stellent/groups/corporatesite/@msh_peda/documents/web_document/wtvm052732.pdf

likely to involve several changes during their lifetime. The aforementioned bias is potentially a barrier to transferability and mobility as it presents difficulties for the quality control, consistency and equivalence of qualifications.

Further Education Colleges play a large part in successfully delivering vocational education courses for students who prefer college settings over school settings. Delivery often relies on local rather than national provision, and often on relationships between local industries, universities and other education providers. It can also be costly to deliver as it often requires specialist facilities and a critical mass of learners to make courses viable. Yet in some coastal and rural areas, for example, there is a shortage of provision of science qualifications in FE, in part because of lack of local university or large research or innovation-driven employers.

Financial barriers

The increasing cost of living away from home impedes many young people's ability to take on opportunities in other parts of the country. We have heard from employers of instances where apprentices have only been able to relocate to take up a position with financial support of parents, but this is likely to be the exception rather than the norm.

Young people with caring responsibilities are unlikely to have the resources or desire to move cities or regions to take up opportunities. They should not be penalised for this, and should be given greater support to enable them to continue or re-start their education.

Free schools and academy schools

We note that free schools and academies are not required to follow the national curriculum, nor, for example are they required to appoint qualified teachers. While it is probably too early to judge the performance of many new free schools and academies, and their impact on the science workforce, we are keen to ensure that all young people have access to high-quality and inspiring science education. **The Science Council would welcome a review of the provision and quality of science and mathematics education in free schools.**

Support and challenges facing young people's successful transition into the workplace

Science A-levels and higher education courses play a valuable role in educating and training a highly-skilled UK science workforce, but we recognise that it is not possible for a single qualification route to adequately satisfy the needs of all stakeholders. However, much of the policy focus and investment in the science workforce has hitherto been in the graduate workforce, with little recognition that not every science-based job is a graduate job.

The Science Council has welcomed the government's recent focus on apprenticeships and vocational education in an attempt to raise their profile and status, but there remains an urgent need to address wider issues of the perception, take up and quality assurance of non-graduate pathways, particularly apprenticeships.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁵⁰ Science Council response to BIS consultation on protecting the term apprenticeship in law
http://www.sciencecouncil.org/sites/default/files/apprenticeship%20protection%20in%20law_final_0.pdf

Improving the apprenticeship ‘brand’

For many the term ‘apprenticeship’ has become a generic term for non-university based continued learning and training, but the tendency to perceive the choice as simply ‘graduate’ or ‘apprentice’ routes is unhelpful and does not promote the distinctive value of vocational qualifications.

The lack of availability of appropriate vocational and practical qualifications has given rise to employers’ lack of confidence in these qualifications.⁴⁵¹ It remains much easier for science-based employers to recruit into technician-level roles graduates with qualifications that they recognise and understand but where the learner has taken on the costs of their education. This in turn fuels concerns about the validity and value of some science qualifications particularly for those who achieve lower grades in STEM and does not help to develop a greater understanding of non-graduate routes to science careers.

The Science Council calls on the government to review, with professional bodies, industry and employment sectors the provision and range of vocational science qualifications to develop better non-graduate vocation pathways into science.

Increasing the number of high-quality science apprenticeships

There is a widely held perception that in order to become a scientist, gaining a degree is the only possible option. In the past, other routes have also been valid and many senior practising scientists have progressed from apprenticeships and experience-based routes. However, this route is relatively rare in today’s science industries where the practice of science is increasingly more complex and multi-disciplinary and the apprentice route hardly exists for entry to science careers.⁴⁵²

It has been shown that while parents see an apprenticeship as a good route to employment, few would consider it the right route for their child.⁴⁵³ To be attractive to employers and aspirational for young people, apprenticeships must lead to a clear and identifiable achievement at completion; they should go beyond a job with a particular employer, to entry into a recognisable occupation or a profession that would also give status and mobility to the completing apprentice.⁷ This is a key aspect of the German system and one that would be well worth emulating in the UK.

It is essential that apprenticeship standards directly link to professional registration requirements in sectors where they exist to support young people’s career progression. The Science Council has built progression and transferability into its professional registers to provide a clear route from technician level through to Chartered status.⁴⁵⁴

Evidence from the engineering sector indicates that professional registration leads to increased average earnings and lower levels of unemployment.⁴⁵⁵ The Science Council’s research also shows that average science wages are generally higher than the average wage across the whole economy.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵¹ <http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/2807987/gateway-to-growth.pdf>

⁴⁵² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>

⁴⁵³ <http://www.edge.co.uk/news/2014/november/practical-qualifications-better-for-employability>

⁴⁵⁴ <http://www.sciencecouncil.org/professional>

⁴⁵⁵ [https://www.jstructe.org/news-articles/2014/industry-news/engineering-council-survey-2013-\(1\)?feed=Latest-News-Features](https://www.jstructe.org/news-articles/2014/industry-news/engineering-council-survey-2013-(1)?feed=Latest-News-Features)

⁴⁵⁶ <http://www.sciencecouncil.org/content/science-workforce>

Increasing the number of high-quality science traineeships

Many young people will not be ready to take up an apprenticeship because they will lack the necessary English, Maths or lab-skills demanded of employers. Increasing the number of science traineeships⁴⁵⁷ can provide young people with the opportunity to gain essential core practical skills and experience of working in science before they decide to progress further with their education.

No clear pathway exists for those wanting to progress from a non-science-based career to a science-based career. Widening access to traineeships in science would give many young people the opportunity to gain the necessary experience and preparation in a technically-focused occupation before taking up an apprenticeship or further education options. **The Science Council calls on the government to consider tax breaks for companies that employ science traineeships in order to stimulate employment. The government has adopted a similar approach with regard to apprenticeships, whereby employers do not pay National Insurance contributions for apprentices under 25 years of age.**⁴⁵⁸

Improving young people's transition from school to work

As science and the practice of science becomes increasingly multi-disciplinary and important across all sectors of the UK economy and society, it is crucial that we understand more about where and how science skills are currently used in the economy as well as how this is likely to change in the future. Hitherto, it has been the case that most labour market information and surveys classify by core science discipline, education level or employment sectors.

We agree that there is a need to develop more accessible, consistent and comprehensive labour market information (LMI) on the demand for science-skilled workforce for careers AEIAG stakeholders and users. The Science Council has devoted significant energies to showcase the many different ways professional scientists contribute to UK society and the economy to illustrate the wide range of possible careers in science, and challenge the widely held perception that in order to become a scientist, gaining a degree is the only possible option.⁴⁵⁹

Used appropriately, more accessible, consistent and comprehensive LMI will help careers AEIAG stakeholders and users to gain a deeper understanding of the wide range of science-related careers available to them and the qualifications and training required to access these careers.

It is essential that resources are provided to support early careers intervention work that helps to increase the diversity of the pool of young people choosing to pursue science, particularly in relation to gender, ethnicity and socio-economic background. The government's desire to grant schools and colleges greater freedom to set policies appropriate to their local needs must also be balanced with adequate guidance and support, particularly funding support.

We recognise that employers are key stakeholders in facilitating young people's social mobility. The government's employer-led Trailblazer programme, with which the Science Council and several members have been engaged, has provided employers with the

⁴⁵⁷ <http://www.scienceindustrypartnership.com/traineeships/>

⁴⁵⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/385150/TIIN_2143.pdf

⁴⁵⁹ <http://www.sciencecouncil.org/UK-science-workforce>

opportunity to take ownership of developing high-quality apprenticeship routes. However, there has been low engagement among smaller businesses due to the resource and time-intensive nature of the programme; this has led to larger companies dominating the direction and design of the programme.⁴⁶⁰

We acknowledge that the Trailblazer scheme is due to end in 2017. However, the Science Council calls on government to find appropriate mechanisms to enable smaller businesses to engage with the programme now so that they remain at the heart of developing high-quality apprenticeships in the long-term.

When the Trailblazer scheme concludes in 2017, professional bodies in science are in a position to ensure apprenticeship standards in science remain relevant. They are independent and have a well-established track record for providing a link to professional standards. Professional body approval of training provision will also help employers identify quality.

At the time of writing the government is consulting on its proposed apprenticeship levy. While details are yet to be confirmed we hope that employers will better engage with apprenticeships as they will have a financial investment in the scheme.

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

Improving young people's social mobility cannot be solved by a single or small group of organisations. A range of stakeholders should assume joint responsibility for improving young people's social mobility. This includes but is not exclusive to government, schools and further education colleges, higher education institutions, local authorities, public and private sector employers, civil society bodies and professional bodies. The government can act as a broker to facilitate collaborative partnerships between different organisations.

Science Council members continue to support the Social Mobility Foundation's Aspiring Professionals programme⁴⁶¹.

The Science Council has been working in collaboration with a wide range of organisations on its Diversity, Equality and Inclusion project, including government, education, professional and learned bodies and civil society to raise the profile of the importance of diversity and develop effective action that will deliver positive change and a more diverse science workforce.

We echo the sentiments of the Gatsby Charitable Foundation that professional bodies must play a major role in supporting young people's social mobility. Professional bodies have a well-established track record for supporting young people into the professions and providing a link to professional standards; many professional bodies also have experience of providing support and recognition for non-traditional routes into science.

Other examples of our members' activities to enhance social mobility include:

- An Institute of Physics three-year pilot project to investigate the barriers that prevent young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds choosing to take physics post-16⁴⁶²

⁴⁶⁰ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmeduc/597/597.pdf>

⁴⁶¹ http://www.iop.org/careers/i-am-an-employer/iop-social-mobility-foundation/page_62309.html

- The Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining offer travel grants to help younger members, those under 35, to attend international conferences.⁴⁶³
- The British Academy of Audiology provide a higher training scheme open to all registered members, regardless of academic background. This includes training modules that are fulfilled either during work or in the participants own time⁴⁶⁴

Oliver O'Hanlon

Policy and Public Affairs Manager

Member Organisations of the Science Council

September 2015

Association for Clinical Biochemistry and Laboratory Medicine

Association of Neurophysiological Scientists

Association for Science Education

British Academy of Audiology

British Association of Sport and Exercise Science

British Computer Society

British Psychological Society

British Society of Soil Scientists

Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management

College of Podiatry

Energy Institute

Geological Society of London

Institute of Biomedical Science

Institute of Brewing and Distilling

Institute of Corrosion

Institute of Food Science and Technology

Institute of Marine Engineering, Science and Technology

Institute of Materials, Minerals and Mining

Institute of Mathematics and its Applications

⁴⁶² http://www.iop.org/publications/iop/2014/file_64460.pdf

⁴⁶³ <http://www.iom3.org/scholarships-grants-and-bursaries>

⁴⁶⁴ <http://www.baaudiology.org/hts/#.VfLNoRH2Dcs>

Institute of Measurement and Control
Institute of Physics and Engineering in Medicine
Institute of Physics
Institute of Science and Technology
Institute of Water
Institution of Chemical Engineers
Institution of Environmental Sciences
London Mathematical Society
Mineralogical Society
Nuclear Institute
Oil and Colour Chemists' Association
Operational Research Society
Physiological Society
Royal Astronomical Society
Royal Meteorological Society
Royal Society of Chemistry
Royal Statistical Society
Society for Cardiological Science and Technology
Society for General Microbiology
Society of Biology
Society of Dyers & Colourists
The Organisation for Professionals in Regulatory Affairs

24 September 2015

Trades Union Congress (TUC) – Written evidence (SMO0104)

Written evidence submitted by the Trades Union Congress (TUC)

14 September 2015

The TUC is the umbrella body for 54 affiliated trade unions representing 6.2 million workers in Britain.

Helping young people into work is an important issue for trade union members and their families. Young people are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and trade union representatives have a strong track record in supporting Apprentices to make the transition into secure employment. The TUC is committed to ensuring that young people have access to high quality learning and skills opportunities which lead to secure, sustainable, fairly paid employment.

Unionlearn, the learning and services arm of the TUC, has played an important role, supporting union representatives to promote and negotiate high quality learning opportunities for young people, particularly those who are underrepresented in the labour market. Where unions are recognised they are able to negotiate learning agreements which solidifies a commitment from the both the employer and the union to support young people in the workplace.

Unionlearn has published charters of best practice on both Traineeships⁴⁶⁵ and Apprenticeships⁴⁶⁶, as well as guidance on the components of high quality work experience⁴⁶⁷.

This submission contains the TUC's key comments and concerns on the policies/factors/cultural influences that affect the social mobility of young people as they make the transition between school and work. Much of the submission is focussed on improvements that could be made to the Apprenticeship system to improve social mobility. (We have already sent the Committee our 2014 pamphlet, *Dismantling the Barriers to Social Mobility*). Our submission aims to be concise and provide key statistics. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further with the committee.

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Insufficient Apprenticeship places for young people

Demand for apprenticeships from young people far outstrips supply. According to the National Apprenticeship Service, more than 1.4 million online applicants competed for 129,000 vacancies posted online in the last year, up 32% on the previous year. This represents an average of 11 applicants per apprenticeship. In some job areas young people were competing with over 30 applicants for every place⁴⁶⁸.

⁴⁶⁵ http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/sites/default/files/charter%20for%20traineeships_0.pdf

⁴⁶⁶ <http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/campaigns/apprenticeships/charter-apprenticeships>

⁴⁶⁷ <http://www.tuc.org.uk/workplace-issues/learning-and-training/work-experience-placements-guidance-union-reps>

⁴⁶⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-23894902>, "Online applications for apprenticeships up by a third"

Only 15% of employers now offer apprenticeships⁴⁶⁹. While this is up from 13% in 2012, it is still very low compared to many other European countries, for example Germany and Switzerland where 50-60% of employers offer Apprenticeships⁴⁷⁰.

The introduction of the Apprenticeship levy may play an important role in increasing the number of Apprenticeship opportunities.

Work needs to be done to better promote apprenticeships and encourage employers to create new Apprenticeship opportunities, enabling young people increased opportunities to start an Apprenticeship.

Age profile of Apprentices

45% of all Apprenticeships are achieved by those aged 25+⁴⁷¹.

BIS has reported that 64% of level 2 and 3 apprentices already worked for their employer before starting their Apprenticeships.

The combination of these factors is indicative of the fact that there are not enough Apprenticeship opportunities being made available for **young people** who are **unemployed**.

Further work should be undertaken to incentivise employers to create new Apprenticeship opportunities for young people. The TUC is calling for the cost ceiling being introduced by the levy to be raised where an employer considers taking on a young apprentice.

Under representation in Apprenticeships

Ethnic minorities are under-represented in some Apprenticeship sectors, including engineering and construction, and over-represented in others such as leisure, travel and tourism, and public services.

Jeremy Crook, chair of the BIS Apprenticeships Advisory Group (on equality) has highlighted that the proportion of ethnic minority people who apply for an Apprenticeship is far higher than the proportion that start one⁴⁷². In 2011/12, around 25 per cent of applications made via the central Apprenticeship Vacancies system were from ethnic minority people but only 10 per cent of the starts in that year were by ethnic minorities.

Both these statistics are alarming and suggest drastic changes are needed to address the barriers that are preventing these groups from converting applications to actually starting an Apprenticeship.

Before this problem can be adequately addressed reforms need to be made to the collection and monitoring of data relating to Apprentices. For example, as far as the TUC is aware, there is no specific data recorded on the number of disabled Apprentices (only those “with a learning difficulty/disability” are recorded). Again, as far as the TUC is aware, there

⁴⁶⁹ <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/APPRENTICESHIPS.pdf> - “Real Apprenticeships, Creating a Revolution in English Skills, October 2013

⁴⁷⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/404997/15.02.18_Youth_report_V17.pdf, Catch 16-24, UKCES Report, February 2015

⁴⁷¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/296382/apprenticeship-achievements-by-geography-level-and-age.xlsx

⁴⁷² <http://www.bteq.co.uk/content/time-employers-and-government-end-equality-opportunity-deficit-ethnic-minorities>

is no data relating to other protected characteristics such as a young person's sexual orientation. These young workers may face higher levels of prejudice and harassment than heterosexual colleagues. Before underrepresented young workers can be offered the support they may need, it is necessary to understand the scale of under representation in Apprenticeships amongst groups with protected characteristics.

There are also a number of practical reforms which could be considered such as improving careers guidance, amending recruitment practices and providing further childcare support for parents that are undertaking Apprenticeships. Apprentices are not eligible to receive free childcare funding under the Care 2 Learn scheme, which other FE students can benefit from. This obviously has a disproportionate affect on young women, single parents and may prevent these young people from embarking on the Apprenticeship route.

Young people not sufficiently represented within the Apprenticeship system

Recent apprenticeship reforms have seen employers being put "in the driving seat". Entirely employer-led design risks leading to narrow training that meets the needs of employers, but not those of young people, or perhaps the wider sector. As the manufacturers' organisation the EEF said in a submission to the Labour Skills Taskforce, "it is important for [employers] to work closely with unions, colleges and quality training providers to ensure that the partnership works for both the employer and the learner".

In other countries employee representatives have ensured that apprenticeships are broad qualifications that include the underpinning academic subjects that enable learners to gain broad theoretical understanding and also underpin mobility and progression in the labour market. Apprenticeship training should provide the grounding for a career, not just an entry level job. Trade unions and professional bodies should therefore also have greater involvement in apprenticeship design, working alongside employers to develop a smaller number of apprenticeship frameworks of higher quality.⁴⁷³

Apprenticeship reforms should ensure that trade unions and young workers are properly represented throughout the governance structures. Only then will young apprentices be able to effectively highlight improvements that can make the Apprenticeship programme accessible to all.

Gender segregation

Only 1% and 3% of Apprenticeship starts were by women (aged under 19) in construction and engineering, respectively⁴⁷⁴.

Whilst the ratio of male/female apprentices is balanced, many young women are working in sectors synonymous with low pay and do not have as much opportunity to progress through Apprenticeship frameworks. Careers guidance should be reformed to ensure it can play the vital role of ensuring that young women are made aware of Apprenticeships and encouraged to undertake Apprenticeships in well paid sectors. This would have an important impact on improving the life chances of young women.

⁴⁷³ EEF Submission to Labour Skills Taskforce on Apprenticeships, page 5,

http://www.yourbritain.org.uk/uploads/editor/files/Skills_taskforce_-_apprenticeships.pdf

⁴⁷⁴ <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/education-committee/apprenticeships-and-traineeships-for-16-to-19-year-olds/written/15592.pdf>

Apprenticeship Pay

The recent BIS Apprenticeship pay survey⁴⁷⁵ depressingly revealed that one in seven Apprentices are still paid below the meagre Apprentice National Minimum Wage rate. Women and young people were disproportionately adversely affected.

- The Apprenticeship Pay Survey 2014⁴⁷⁶ indicates that 24 per cent of apprentices aged 16 to 18 and learning at levels two and three were paid less than the apprentice minimum wage, which was £2.68 an-hour at the time of the survey.
- Non-compliant pay was more common among apprentices in hairdressing (42 per cent), children’s care (26 per cent) and construction (26 per cent).

As the NUS have recently pointed out in *Progress*⁴⁷⁷, the effects of low Apprenticeship pay will be most keenly felt by the poorest students and their families. Some families will lose their child benefit payment and child tax credit when their son or daughter starts an Apprenticeship. These apprentices will face the double whammy of low pay and loss of some of their family’s financial benefits.

There should be an increased rate of pay for Apprentices and targeted enforcement of the Apprentice National Minimum Wage. An apprenticeship system which fairly remunerates apprentices will be more accessible to young people.

Duration of Apprenticeships

The duration of an Apprenticeship is also an indicator of quality and arguably longer apprenticeships would enable a young person to develop a wider range of transferable skills, enabling greater mobility between jobs within a particular sector. Narrow apprenticeships may restrict an apprentice to working in a particular job role. The “Expansive Apprenticeships” model,⁴⁷⁸ which the TUC supports, recommends apprenticeships which are longer in duration and that support the Apprentice to develop a wide set of transferable skills. Longer apprenticeships also underline an employer’s commitment to offer ongoing training and support to the Apprentice.

Evidence from BIS highlights that 21%⁴⁷⁹ of 16-18 year olds complete their apprenticeship in less than one year⁴⁸⁰.

The TUC believes that in many occupations Apprenticeships should last considerably longer than the minimum one year duration, as is often the case with highly regarded Apprenticeships in parts of the engineering and ICT sectors. Professor Steedman notes that “in all apprenticeship countries except Australia and England most apprenticeship

⁴⁷⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387319/bis-14-1281-apprenticeship-pay-survey-2014.pdf

⁴⁷⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/387319/bis-14-1281-apprenticeship-pay-survey-2014.pdf

⁴⁷⁷ <http://www.progressonline.org.uk/magazines/march-2015/>

⁴⁷⁸ <http://www.tlrp.org/pub/documents/apprenticeshipcommentaryFINAL.pdf>

⁴⁷⁹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-reforms-equality-impact-assessment-table1>, page 13

⁴⁸⁰ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/357005/Bis-14-970-Reformed-apprenticeships-equality-impact-assessments1.pdf

programmes take three years to complete or, in the case of Ireland, four years”⁴⁸¹. In England the average for all apprenticeships is between one and two years and too many are simply adopting the new minimum duration as their standard. Apprenticeships should last a minimum of two years, to be phased in through discussion between employers, unions and other stakeholders. This would enable apprentices to develop a range of skills to help them progress through the labour market.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

No comment

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

As far as the TUC is aware, data on employment outcomes is not currently captured by BIS statistics relating to Apprenticeships. Efforts are being made to capture this data going forward.

As flagged up by this recent report from the House of Commons Education Committee⁴⁸² further work needs to be done to collect Apprenticeship data around future earnings potential and employability outcomes, before a proper comparison/assessment can be made.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Careers guidance

According to the latest “Sector Subject Area” statistics released by BIS⁴⁸³, the provisional figures from 2013/2014 highlight that there were 151,800 programme starts in Business Administration and Law, and Retail and Commercial Enterprise Apprenticeships. This is 48% of the total Apprenticeship starts.

⁴⁸¹ Steedman H (2010) *The State of Apprenticeship 2010: International Comparisons - Australia, Austria, England, France, Germany, Ireland, Sweden, Switzerland*. A Report for the Apprenticeship Ambassadors Network, London: Centre for Economic Performance, LSE

⁴⁸² <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmeduc/597/597.pdf>, paragraphs 41-49

⁴⁸³ Apprenticeship Programme Starts by Sector Subject Area (2002/03 to 2013/14 in-year estimates), <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships--2>

The key findings from a recent UKCES report⁴⁸⁴ looking at likely employment trends in different sectors and occupations reveal “that many administrative, clerical and secretarial jobs are expected to disappear”. The findings relating to the retail sector acknowledge that this sector is unlikely to experience employment growth. The key point here is that Apprenticeship starts do not sufficiently align to the gaps which are likely to emerge in the labour market, meaning there is a real risk that the aspirations of young people and needs of employers will fail to be met, over the next decade.

Careers guidance provision for young people needs to be significantly improved. Results from a recent TUC questionnaire (sample size of around 450 young people) show that around 40% of young people are not receiving any information about Apprenticeships.

A recent OFSTED report⁴⁸⁵ into careers provision stated that the statutory duty for schools to provide careers guidance was not working well and that the National Careers Service does not focus sufficiently on supporting young people up to the age of 18.

The TUC has worked with the NUS and UNISON to develop a charter for careers guidance which we would be happy to share with the committee.

Apprenticeships will always be viewed as university’s poor relation until careers guidance improves. If young people are unaware of the different career routes open to them, the chances of progressing through the labour market are diminished.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

The government is responsible for ensuring that the Apprenticeship system provides high quality opportunities to all young people, especially those from underrepresented groups. The TUC is supportive of the Apprenticeship levy and the proposal to make it an offence to misuse the term apprenticeship, in relation to poor quality provision. However the TUC would like to see the emphasis placed on quality of provision and this should be given equal priority to the policy objective of achieving 3 million apprenticeship starts during the current Parliament. There are concerns that a relentless drive to achieving a target of 3 million apprenticeships could see important concerns around quality and social mobility overlooked.

In addition to the key points made above, the TUC submitted a response to the House of Commons Education Select Committee inquiry into Apprenticeships and Traineeships⁴⁸⁶. The committee may find this useful for reference.

15 September 2015

⁴⁸⁴ UKCES, Working Futures 2012-2022, Evidence Report 83, March 2014, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/298510/working-futures-2012-2022-main-report.pdf

⁴⁸⁵ “Going in the Right Direction?”, Careers guidance in schools from 2012, <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/surveys-and-good-practice/g/Going%20in%20the%20right%20direction.pdf>

⁴⁸⁶ <http://data.parliament.uk/WrittenEvidence/CommitteeEvidence.svc/EvidenceDocument/Education/Apprenticeships%20and%20traineeships%20for%2016%20to%2019%20year%20olds/written/13468.html>

Professional bodies

Access to the Professions – Written evidence (SMO0124)

Evidence for the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility - from 'Access to the Professions'

The role of Professional Bodies - Social Mobility in the Transition from School to Work

Access to the Professions, comprises professional bodies who are determined to make a difference and widen access to the professions, especially for young people who are disadvantaged and who do not know adults through their social and family networks with careers in the professions.

We welcome the opportunity to give evidence and to support the inquiry being led by the House of Lords Select Committee on social mobility, and we very much welcome the emphasis being given on the transition from school to work.

A profession typically has specialised educational training and qualification of formal or mandatory study, and usually requires a person actively engaged to be a member of a professional body, often with some regulation upholding standards. The professions offer varied and interesting careers options for young people. However, often more disadvantaged young people are less likely to be in these relatively high-status and well-paid areas of employment.

Across the labour market there is an expansion in the professions and an increased demand for high skilled workers, technicians and managers, and moreover often there are skills shortages and hard-to-fill vacancies in the professions. The UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) predicts that by 2022 there will be an additional two million jobs in professional and managerial occupations. Additionally these are expected to increase their share of total employment from 42% to 46% (UKCES, 2012, p.26). Historically, lower socio-economic groups are under underrepresented in professional careers and this urgently needs addressing. Young people who do not have a role model of anyone working in the professions within their family or extended network need more support in the transition from school into further education, apprenticeships linked to professional bodies, or university courses that lead to careers in the professions. The transitions from school to work must include a strong focus on the vital role of Further Education and the routes that colleges offer to careers in the professions.

There is a changing landscape, however, and much of this is encouraging; not least that a focus on the need to increase the amount of help to widen access to the professions is being given a higher profile. Key positive developments are characterised by growing opportunities for young people to enter the professions through different vocational courses in Further Education Colleges and on-the-job professional training routes, including apprenticeships. More professional bodies, spurred by organisations like Access to the Professions, plus a number of government committees working on fair access - including the influential Panel on access to the professions led by Alan Milburn MP - are making a difference, as well as some employers becoming more keen to attract young people from across a diverse range of backgrounds in order to increase their own talent pool. Some charities are offering mentoring and speakers on careers to young people about the world of work, including the professions. Widening access to the professions for more disadvantaged young people makes moral and economic sense, and is key to social mobility.

The most negative and deteriorating position in relation to transitions from school to work and social mobility is the persistent lack of independent and impartial careers guidance for young people. This is compounded by a lack of consistent and fair access to work shadowing and mentoring opportunities linked to professional careers that reach disadvantaged young people in our rural and coastal communities, as well as those in deprived inner-city areas. The expectation that 16 to 18 year olds on the Study Programme will each have some direct work experience is far from being fully realised, and we understand analysis would show a pretty parlous picture if actual work experience relating to careers in the professions for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds was quantified.

Access to the Professions recommends that:

- **Impartial careers advice and guidance at no cost at the point of use is an entitlement for all young people, whatever their background. This is essential in order to enable each young person to make informed choices about careers, including careers in the professions, and government should invest in careers advice services – this is in the public interest and the proper role of government**
- **Schools are not the right body to be responsible for careers advice. The evidence from Ofsted and others is overwhelmingly clear that schools fail to be well informed, systematic and complete in giving careers guidance, and moreover they are partial and promote their own school A level provision. Schools rarely give good, if any, advice on apprenticeships. Neither do schools explain options for vocational and academic study in Further Education colleges effectively, or at all. The statutory responsibility on schools to give careers advice should be reviewed, and guidance should set out a clear expectation that schools must commission independent careers services**
- **Careers advisers are a well respected and recognised Profession; the Careers Development Institute (CDI) is important here for helping to ensure and uphold high professional standards for independent careers advice**
- **Professional bodies continue to connect closely with young people and their advisers, and that they each make an explicit commitment to widening access to their own profession so that young people, whatever their background, are informed, and then if interested they are welcomed and supported to become a qualified professional**
- **The Inquiry gives strong attention to the crucial role of properly funded Further Education as a vital pathway for disadvantaged young people into vocational and professional careers. Increased funding is needed for a national programme of real-life work experience opportunities for young people, not reductions in government investment in young people studying and training in further education**
- **The partnerships between professional bodies and Further Education Colleges, schools and with careers advisers continues to be strengthened, with funds made available to support such collaborations in order to widen access for careers in the professions.**

We think that the Select Committee Inquiry members may be interested in the Access to the Professions' recently commissioned independent research conducted in 2014 which focused on young people and their parents/guardians' awareness, aspirations, expectations and

perceptions of life as a professional. This provides a very rich set of data from which Access to the Professions has been able to draw some useful conclusions. The report brings together key findings from the research with discussion areas and recommendations for government, employers, professional bodies and educators that will help ensure that the opportunities, available through labour market shifts, can be taken advantage of by young people in the UK.

In summer 2014, Access to the Professions surveyed 2,448 14-24 year olds and parents and found that while perceptions of moving towards and having a career as a professional are generally positive, levels of awareness could be higher; most young people did not know someone from each of the 25 professions we asked about.

Where aspirations are low this is due to lack of information, not negative perceptions of careers in the professions. Those from lower socio-economic groups had statistically significantly lower awareness, aspirations and expectations. This may not be surprising, but it remains a serious concern.

The similarity of each parent's views to their own child's highlights the importance of helping parents as well as their children find information on careers. There is a need for national coordination to enable professional bodies to support schools and colleges provide accurate and up-to-date information on professional careers. Parents also need clearer signposting to information online.

It is woeful that:

- there were statistically significant differences in aspiration and expectation by gender, these were stronger amongst parents for their children than amongst the children themselves (these differences while small were notable)
- 14-24 year olds from lower socio-economic groups had statistically significantly lower awareness, aspirations and expectations of becoming a professional and were less likely to think that more support would make a positive difference.

Other key findings of the research include:

- Between a fifth to over a third of 14-18 year olds, 19-24 year olds and parents thought that they/ their child would be more likely to be able to become a professional with more support (except for construction)
- 45% of 14-24 year olds from lower socio-economic groups thought they would probably go to university, in contrast to 83% of their higher socio-economic counterparts
- Only 46% of 14-18 year olds had a careers advice conversation in the last 12 months which they considered useful (similar to the previous year), in contrast to only 31% of 19-24 year olds
- 86% of parents had given their child careers advice, although parents from lower socio-economic groups were slightly less likely to have done so
- The most common reason by parents for not giving careers advice was that they didn't know enough (60%)
- Perceptions of life as a professional were generally positive (typically a fifth to a third of each group were neutral and minority expressed more negative views)
- The weight of perception tended towards life as a professional being exciting, offering freedom how and when you do your tasks, greater earnings, more

opportunity for flexible working but at the price of longer working hours.

See the Access to the Professions full 2014 research report here -

<http://www.accesstotheprofessions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Final-PW-Research-Report-2014-WEB-93897.pdf>

In 2013, in our Access to the Professions independently conducted research survey, we explored awareness of different professions and the possible routes into them and surveyed 1,200 14-19 year olds from middle and lower socio-economic groups.

The key findings included:

- Typically, around half have a rough idea what each occupation does, but there are a lot of misperceptions
- Careers advice is far too limited, and significant proportions of young people feel they do not have and have not had a meaningful conversation about careers
- Young people were less certain particularly about what a patent attorney and civil engineer does, but also about what an investment manager or adviser, executive coach, structural engineer or a payroll, pensions, tax or public relations professional does
- 64 per cent thought they would probably go to university, and 11 per cent cited cost or qualifications as a barrier (socio- economic status is not a factor, though age is).
- While half thought they could join through hard work, just over a fifth thought that only the best can join, and half thought they would be a member of a professional community
- Between eight and nine 14 to 19-year-olds out of 10 have heard of the professional areas we asked about, and there are no significant differences in awareness by age or by socio-economic group
- Respondents generally thought it was unlikely that they could become a professional in the areas we asked about, especially financial and legal (and then construction and engineering). The reason given is often because they do not know or have a narrow perception of what a professional does.

The responses relating to if they think that they can become a professional are all self-reported perceptions and it is clear that some 14-19-year-olds' decisions are based on flawed or narrow perceptions of professional life. This is typified by one 14-year-old female's reason for not being able to become a legal professional: "I wouldn't like to stick up for a guilty person who then doesn't go to jail". One 15-year-old male could not entertain the possibility of a financial career because it is "too boring pushing numbers around a spreadsheet, it is something my dad would do".

Lacking the right qualifications was a common reason given, typically based on the notion that they would not be doing the right degree. A 19-year-old female thought that to be a business professional you "need to do a related degree – I am doing a science degree". An 18-year-old male noted that he had the "wrong A levels and degree" for a professional legal career.

Sometimes professional areas were ruled out as too difficult or not worth the time and effort required for the perceived result. One 17-year-old female explained that to become a professional engineer it would "be too difficult to learn and very, very time-consuming". One 14-year-old male could not see himself as a financial professional because "I have not got the best brain when it comes to maths and particularly quick maths". This assumed logic was echoed by a 14-year-old female: "maths is not my strongest subject at school so this virtually rules this out". A 15-year-old male would not go into engineering because he was

”not clever enough”.

Occasionally, professional areas were discounted because of sheer lack of awareness. An 18-year-old male stated, ”I hardly know anything about that career path” for communications. A professional career in business was discounted by a 15-year-old female simply ”because I’ve never thought about it”. From some of the explanations given, it seems that the gaps in knowledge are partially filled with stereotypical ideas, sometimes from television. For example, one 17-year-old female explained, ”Having watched The Apprentice and taken part in planning of business enterprises the career has not appealed to me.” Another just said, ”I have watched The Apprentice and don’t think business is for me.” Work experience and related college courses can also turn potential entrants away. One 16-year-old male ”had work experience at an accountants and didn’t enjoy the work I was given there”. A 19-year-old female explained that she ”hated business in school”.

Other key findings included:

- In terms of interest in working in any of these professions, being an accountant, journalist, manager or director, further education teacher, or marketing professional were more popular. Executive coach, tax adviser, investment manager or adviser, payroll professional, pensions adviser, patent attorney were less so, and around a fifth would prefer to do something else.
- While over half thought a career in the professions is exciting, only 10 per cent thought that it is dull, even though slightly more thought it is about paperwork than people.
- Three-quarters thought they would need at least a university degree to join the legal profession and around half that they would need a degree to become a learning and development, financial or construction (surveyor or architect) professional. Typically, over half thought they could train and qualify as a trainee, though (except for engineering) between nearly a quarter and over a third thought they would have to study in their own time, with no training available at work.
- 60 per cent thought that a career in the professions opens possibilities compared to under a fifth, who thought it limits what you can do.

See the Access to the Professions full 2013 research report here -

http://www.accesstotheprofessions.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/83119_Research_Prof_NEW_LR.pdf

Additional information about Access to the Professions and our Aims

Back in 2012/13, some 20 leading professional bodies came together to work together under the banner of ‘Access to the Professions’. We have committed to reinforcing the three underlying principles of helping:

1. Young people, especially those from more disadvantaged backgrounds, to consider professional careers
2. Careers advisers and teachers provide the very best advice and guidance on professional careers, as well as up-to-date teaching in areas relating to professions
3. Government and the public to understand the contribution professional bodies make to social mobility and the economy and future prospects of the UK.

Access to the Professions’ work in its third year and culminates with National Professions Week, commencing 9 November 2015, and there is a series of launches and training for careers advisers, work with young people etc all with the aim of widening access to the professions by professional bodies helping young people and their advisers to know more

about the options available to them in professional careers and the support and training routes offered.

Key leading professional bodies involved in Access to the Professions as a not-for-profit organisation include: The Chartered Institute of Patent Attorneys, the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, the Association of Chartered Accountants, the Institute of Leadership and Management, the International Association of Book Keepers, the Chartered Management Institute and the Chartered Insurance Institute.

29 September 2015

The Chartered Insurance Institute – Written evidence (SMO0106)

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

Transition from school to work: call for evidence

Background

1. The Chartered Insurance Institute is the world's leading professional body for insurance and financial services with over 115,000 members in 150 countries. Our Royal Charter remit is to secure and justify the confidence of huge public. Part of this work includes attracting and developing the next generation of talent. We provide support and guidance for our members on apprenticeships and internships, as well as promoting careers in insurance and financial services to students in schools colleges and universities. In doing so we work closely with employers and are involved in the apprenticeship trailblazer process.

Evidence

Academic & vocational

2. The CII is a firm believer in the value of both academic and vocational educational pathways. Before making choices about their future career, young people are faced with employers' and society's attitude that university is preferable to other post-compulsory education routes. The CII's own research with sixth form students found that over 80% said that they were planning on going to university, with almost two thirds of them believing it would fast track them to a well paid job⁴⁸⁷. Recent research by CIPD research showed this was not necessarily the case as nearly 60% of graduates are in non-graduate jobs⁴⁸⁸.
3. This focus on university is hindering many young people's future careers, leading them down a path which may not serve their best interests and which costs the individual thousands of pounds. This also blocks employment entry routes for those who have not attended university. The default option for many schools is to advocate university, and often it is in their interests to do so as this can be used as a measure of 'success'. This has to stop and more needs to be done to improve careers advice (see below).
4. It is key that government policy reflects the value of non-university routes for young people, and we are starting to see this with the focus on apprenticeships. However, we would caution that the choice not become university or apprenticeship. There are other entry points into the world of work that are just as valuable.

Literacy and numeracy

⁴⁸⁷ CII *Bridging the gap: Student attitudes towards careers and the insurance industry* (October 2014)
<http://www.cii.co.uk/32177>

⁴⁸⁸ CIPD *Over-qualification and skills mismatch in the graduate labour market* (August 2015)
<http://www.cipd.co.uk/publicpolicy/policy-reports/overqualification-skills-mismatch-graduate-labour-market.aspx>

- For employers to offer employment opportunities to young people (and for many, especially small firms, this is a big step and commitment), they need to be confident that those young people entering the workplace have a good grasp of basic literacy and numeracy. They want a strong grounding in the basics upon which they can build upon. However, the CII's latest employer skills survey⁴⁸⁹ shows that many firms are critical of the basic skills ability of those entering from education. Quotes from employers included:

"Standards in maths and English seem low and students are not fully prepared for the workplace environment."

"Mental arithmetic, grammar and spelling seem to be notable weaknesses in young people emerging from the education system."

"Levels of English and maths are essential and not always good. If the attitude is right, all other things can be taught."

In the corresponding survey from 2011, we found that a relatively large proportion of employers had put school leavers and graduates through remedial training⁴⁹⁰.

Q. Have you had to offer remedial training in the following disciplines to the following groups?

	School Leavers	Graduates
Literacy	40%	25%
Numeracy	33%	18%

The Government needs to place greater emphasis on improving teaching of and attainment in literacy and numeracy at all level. Despite promises to do so employers have yet to feel any change.

Supporting careers guidance

- The importance of good quality careers information cannot be understated and yet the CII's student research found that young people are not receiving the service they require. Although most students have access to some careers information, only a third say that it is 'inspiring'. Almost two thirds say careers information is not practical enough and therefore it is not surprising to find a majority turning to family and friends for help.
- The CII's 2015 skills survey has, for the first time, asked employers their view of careers education in schools. As with the students, the results make worrying reading. Only 15% of members believe it to be good, whereas well over double that amount (39%) feel the quality is poor.
- Although the previous administration looked to improve the wider careers information situation with the creation of a National Careers Service, the position within many state schools has not changed. The

⁴⁸⁹ Survey run July 2015. Data to be published in October

⁴⁹⁰ CII *The Skills Report 2011* <http://www.cii.co.uk/knowledge/claims/articles/cii-skills-report-2011/10135>

quality of careers education within schools has to be tackled if we are to improve the life chances of young people.

9. Employers have a role to play as they are able to bring to life the offering in a way that a teacher or careers professional cannot. Therefore it is important for firms to be given the encouragement and support to develop links with local education establishments. The coordination between business and education needs to be improved. Any measure that makes it easier for employers to support this would be welcome. We have found a good proportion of firms wanting help out (28%) but not sure how to go about it.
10. Through our Discover Risk initiative (a programme of engagement with schools and colleges to promote insurance careers with the support of practitioners), the CII has seen how targeted messaging backed up by employers can work. Firms should be encouraged to take part in initiatives like this more often.
11. It was clear from our student study that first-hand experience is of greatest value to those making career choices. Therefore firms need to offer more work experience and internship opportunities. The CII offers guidance to help firms but we believe central government also needs to promote the value to firms of offering such opportunities.
12. In improving careers information in schools and by providing more openings to experience the world of work, demand from young people to enter different professions will rise. Take insurance for example. Many young people are unaware of what is available and the entry points that exist. If the demand from young people existed then there might be more employers willing to run school leaver and apprenticeship programmes.
13. We believe that the weakest link currently in developing strong and clear links into work for young people is the current careers education system.

Apprenticeships

14. The CII welcomes the current focus on promoting apprenticeships and central role employers and professional bodies play in the development of new standards. The trailblazer scheme has given apprenticeships a fresh impetus. However, we are concerned that the Government's target of three million starts by 2020 could have an adverse impact on quality and might lead to unintended consequences. We would also question the use of starts as a unit of measurement rather than completions.
15. Apprenticeships are becoming an increasingly important part of the insurance recruitment landscape. Our 2015 skills survey has found a continuing increase in awareness across our sector of apprenticeships. 80% said they are aware of insurance apprenticeships. In 2009 this figure stood at only 46%. This reflects the work of bodies like CII to promote the benefits apprenticeships can bring to a business. We have also had an industry commitment, made as part of the 2013 Insurance Growth Action Plan, to double the number of technical insurance apprenticeships by 2018⁴⁹¹.
16. There remains a challenge to convert this awareness into action. There is still a wariness amongst some employers to engage with publicly funded schemes. Perceived bureaucracy is

⁴⁹¹ HM Treasury <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-uk-insurance-growth-action-plan>

the biggest barrier and so the CII often has to walk employers through schemes like apprenticeships to show they are not overly burdensome.

Apprenticeships policy challenges

17. The biggest policy change that would encourage employers to take on apprentices is not to change at all, once the trailblazer process and introduction of the levy have settled down. The constant change across policy, rules and funding is a huge issue and deters employers from getting involved. There needs to be stability and simplicity across apprenticeships.
18. Apprenticeships provide a vital entry point into professions, such as insurance and financial services, that young people might not have considered otherwise. Therefore we feel that there needs to remain a focus on apprenticeships as all levels, not just those at higher level. The way the system is shaping up there will be good progression routes from level 2 upwards across a range of disciplines and policy makers must not lose sight of the value level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships offer.
19. Despite some claims to the contrary, the apprenticeships system has not been simplified. Indeed recent changes have led to greater uncertainty. We have the 'framework' system and 'trailblazer standard' system running concurrently, numerous funding consultations (as well as funding differences) and the issue of differences in approach across the devolved administrations. We believe that such confusion and complexity does not send a good message to those we are looking to engage with.
20. The trailblazer approach is a case in point. Initially this was a 'dynamic' policy driven by employer enthusiasm. However, some trailblazers have quickly become bogged down with increased interventions from the government. An increasing number of rules and requirements from BIS are leading to employer frustration with the process⁴⁹².
21. There are also number of inconsistencies within the system and decision making. For example around funding caps and different assessment criteria for similar standards. Such decisions risk disengaging those employers taking part in the design of new apprenticeships.
22. The key to apprenticeships policy is to ensure that the long term outcomes favour quality apprenticeships and that focus on areas of skills shortages and need, rather than being target driven.

Apprenticeships funding & the levy

23. There have been a number of funding consultations since the announcement of the trailblazer programme. Prior to May's General Election there was a break which was welcome, and yet it appears we have returned to a system that involves the HMRC as part of the introduction of the apprenticeship levy for large employers.
24. The recent apprenticeship levy proposal leaves many questions unanswered. There appears little incentive for those already engaged, especially those running trailblazers. We would also question how many firms will really get out more than they put in? There seems there will be those who are 'winners' as a result of the changes and those who are 'losers'. Some sectors will effectively cross subsidise those who take on apprentices in huge numbers. Will there be some form of sectoral approach to ensure some level of fairness?

⁴⁹² <http://feweek.co.uk/2015/08/06/employers-frustrated-as-wait-for-trailblazer-apprenticeships-approval-nears-one-year-mark/>

25. We hope that the new funding regime will continue to take into account the needs of small businesses. Some find it more difficult to recruit school or college leavers because of the extra resource and support required. We welcome the current arrangement whereby there is an extra grant for SMEs and hope that this continues.

Recommendations

We suggest three main areas for focus to help school leavers in the transition from education into work, and in turn support social mobility:

26. The current approach to careers education is failing young people and needs to be addressed. University is often portrayed as the only option and this has to change. Schools need to be supported and encouraged to outline all available options open to students. The promotion of Apprenticeships needs to be an integral part of a reformed careers advice service in England.
27. The Government needs to continue with its efforts to promote Apprenticeships, highlighting the benefits and career paths available. Only by developing strong vocational pathways will we see parity of esteem with university education. The government also needs to ensure that there are the places available for those young people who are interested.
28. Employers need to be encouraged to take a more active role in providing information on careers in schools and colleges. They are the ones with the first hand experience and are best able to bring their career paths to life.

15 September 2015

The transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds

Submission to the House of Lords Social Mobility Committee's call for evidence

Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD)

September 2015

Executive summary:

- There are a **number of factors** that affect social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace.
- This is particularly true for **young people aged 14-24 who are not, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A-Level to Higher Education pathway.**
- Despite increased **demand from employers to access a diverse range of talent**, there continues to be a range of **supply and demand-side challenges**
- These challenges not only **limit employers' ability to access the talents and skills** they need to be successful in the future, they also **impede young people's successful transition** into employment.
- This submission from the CIPD sheds light on these supply and demand-side issues, including
 - **Employers' attitudes** towards vocational education and training
 - **Employer recruitment practices and policies**
 - The ability of young people to access **independent and impartial careers advice and guidance**
 - The willingness of employers to provide **opportunities and pathways which help facilitate access to young people** from a variety of backgrounds.
 - **Progress made by the professions** in helping to achieve fairer access

Recommendations:

- This submission suggests that a coordinated response from the following key actors could help to improve the transition from school to work for all young people -
 - **Schools and colleges** – to ensure that young people are able to access independent and impartial careers guidance, careers support and inspiration, and are given the opportunity to explore the full range of possibilities, including vocational routes, apprenticeships and traineeships, work experience and employment.
 - **Employers** – to review their recruitment practices and access routes with a view to boosting the number of young people – in particular those with vocational qualifications – in their organisations. The CIPD also calls on employers to play an active role in helping young people prepare for work;

this is particularly important for SMEs, with data showing that only 38 per cent of SME employers working with schools compared with 70 per cent of larger organisations.

- **Government** – To continue to pursue and support initiatives, such as the Careers and Enterprise Company, aimed at achieving greater collaboration between schools and colleges with employers; to challenge negative perceptions of vocational education and training amongst employers, parents and young people; and incentivise schools and colleges to give equal footing to vocational routes to work in order to drive-up an understanding of non-traditional pathways (including apprenticeships) as providing a viable and credible pathway into employment

Background

The [CIPD](#) is the professional body for HR and people development. The not-for-profit organisation champions better work and working lives and has been setting the benchmark for excellence in people and organisation development for more than 100 years. It has 140,000 members across the world, provides thought leadership through independent research on the world of work, and offers professional training and accreditation for those working in HR and learning and development.

Our membership base is wide, with 60% of our members working in private sector services and manufacturing, 33% working in the public sector and 7% in the not-for-profit sector. In addition, 76% of the FTSE 100 companies have CIPD members at director level.

This submission has been produced by the CIPD's [Learning to Work](#) programme. Learning to Work was launched in 2012 to promote the role of employers in reducing youth unemployment by encouraging employers to increase the number of access routes into their organisations and to make their workplaces and practices more 'youth-friendly'. Through the Learning to Work programme, the CIPD encourages employers to play an active role in preparing young people for the workplace by promoting direct contact with young people via two youth volunteering programmes; [Steps Ahead Mentoring](#) and [Inspiring the Future](#).

General Comments

There are a number of factors that affect social mobility and employment outcomes of young people aged 14-24 in the transition from school into the workplace – particularly for

young people who are not, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A-Level to Higher Education pathway. Despite increased demand from employers to take advantage of the diverse range of talent available, there continues to be a range of supply and demand-side challenges that are limiting employers' ability to access the talents and skills they need, as well as impeding young people's successful transition into employment. This response will examine each of these challenges in turn:

- Employers' attitudes towards vocational education and training
- Employers' recruitment practices and policies
- The ability of young people to access independent and impartial careers advice and guidance
- The willingness of employers to provide opportunities and pathways which help facilitate access to the labour market for young people from a variety of backgrounds.
- Progress made by the professions in helping to achieve fairer access

Response

1. Graduates versus non-graduates

- 1.1. One of the most enduring factors that affects social mobility and employment outcomes of young people who do not follow the traditional A-Level to Higher Education pathway is certain employers' attitudes towards vocational education.
- 1.2. On the one hand, we've witnessed a significant growth in interest from employers in vocational routes into work – apprenticeships in particular. Indeed, the National Apprenticeship Service has found that, in 2013/14, more than 850,000 people undertook apprenticeships in 240,000 workplace locations in England; what's more, apprenticeships are now available in over 170 industries, covering 1,500 job roles in most occupations and sectors, from engineering to accountancy, public relations, business administration and HR.
- 1.3. However, for some, the view persists that vocational education is the 'poor relation' of a university degree. Indeed, in a [CIPD Employee Outlook survey](#) conducted in

spring 2013 less than a fifth of respondents said that they felt apprenticeships had the “same status” as a university education. What’s more, it is not enough to simply convince employers that apprenticeships are a good idea; there is also a need to increase the number of young people choosing vocational education as a pathway to work, and to provide information to parents – as key influencers on their child’s education and career decision making - that demonstrates that apprenticeships can offer a viable route into skilled jobs and alternative to university. Parents and guardians are key influencers when it comes to young people’s perceptions of vocational education and training pathways. Indeed, the same survey found that less than a fifth of working parents believe that apprenticeships are more appropriate for manual or blue collar jobs.

1.4. These findings have worrying implications. Firstly, that despite clear and significant interest from many employers in apprenticeships, some organisations still view vocational qualifications as unsuitable for their industry or organisation. A consequence of this is that candidates with relevant vocational qualifications that demonstrate a high level of skill and a significant amount of experience are at risk of being overlooked in favour of a candidate who attended university. Our research not only highlights, therefore, that there is still much work to be done to reach parity of esteem between vocational qualifications and university, but that employers could benefit from more information about the way in which vocational qualifications help prepare young people for the workplace, as well as the skills and experience individuals with this background can bring to the workplace. Our research also shows that there is a need to get young people and their parents to understand the exciting opportunities that are available across all occupations and sectors through vocational qualifications.

1.5. By driving-up interest and understanding of the various vocational routes into work and tackling stereotypes that might influence the number of young people with vocational qualifications being recruited into organisations, we can improve the employment prospects and social mobility outcomes of young people aged 14-24 who are not, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A-Level to Higher Education pathway.

2. Employer recruitment practices and policies

- 2.1. Another factor affecting the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people who are not, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A-Level to Higher Education pathway is employers' recruitment practices and policies; in particular, employers specifying the need for a candidate to possess a degree qualification for a role which is suitable for those with vocational qualifications. Indeed, the [CIPD Learning to Work survey 2015](#) found that two-thirds of HR professionals said their organisation uses formal qualifications and academic achievement during the first stage of the recruitment process to filter candidates for entry-level roles, with university being one of the most popular ways to sort applicants. As a recent CIPD report, [Overqualification and skills mismatch in the graduate labour market](#), has found, having a degree is becoming a necessity for getting an ever-larger proportion of jobs, leading to a phenomenon known as occupational filtering down – graduates entering jobs that were once done by their non-graduate mothers and fathers, and having a degree has replaced vocational training-based routes into occupations.
- 2.2. To address this, the Learning to Work programme highlights to employers the need to regularly review eligibility and selection criteria, particularly for entry level roles (in order to avoid instances where degree qualifications are requested but may not be necessary) and to be more flexible when considering qualifying criteria, including grades, training and educational background, as focusing on these formal requirements can create unfair barriers. The CIPD also encourages and supports employers to actively identify opportunities where an apprentice, school leaver or individual with suitable vocational qualifications could be recruited; however, in order to support this activity, employers require further information on less recognised pathways and qualifications (such as NVQs, HNCs, HNDs, BTECs, tech levels, applied general qualifications, or diplomas) if they are to gain an increased understanding of the skills, attributes and experience a young person could bring to a role.
- 2.3. However, there are other recruitment practices which can disadvantage young people more generally. In order to open up opportunities to all young people and

help improve social mobility and employment outcomes for those individuals who may not have pursued a traditional pathway into work, the CIPD has produced [extensive guidance](#) for organisations on how employers can adapt recruitment practices and policies so that they are ‘youth-friendly’ and do not disadvantage individuals from certain backgrounds, including:

- Advertising opportunities widely using a variety of methods – in particular, avoiding recruiting by ‘word of mouth’ alone, which limits the effectiveness of the search and means groups outside of existing networks never hear of opportunities.
- Using recruitment agencies committed to improving social mobility.
- Working with *Jobcentre Plus* in order to achieve a diverse selection of potential candidates.
- Providing line manager training aimed at tackling potential bias/blind spots in candidate selection, to ensure that prospective candidates receive equal treatment and that everyone is assessed on ability and potential, rather than background.

2.4 The CIPD is encouraged to see that, in recent years, employers have taken steps to address barriers which prevent entry to young people who are not, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A-Level to Higher Education pathway, to both their organisation and profession. For these employers, attracting a diverse range of talent is key to achieving enhanced customer insight, innovation and productivity, and, in the longer-term, future business growth. For example, in May, professional services network PwC announced their intention to remove UCAS scores as entry criteria for graduate jobs to help drive-up social mobility and widen the pool of talent available. Furthermore, [CIPD research](#) shows that employers are making a substantial investment in attracting and developing school leavers, with 45% of employers increasing their offering of talent development programmes aimed specifically at this group.

2.5 Furthermore, our Learning to Work survey 2015 uncovered a discernable interest and willingness on the part of employers to find new ways to tap into new talent. Our survey found that 63 per cent of HR professionals who use formal qualifications in recruitment are interested in finding alternatives; a further quarter (23 per cent) do not at all consider formal qualifications and academic achievements to be the best indicator of the suitability of a candidate.

2.6 In fact, our research has uncovered that employability, or ‘soft’ skills, are becoming an increasingly influential factor for many employers. Indeed, our Learning to Work survey 2015 found that the top three skills employers look for in young candidates are communication (64 per cent), teamwork (60 per cent) and confidence (45%). This is good news for many young people, as there are a range of activities they can undertake to help improve their employment prospects and social mobility.

2.7 The CIPD believes volunteering can help young people gain the employability skills employers are looking for. Indeed, when we asked HR professionals what the top three skills entry-level candidates with volunteering experience demonstrate, they said teamwork (82%), communication (80%) and understanding of the local community (45%), which closely correlate to the skills identified as most desirable by employers, listed in the above section. With the difficulties that many young people also face in terms of securing good-quality work experience, volunteering or social action has a clear role to play in terms of the skills development of the future workforce. Furthermore, given that volunteering activities can take place over extended periods of time, this can often be more beneficial in terms of developing employability skills than a shorter spell of work experience. However, a key challenge is that candidates often fail to draw on their volunteering and social experience during the recruitment process unless prompted, and employers can neglect to uncover it, meaning they are at risk of missing out on enthusiastic individuals who have the types of employability skills organisations say they need, yet struggle to find. To address this, the CIPD, in partnership with the [#iwill campaign](#) - which aims to make social action the norm among 10-20 year-olds, irrespective of background – recently launched a [new guide](#) for recruiters and line managers on how to integrate social action into recruitment practices. It is our hope that, by drawing on best practice from some of the UK’s leading employers, HR can unlock access to a wide new pool of talent, whilst also helping to improve employment and social mobility outcomes for young people.

3. Access to independent and impartial careers advice and guidance

3.1. Another factor that affects the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace is their ability to access to high-quality independent and impartial careers advice and guidance, which equips

them with the knowledge, information and skills they need in order to make informed decisions about their future. For some young people, effective careers advice and guidance can open their eyes to careers they never knew existed. This issue is particularly apparent when examining young people's awareness of non-university routes, most notably apprenticeships. For some young people, information about vocational education and training options as alternatives to university is scant, as this submission has already highlighted. Indeed, when we asked HR professionals who are parents whether they are satisfied with the amount of information available about apprenticeship opportunities in their local areas, only a quarter (29%) said they were. [Previous CIPD research](#) has also found that just 15% of parents feel that teachers provided them with sufficient information on alternatives to university, including apprenticeships.

3.2. The CIPD believes that part of improving the quality, independence and impartiality of careers advice and guidance – and to help young people to improve their social mobility and employment outcomes – is identifying opportunities for employers, schools and colleges to work together at a local level in order to provide careers education. It is for this reason that the CIPD welcomes the newly established Careers & Enterprise Company, which has been created to strengthen links between schools and colleges, between employers and careers, to expose young people to the world of work, as well as to help them to make more informed decisions about their future.

3.3. However, we also believe that employers can play a key role in helping prepare young people for the working world, thereby improving employment outcomes and social mobility for young people – in particular, those who are not on and who do not intend to follow the A Level to Higher Education route. Increased interaction with employers offering vocational schemes, attending careers fairs where employers are present, being invited for tours of a local employer's workplace and benefitting from opportunities to hear from employers and employees at career insight days can all help young people to understand the breadth of routes and opportunities available to them, and see first-hand how their skills and expertise might be put to use.

- 3.4. Providing work experience placements to young people plays a critical role in helping individuals to understand the world of work. Indeed, our Learning to Work survey 2015 found that over half of employers (54 per cent) offer work experience placements; however, to further increase this number, the CIPD provides guidance for employers and our members on implementing [high-quality work experience placements](#) aimed at helping more young people benefit from direct experience of the workplace.
- 3.5. Finally, the CIPD has been working the Education and Employers Taskforce on a free initiative called [Inspiring the Future](#), to get HR professionals to volunteer in schools in order to help young people become more work ready. The CIPD has signed-up over 2000 CIPD member volunteers who help students understand the world of work and how to prepare for it, provide career insight talks and CV and interview workshops in order to educate, raise aspirations and provide visible role models.
- 3.6. The CIPD's Learning to Work programme believes this level of engagement between employers and education is key to helping young people prepare for working life and improve their employment outcomes and their social mobility; this is particularly true for young people who decide not to pursue the traditional university route to work.

4. Access routes for young people

- 4.1. An important part of improving the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people is by ensuring there are a diverse range of access routes open to them – particularly for those who opt to pursue a vocational pathway into employment. A key aim of the CIPD's Learning to Work programme, therefore, is to encourage HR professionals to increase the number of access routes into their organisation. To achieve this, we have produced practical, step-by-step guidance on introducing [apprenticeships](#), offering high-quality, paid [internship opportunities](#) and [work experience placements](#) - in addition to providing entry-level roles aimed at young people who are just starting out in their career. Our survey report from May 2013, [Improving Social Mobility: Inside the HR profession and beyond](#), has also shown that not only do many organisations understand that there is a business case for

diversity in terms of who they recruit, but more than nine out of ten HR professionals agree that they have a role to play in promoting social mobility.

- 4.2. Since the Learning to Work programme began in 2012, we have witnessed significant steps being taken by employers to offer opportunities to younger workers, with our Learning to Work survey 2015 finding that the percentage of organisations that currently employ young people (aged 16–24) has risen in the last 12 months, with four in every five (79 per cent) reporting that they do, up from three-quarters (73 per cent) in 2013. Perhaps more encouraging is the progress that’s being made around engaging with vocational education and training – in particular apprenticeships – with our survey finding that over two-thirds (70 per cent) of HR professionals think that apprenticeships are effective at developing the employability skills of young people in the workplace. What’s more, apprenticeships came out as the well-regarded option in terms of developing employability skills, even above graduate schemes, which 66 per cent of employers rated as ‘effective’ or ‘very effective’.
- 4.3. Finally, the CIPD believes there is a clear role for the professions to attract young people aged 14-24 who are not, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A Level to Higher Education pathway. Significant steps have been taken to address the perception that, to be a member of a profession, one needs a degree or similar qualification. In order to open up the profession to new and diverse talent, the CIPD, working in conjunction with Skills CFA, has introduced the new Higher Apprenticeship in Human Resource Management, which enables apprentices to develop knowledge and skills in human resource management, while being employed and earning a salary.
- 4.4. Furthermore, the CIPD is involved in [Access to the Professions](#) – a group of leading professional bodies who aim to increase awareness for the range and variety of potential employment options the professions have to offer, and helping like-minded organisations recruit people from a diverse range of disciplines and backgrounds. In our guide, [Social Mobility: Top tips for HR professionals](#), the CIPD make a series of recommendations to the professions on helping build aspirations and highlight pathways, including:

- Engaging with schools and colleges, and encouraging staff to take part, as ambassadors, in order to highlight the profession to young people and act as a visible and realistic role model.
- Avoid using jargon – in a recent CIPD survey we asked HR professionals what they could do to improve access to the professions. The most popular suggestion recorded was to eliminate the use of unnecessary technical terminology, which can act as a barrier to accessibility. Instead, they recommend using communications that are open, clear and transparent.
- Making information about a profession and routes into your organisations easier to find – this can take the form of a dedicated section of your website which signposts individuals to further resources or your professional body, or simply providing a contact email address and telephone number for individuals to submit enquiries.
- Offering more opportunities to try your profession – an easy way to do this is by providing work experience placements and internships.

4.5 Improving the transition from school to work for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A Levels and Higher Education, requires a co-ordinated response from a number of actors. Namely:

- **Schools and colleges** – who have been tasked to provide independent and impartial careers guidance, as well as careers support and inspiration for students, as documented in guidance provided by the Department for Education and the Department for Business Innovation and Skills. Ensuring that young people are given the opportunity to explore the full range of possibilities, including vocational routes, apprenticeships and traineeships, work experience and employment, will help improve the ability of young people to enter the job market and build careers.
- **Employers** – need to be aware of the need to build sustainable talent pipelines. Central to this will be examining their current engagement with young people and reviewing their recruitment practices and access routes with a view to boosting the number of young people – in particular those with vocational qualifications – in their organisations. The CIPD also calls on

employers to play an active role in helping young people understand the various opportunities – including vocational – available in their organisation and to work in partnership with local schools and colleges to build effective and sustainable relationships. This is particularly important for SMEs, with data showing that only 38 per cent of SME employers working with schools to offer opportunities for young people or provide employee volunteer support, compare with 70 per cent of larger organisations.

- **Government** - The launch of the new Careers & Enterprise Company is a welcome step towards achieving greater collaboration between schools and colleges and employers. However, more still needs to be done to help challenge negative perceptions of vocational education and training amongst employers, parents and young people, and incentivise schools and colleges to give equal footing to vocational routes to work in order to drive-up an understanding of non-traditional pathways (including apprenticeships) as providing a viable and credible pathways into employment. By increasing the number of employer engaging with vocational routes, such as apprenticeships, and working with the professions to widen participation for all, businesses can take full advantage of the range and diversity of skills and talent available whilst helping to improve social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace.

11 September 2015

ICAEW – Written evidence (SMO0063)

ICAEW submission to the House of Lords social mobility committee

Summary

1. ICAEW is a world-leading professional accountancy body. Our chartered accountancy qualification, **the ACA**, is one of the most advanced learning and professional development programmes available and our profession is at the forefront of innovation in recruitment and training.
2. Through our Royal Charters and public policy work, we collaborate with parliamentarians to promote social mobility and access to the profession. If the UK is to compete internationally, we need to make sure professions like chartered accountancy attract the best talent, regardless of individuals' background.

Knowledge, skills and experience

3. Based on our experience, ICAEW believes that **knowledge, skills and experience** as well as **attitudes and behaviours** is central to equipping young people for the world of work. These areas are integral to chartered accountancy training and throughout our 135 year history this approach has been available for non-graduates as well as graduates.

Careers advice

4. The most powerful assets that young people have when making the transition from school to work is **knowledge, well developed personal skills and exposure to work experiences**. So the availability of quality careers advice and work experience opportunities can help address the many challenges faced by young people in the transition from school to work.
5. One of the key challenges for school/college leavers is how to apply their knowledge in the work place. This **can** be taught within the classroom, but work experience, and **quality careers advice is also important**. It is vital for young people to be familiar with the opportunities available in the professions and to understand how their classroom experience equips them for those opportunities. And the opportunities do exist, for example, UKCES predicted in 2012 that 140,000 more accountants will be needed in the UK economy by 2022.

Work readiness

6. A key obstacle widely cited by business is the extent to which young people are **work-ready**. Given that schools are incentivised through their accountability measures to prioritise overall attainment and exam performance, this can limit the opportunities that students get to develop their work readiness skills. Where opportunities to acquire **skills and experience** outside of the classroom do exist, there is often an uneven distribution of them across schools and colleges. This is because with limited resources, employers tend to focus on engaging with select groups. This leads to a number of schools and colleges missing out on opportunities to build links with business which ultimately inhibits their student's ability to develop key work readiness skills.
7. The ICAEW's **National Business and Accounting competition (BASE)** was developed to address these challenges. BASE provides a platform through which students can apply

their classroom knowledge in a business context and gain exposure to the world of work.

Q1) What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Consider the range of factors that affect the ability of young people to enter the job market and to build careers. What is the impact of current (and previous) Government policy, the qualifications system, the expectations of employers and the challenges facing those aged 14-24 as they transition from school to work?

Impact of Government policy

8. ICAEW welcomes the government's commitment to careers advice and the recent announcement of an employer-led careers advice company. However a number of other recent policies have had a negative impact on careers provision, for example, funding was not attached to the obligation for schools to provide careers advice.

Challenges

9. The removal of compulsory work experience and the lack of funding for the provision of quality careers guidance have both had a negative impact on the ability of schools to prepare their students for the world of work. Previous governments have set a target of 50% of young people entering higher education and this has shaped the views held by parents, teachers and students regarding the steps that need to be taken to access a good job and a successful career. This has encouraged young people to focus on the journey from school to higher education rather than from school into workplace training or school leaver programmes, which increasingly employers are offering.
10. We accept that over the last few years greater steps have been made to push the benefits of workplace learning and employer ownership of skills development such as the new apprenticeship trailblazers. However, the challenge is removing the stigma around apprenticeships which still exists. The perception that apprenticeships and workplace training are sub-standard to a more traditional academic route is embedded in British culture. Tackling this issue will require a long term strategy to ensure alternative routes into a career are placed on an equal footing with higher education routes.
11. The push towards higher education has also impacted on the preparation which schools offer young people. School culture and provision has been skewed towards supporting students to access university courses, as opposed to alternative routes into the professions. We have examples of schools in England refusing employers and professional bodies the opportunity to talk about the various routes into careers; the clear preference in these cases is accessing careers through higher education only.

Solution

12. The government should therefore ensure its policies facilitate the development of soft skills as well as the promotion of a full range of alternative routes into employment. These include apprenticeships, school leaver programmes and internships. ICAEW would welcome the rapid development of the Careers and Enterprise Company which we hope will better promote these various routes into the professions and provide further links

between schools and employers and professional bodies have a role to play in helping them.

Impact of the qualifications system

Challenges

13. The support which students receive within school is vital to ensure they leave the education system with the appropriate skills and experiences to succeed in the workplace. In recent years there has been a great deal of attention paid to the qualifications that young people achieve as opposed to the skills they develop such as teamwork, critical analysis and problem solving. The government's approach towards assessment and accountability of schools inevitably impacts upon the priorities which the schools adopt. The targets for attainment at GCSE have incentivised schools to focus on exam results, as opposed to providing a more well-rounded education which incorporates the application of workplace skills.

Solution

14. The government should offer greater recognition for the work that schools undertake which falls outside of the core curriculum, in order to incentivise them to provide for the development of soft skills. While Ofsted do now judge and take account of careers guidance in schools, we need to ensure this is made a higher priority.

Impact of employer expectations

Challenges

15. The number of people aged 16-24 in full time education has rapidly increased in recent years from 17% in 1984 to 42% in 2013⁴⁹³. Despite this rise in the level of qualifications which young people hold, employers repeatedly cite the lack of work readiness skills of those entering the labour market. **Lack of work experience is now the number one barrier preventing employers from hiring more young people.**⁴⁹⁴ This demonstrates that employers' expectations are not adequately met by qualifications alone. Beyond academic ability, students need to demonstrate they are work-ready - that they can communicate, solve problems and can work in a team.

Solution

16. We need to achieve an education system which equips young people with the right skills, including the ability to apply their knowledge to the needs of the workplace. Without this, we will continue to fall short of the expectations and needs of both employers and the economy as a whole.

Q3) Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

How easy is it for young people to get onto pathways that they want and that have currency with employers and higher education institutions?

17. In order for young people to get onto certain pathways, they first need to have an awareness of the vast array of options available to them. In addition to this, they also

⁴⁹³ <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/number-uk-youngsters-full-time-education-doubled-over-last-three-decades-1438958>

⁴⁹⁴ UK Commission for Employment and Skills, *Not just making tea...Reinventing work experience*, p.4.

need to have the full range of opportunities promoted to them in a fair and accessible way. This will ensure they recognise the value of each option and also have the confidence to pursue them. Employers have a growing appetite to recruit school-leavers and apprentices as well as graduates, and young people should have the knowledge that they can access a professional career in a number of different ways.

18. Young people need to demonstrate that as well as having the knowledge and skills employers are looking for, they are also capable of applying them within the workplace. With some accounting firms now discarding the traditional UCAS points system, we are seeing a change in criteria some firms use to recruit. While this is creating a level-playing field for talented students who for whatever reason might not have excelled at A Levels, it is also a signal that employers are looking for a wider set of skills.

What are the options available to young people if they do not undertake A-Levels and go on to study higher education, why some qualification programmes and apprenticeships have less status than others, and what the features of high quality qualification programmes and apprenticeships are?

Options available to young people

19. There are a number of options available to young people who choose not to take a higher education route. These include apprenticeships, internships and school leaver programmes. The school leaver programmes offer the opportunity to earn while you learn. Some programmes enable students to gain a degree alongside work experience, while others provide the chance to gain a professional qualification without taking on student debt.
20. ICAEW also offers a Certificate in Finance, Accountancy and Business (CFAB). This is an internationally recognised certificate that teaches essential knowledge in business, finance and accounting and provides an entry level route into chartered accountancy. CFAB helps to support access into the profession as it offers a platform to complete the ACA without any formal academic entry requirements. CFAB provides opportunities to those who choose not to pursue the traditional academic route into higher education.

Why some qualifications have less status than others

Challenges

21. One consequence of the government's drive towards expanding higher education is that non-graduate courses are perceived as a sub-standard route into the workplace. This is often the perception of key influencers such as parents and teachers. A challenge is to remove this stigma and ensure that higher education and non-graduate routes are placed on an equal footing. While the government envisions apprenticeships to be the first choice for employers in order to raise the UK's skills base, apprenticeship starts decreased by 13.7% between 2012/13 and 2013/14⁴⁹⁵. This picture needs to change if the government is to meet its apprenticeships target as well as for those businesses and young people to realise the full benefits of these routes.
22. Ahead of the Spending Review, it is unclear what level of public funding will be invested in apprenticeships and it is vital that the implementation of the apprenticeship levy does not disincentive employers to hire more apprentices. Historically, many in our profession came from relatively modest backgrounds and until the late 1960s, less than a quarter of

⁴⁹⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/398446/learner-participation-outcomes-and-level-of-highest-qualification-release-nov14.pdf

those entering the profession were university educated. While this rose significantly alongside the boom in university education, in recent years we have seen a rise in non-graduate entrants – who now make up 17% of those training with ICAEW⁴⁹⁶. This recent trend demonstrates the impact of efforts to boost different routes into the profession. It also illustrates progress made when young people are equipped with the relevant information regarding their future career choices.

Solution

23. Part of tackling the stigma problem is to raise awareness among young people, parents, teachers and businesses of the benefits of apprenticeships and other routes into the professions. Nearly two thirds of parents (63%)⁴⁹⁷ do not fully understand what an apprenticeship involves. Many countries across Europe have successfully raised the profile of apprenticeships and their achievements in this area offers useful lessons for the UK to improve perceptions held by key stakeholders.

What are the features of a high quality qualification/apprenticeship

24. One of the key features of a high quality apprenticeship or qualification is having business input surrounding course design, as in the case of the new trailblazers. This would ensure young people can be confident that the qualification is endorsed by key employers. They will be confident that the skills they develop throughout their period of study will support their ability to obtain employment once the qualification is complete. Some high quality professional qualifications also provide opportunities for young people to experience the workplace alongside their studies. This offers the chance for young people to apply the knowledge they obtain, as well as gain exposure to the challenges of the workplace.

Q4) How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

What incentives exist in the current system to make the transition from school to work be more efficient for young people, and what the different options are for improving the system?

Options for improving the system

25. There are a number of ways in which the system can be improved and it is vital that each of these measures are rigorously accounted for within Ofsted inspections. These changes include:

26. The delivery of **fully funded and high quality careers advice** to ensure young people are aware of the range of opportunities available to them. Alternative routes should be promoted to students in a fair and accessible manner alongside more traditional academic routes. This will ensure they are able to make fully informed decisions regarding their future career decisions.

27. The **reintroduction of compulsory work experience at KS4** to provide an opportunity to gain exposure to the workplace and apply their knowledge and skills.

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https://www.icaew.com/~/_media/corporate/archive/files/about%20icaew/what%20we%20do/policy/financial%20capability%20and%20social%20mobility/social%20mobility%20v1%20dpm%20foreword.ashx

⁴⁹⁷ <https://www.aat.org.uk/news/article/parents-and-apprenticeships>

28. Improved dialogue between the education system and the business community to ensure employers expectations are effectively communicated to schools/colleges. This means the skills required of employers can be reflected in what schools deliver.

What employers want in their new employees and if there is a match between what employers say they want and what they practise?

What employers want

29. The expectations of employers stretch far beyond the acquisition of traditional qualifications. In addition to academic ability, students need to demonstrate they are work-ready. Our members work with over 1.5 million businesses in the UK and they share their insights with us regarding the skills which employers are looking for.
30. Through our experience of running the ICAEW **National Business and Accounting competition, (BASE)** we have recognised a number of core skills which employers' value. This competition was designed to help develop work readiness. It provides students with a competitive platform to explore a business scenario, requiring them to utilise a range of skills they will have learnt in the classroom. This highlights the importance of soft skills including communication, resilience, innovation and commercial awareness. BASE also connects local businesses with teachers and provides schools with the opportunity to gain an insight into what employers are seeking from new recruits.

Is there a match between what employers say they want and what they practise?

31. The skills required in the business community are constantly changing. How the UK equips its young people to respond to and develop these skills must change too. A key challenge is the skills gap between what employers need and those offered by new recruits. Employers' expectations will shift in line with market changes and the education system must be responsive to job market changes to minimise any "learning lag". It is vital that open channels of communication exist between the education system and the business community so schools deliver what business needs. The Careers and Enterprise Company has a pivotal role to play here. The challenge will be ensuring all schools/colleges gain this insight, not just the select few.

What good practice in careers guidance looks like and what can we learn from the changes that have taken place to career guidance over the past decades?

Careers guidance: Good practice and lessons learnt

32. There are a number of elements which contribute to good practice in careers advice. Despite the government's commitment, too many young people (93% of 14-25 year olds) feel they are not provided with the information they need to make informed choices about their future careers ⁴⁹⁸.
33. Good practice is where Local Enterprise Partnerships and Local Councils work with employers and careers advisors to discover what skills are needed to support local and national growth. There are several examples of this happening, and it is key that these successful relationships are shared with other regions.

⁴⁹⁸ <http://www.cbi.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2013/11/93-of-young-people-are-not-getting-the-careers-information-they-need-cbi/>

34. Good practice in careers guidance will include up to date information on various professions (and routes in) with accessible information to students and their influencers. Students should feel confident they have skills they could use in a work environment. Students should also have the opportunity to make informed decisions about their future careers and know how to access them. Those providing careers guidance should know how to strike up long-term relationships with local employers and professional bodies.

Funding

35. If we are to deliver quality careers advice we must ensure there is a sufficient level of funding. In 2011 when the government placed the duty for provision with schools they did not attach any funding to the delivery of this additional responsibility. This has restricted the ability of schools to provide quality careers advice as provision has had to be funded from within existing budgets.

Accountability

36. To ensure careers advice is of a high quality, we must attach a level of accountability it. As recommended by Ofsted, inspectors should take greater account of the quality – including the balanced nature – of advice provided by schools.

Expert support

37. Many schools do not have the expertise to deliver high quality careers advice. Schools should be given additional support, with teachers provided with the right resources and toolkits to deliver guidance or at least know how to signpost students to find information.

Business connections

38. A key component of good careers advice is to have strong links with employers. This enables young people to have direct access to professionals within a given field who are able to share insights on how to access particular careers and the steps they need to take to be successful.

Q5) Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

Who is best placed to help improve the transition from school to work for young people?

39. Government, employers, education providers, parents, students and professional bodies must all work together to achieve progress. Building a partnership between each of these key stakeholders is central to ensuring young people experience a smooth transition from school to employment. A recent Ofsted report found that links with employers were the weakest aspect of career guidance in schools.⁴⁹⁹ A key barrier which schools face in securing work placements for their students is sourcing the opportunities. This demonstrates the need for greater links to be forged between employers and the education system.

40. Future efforts should focus on building strong connections between schools and employers. This would help to generate greater levels of awareness on the various pathways young people have available to gain exposure to the workplace. The government has a vital role to play in facilitating this dialogue and coordinating engagement between each of the key partners.

⁴⁹⁹ Ofsted, *Going in the right direction*, p.11 & 19

41. ICAEW recognise that business has a role to play in this partnership. As well as promoting the importance of work readiness skills, we believe it is vital for the future of the profession to access talent from the widest possible group of people. [Access Accountancy](#), offers work experience placements for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. It also offers a wide range of free activities to help young people develop employability skills.

What organisations have, or should have, a remit for monitoring and reviewing progress towards achieving greater equity and social mobility?

42. Monitoring and reviewing access to the professions is vital to ensuring that progress on social mobility is made. As members of the Social Mobility Business Compact, ICAEW is keen to make progress. We will be gathering more data on the background of people entering our profession so we can determine the impact which our work in this area is delivering. We would encourage other professions to make similar efforts and share their experiences to enable others to learn best practice.

43. There should be publicised criteria for success and failure in this area to allow progress to be judged. All of the stakeholders cited in paragraph 39 should reconvene to review the success of any activity they put in place to improve social mobility and greater equality.

14 September 2015

Institution of Mechanical Engineers – Written evidence (SMO0070)

Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

Call for Evidence “to consider social mobility in the transition from school to work”

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

No response.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers has [published research \(Five Tribes\)](#) on the values, attitudes and preferences of 11 to 19 year olds towards engineering. This report concludes that personalising education is an essential step if we are to realise young peoples’ potentials. A traditional approach of “be like me” appeals to a minority of young people and does little to address engineering skills shortages known to be imminent due to demographic changes.

The report makes five recommendations to maximise attainment in engineering

- a) programmes, courses and activities should be tailored to be diverse enough to address all five “tribes” of young people and not solely focus on “devotees”,*
- b) schools and outreach providers should realise that much enthusiasm about engineering is currently stifled by a lack of confidence in the subject,*
- c) young people are attracted to follow career trajectories based more on societal benefit than academic specialism,*
- d) subjects like engineering struggle to be explicit in the curriculum and hence young people have little exposure to them,*
- e) all initiatives and interventions need better evaluation to match their impact to longer term needs of skills supply*

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Progressive educational reforms in Education in England and Wales since 1944, have presented generations with access to higher education, previously experienced by a far smaller elite. Payment of fees and maintenance grants by the state changed the complexion of many of our universities, while at the same time has introduced new conventions and expectations – namely that university education was an entitlement.

Alongside the growth of more equitable higher education, the post-war period initially saw an expansion in skilled technical training. In an era described as a ‘zenith for apprenticeships’ as many as 33% of male school leavers became apprentices – including a significant number who went on to become today’s industrial leaders.

A university education, regardless of subject, has to a great extent, become the entry requirement for many careers, at the same time, skilled technical routes falling out of favour and no longer trusted as secure career options – a consequence of the contraction in employment of the nation’s traditional industrial base in the 1970s and 80s.

The exception to this was the Connexions programme, since this scheme set out to prevent the most vulnerable from falling by the wayside. The Select Committee’s call for evidence articulates how the desirable and well-meaning focus on those at greatest risk of social alienation, may have led to the neglect of a large swathe of future citizens – who were neither NEET yet not able to make use of their family, contacts and networks in planning their future.

The Institution believes that this group, a reservoir of prospective engineering talent, have been least well served.

- 4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?**

There has been an emphasis shifting from vocational routes of education toward more academic routes, school courses and assessment structures. The wider cultural narrative, access to higher education and marketing of higher education has funnelled pupils towards university.

Careers advice has never been strong, but the assumptions inherent in making all schools feeder institutions for higher education, has weakened it further and rendered careers support in schools as 'nice-to-have' rather than essential.

Engineering is intrinsically meritocratic – a successful technology is determined by its efficacy and effectiveness alone, independent of its provenance. The professional engineering institutions exist largely to accredit the professional competencies of an individual, and do so based on their engineering skills and ability to apply them. For this reason, the sector has always presented opportunities for talented people from all backgrounds and social class. But without decent careers advice and meaningful engagement in schools there is a remote possibility of socially disadvantaged young people embarking on engineering spontaneously.

The Institution of Mechanical Engineers has recently published a [Policy Statement addressing the role of engineering in social mobility](#). To reduce the divide between the more privileged, and the bright but forgotten youngsters, we recommend the following:

- Government to make schools and colleges fully accountable for the provision of structured careers advice through the compulsory publication of student destinations. It is not sufficient to rely on outreach by companies of one-off visits.
- In the medium-term, the Government should undertake a review of the options for changing the structure of post-16 education, specifically exploring the consequence for introducing a Baccalaureate-style approach on both academic and vocational routes for economically vital sectors, including engineering.
- Government to compel its careers and enterprise company to source, promote and record industry placements for teachers alongside meaningful work experience for pupils. Our rationale is that without exposure to careers professionals within schools, teachers must be better prepared to take on this role – and must therefore have experience of how modern industry works and what it is like to be in a modern engineering, design or manufacturing company

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

No response.

Authored by Peter Finegold, Head of Education & Skills and Dr Colin Brown, Director of Engineering

14 September 2015

Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists – Written evidence (SMO0065)

Submission from the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility:

How can young people be best prepared for the world of work?

September 2015

1. Executive summary

- 1.1. Many employers believe the ability to communicate effectively is an essential job skill, and good or excellent communication or interpersonal skills are routinely demanded in the job requirements. However, young people are leaving school without such employability skills and this is hampering the ability of young people to obtain a job.
- 1.2. Employment has been identified as a route out of poverty and enables young people to improve their life chances. Communication is central to raising attainment and has been identified as crucial to social mobility and increased life chances⁵⁰⁰. However if schools are not equipping young people with the skills they require to be employed, then this will not result in a greater number of young people with the skills they require to be employed.

2. About the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists

- 2.1. The Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT) is the professional body for speech and language therapists (SLTs), SLT students and support workers working in the UK. We promote excellence in practice and influence health, education, employment, social care and justice policies. The RCSLT currently has over 16,000 members, 60% of who work with children and young people.

REFERENCES

⁵⁰⁰ DfE (2011) Opening Door, breaking down barriers: a strategy for social mobility

3. About speech and language therapists

3.1. Speech and Language Therapists assess and treat speech, language and communication problems in people of all ages, including children and young people, to help them communicate better. Using specialist skills, SLTs work directly with young people, their families, and other professionals to develop personalised strategies which support people with speech language and communication needs (SLCN), including providing alternative and augmentative communication aids. Speech and language therapists also provide training to the wider workforce and develop strategies so that they can improve the communication environment of young people with SLCN, identify the signs of SLCN and provide effective support.

4. RCSLT response to the inquiry questions

4.1. Our economy has become increasingly dependent on communication-based employment, the fitness of the young person of the 21st century will be defined increasingly in terms of his or her ability to communicate effectively. The nature of employment has changed considerably over the last century, with white collar jobs replacing blue collar jobs in western economies⁵⁰¹. One of the features of the increasing number of white collar jobs is increased demand for adequate communication skills. Indeed, the CBI data in 2012⁵⁰² shows 42% of respondents deem communication skills a business priority.

4.2. However, research has highlighted that business leaders complain about the poor levels of communication and literacy skills in those leaving schools. Employers report that young people possess inadequate skills in research, redact and communicate information and the inability to produce appropriate business correspondence and communication in general. Among other issues a lack of confidence and understanding of employer expectations and poor written communication were mentioned⁵⁰³.

4.3. To be functionally literate, the CBI's 2006 report, "Working on the Three Rs: Employers' Priorities for Functional Skills in Maths and English"⁵⁰⁴, states an individual must be able to understand oral communications and react appropriately and be sufficiently articulate to communicate orally. However, employers recognise that these skills are frequently lacking in new recruits.

⁵⁰¹ Ruben, R.J. (2000) Redefining the survival of the fittest: Communication disorders in the 21st Century, *Laryngoscope* 110

⁵⁰² CBI Education and Skills Survey 2012, http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/1514978/cbi_education_and_skills_survey_2012.pdf

⁵⁰³ Employers are from Mars, Young People are from Venus: Addressing the Young People/Jobs Mismatch, Katerina Rüdiger, Chartered Institute of Professional Development, April 2013, <http://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/MarsVenus%20FINAL%2030%2004%2013.pdf>

⁵⁰⁴ CBI Education and Skills Survey, 2011, http://www.cbi.org.uk/media/1051530/cbi_edi_education_skills_survey_2011.pdf

- 4.4. The CBI defines employability skills as including good communication and literacy. The CBI employment trends survey (2003)⁵⁰⁵ indicated that 34% of employers were unhappy with the basic skills of school leavers.
- 4.5. UKCES data on employer concerns about specific skills 33% expressed concern about written communication skills and 38% regarding oral communication skills⁵⁰⁶.
- 4.6. According to the National Literacy Trust, a former HR Director at the London HQ of an international investment bank mentioned that senior partners frequently complained about the standard of English used by bright and highly-qualified new recruits. She felt that young people do not have a grasp of what it is appropriate or inappropriate in business communication.
- 4.7. Rob Bridstow, UK president of Pearson, says that the government “must not lose sight of the importance of other important attributes like creativity, teamwork and oral communication”⁵⁰⁷.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1. It is important for young people to develop the effective communication skills that are so essential later in personal and working life in childhood. A focus on developing these core enabling skills in school is essential if young people are to thrive and employers have a role to play in highlighting the significance and helping schools to develop effective approaches.
- 5.2. In order to best prepare young people for the world of work, we recommend that a life course approach is taken towards supporting children and young people’s speech, language and communication skills; this should include a focus upon: supporting children’s early language development, the commissioning of speech, language and communication support within schools and communities, and the promotion of the importance of communication skills by employers.

The RCSLT policy recommendations are as follows:

- 5.3. **Commissioning of services:** Health and Wellbeing Boards and schools should work in partnership to ensure that speech, language and communication support services are commissioned within schools and across wider communities at three levels:
- **Universal level** – universal services are provided to all children and seek to support language rich environments that promote all children’s speech, language and communication development (this includes home learning environments, early years settings and children’s centres).

⁵⁰⁵ P23, IBID

⁵⁰⁶ UK Commission’s Employer Skills Survey 2011: UK Results, Evidence Report 45, July 2012, <http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/ukces-employer-skills-survey-11.pdf>

⁵⁰⁷ CBI, 2012

- **Targeted level** - In addition to universal services, children may require additional targeted support in relation to their SLCN. Targeted support is provided to children who are at risk of, or not achieving expected levels of progress in the development of their communication skills.
- **Specialist level** – children who have severe and complex needs over and above those that can be met via universal and targeted provision should receive specialist support. This includes additional highly personalised interventions delivered as appropriate to meet the needs of each child and young person.

5.4. **Training for the wider workforce:** Children and young people’s communication skills are not developed in isolation. To support communication rich environments at home, in schools and wider communities, at a local level, the wider children and young people’s workforce (including GPs and Health Visitors) should have education and training to develop a basic level of competence in speech language and communication, including the understanding of speech, language and socio-emotional development.

14 September 2015

Academics and experts

Gaby Atfield, Professor Anne Green, Professor Phil Mizen, Professor Kate Purcell, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)

[Submission to be found under Professor Kate Purcell](#)

Dr Liz Atkins – Written evidence (SMO0018)

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

Response to Call for Evidence

Dr Liz Atkins

Reader in Education

Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

03 September 2015

House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

Call for Evidence

1. My comments under each of the questions posed by the committee relate to the UK context. This is partly because international comparisons are difficult given the idiosyncratic nature of post-16 education in England, but also because the most significant research related to school to work transitions has been conducted in the UK, and informs research and practice internationally, particularly in the English speaking world (see Hodkinson, Hodkinson et al below, and later work building on this). They are informed by my own and other research into youth transitions, which forms a significant body of credible and reliable academic evidence informing the issues raised by the committee.
2. **What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?**

The factors influencing young people's school to work transitions are complex, and intersectional. Whilst factors such as careers advice have some significance, my own and other research implies that other factors have far greater significance. These include social class and relative access this provides to the cultural capitals which enable young people to navigate their transitions in a positive way. Those young people who are less able to navigate systems and to take the opportunities which are available have qualitatively poorer outcomes in terms of employment and social mobility more generally. Other factors include gender – all further education programmes and most of the occupations they potentially lead to are heavily gendered, thus re-enforcing gendered notions of 'a job which is right for me' – the impact of this is that many young people do not consider undertaking programmes which are more likely to lead to employment in their local area, and also that, as a country, we have areas with significant over supply of, for example, hairdressers. Geography is a third significant factor. Research suggests that most young people on vocational programmes envisage a future in the locality they know as home. Therefore, they are constrained by the opportunities which are actually available in that area. These are likely to be very different according to the

particular geography – so young people will have qualitatively different work opportunities in London, Newcastle and/or the Dearne valley.

3. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

This group of students has been the focus of my own research for 15 years, and there is a considerable body of literature available looking at youth transitions from school to work (see, for example, work by Avis; Ball et al; Bathmaker; Pring et al). This is largely focussed on working class transitions, and largely relates to the group who do not undertake A levels and do not become NEET. This group is predominantly engaged with the further education sector, and forms two broad sub-groups, which have very different trajectories:

- Young people who undertake elite, or higher level vocational programmes (at level 3, broadly equivalent to A level), with either an occupational or broad vocational focus
- Young people who undertake low-level vocational programmes (at level 1 or 2. Level 2 is broadly equivalent to GCSE grades A*-C, level 1 is broadly equivalent to GCSE grades D-G)

The first group includes those doing higher level apprenticeships as well as those undertaking vocationally orientated programmes which offer a qualification such as a BTEC, and may lead to either higher education or employment. Evidence shows that those young people who progress to higher education access lower status universities and undertake lower status, often vocational degrees which have a lower return than some other (nursing rather than medicine for example), and many of these programmes are gradually increasing the entry requirements, making a transition to higher education increasingly difficult from a vocational programme. Those engaged in occupational programmes, such as apprenticeships, broadly progress into those occupations where there is work available. However, there are two points to make here – only a very small number of apprenticeships are at level 3 – a majority are at lower levels and do not provide the progression to the labour market implied by level 3. Secondly, transition to the labour market depends on the availability of jobs, and there is a significant over-supply of some skills in some areas – hairdressing is a good example of this. This group as also experienced more difficult transitions in recent years, as a consequence of the restructuring of the youth and graduate labour markets. This has led to a ‘squeeze’ on employment prospects as jobs once regarded as low-level and which might have been a starting point for young people with vocational qualifications (for example, basic administration work) is increasingly taken by over-qualified graduates.

The second group has even more precarious transitions. The generally low attaining young people who access the lowest level programmes are often characterised by multiple forms of disadvantage (social class, poverty, disability, Race etc) and have normally had difficult, interrupted, or unhappy school experiences. They are also characterised by 'discourses of derision' as disaffected, disengaged and non-academic. They face a much longer transition in order to access employment which is anything other than low pay, low skill and transient. This has to be funded (bus fares, books and lunches are a significant consideration in families living on the poverty line), and many are also *expected* to act as breadwinners in families who are living in poverty or are dependent on benefits. This creates obvious tensions with attempts to engage with education and leads to many young people opting to take low pay, low skill, casual work as it arises, rather than remaining in education which itself has uncertain returns. The low level qualifications these young people achieve, whether occupational or vocationally orientated, have little, if any, exchange value in the labour market. Indeed, there is considerable evidence (e.g. see work by Ewart Keep) to suggest that these qualifications can even have a negative return once the young person enters the labour market. They also have minimal exchange value in education (e.g. see Bathmaker, 2001; Atkins, 2009; 2010; 2013; 2014) meaning that young person's options are normally limited to progressing to the next level of the same broad area in the same institution. Beginning at level 1 and progressing to the end of level 3 would take four years, and many are not financially or socially equipped to undertake this.

Whilst there have been considerable changes to government policy in respect of vocational education since the Wolf review of 2011, this group has fallen through the cracks. Considerable investment has been made in initiatives such as UTCs (see elite vocational education, above); and provision has been made for those with statements of special educational need. In terms of this group, EMA has been withdrawn, and no meaningful changes have been made to the curriculum. This has very significant implications for social mobility – it means that, whatever their hopes and aspirations, most are destined to remain on the margins, something which will then be re-visited in the next generation. A comprehensive analysis of the challenges facing this group of young people as they navigate transitions into employment may be found in my 2009 book.

4. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Current transition policy is failing those young people who are low attainers in the compulsory phase. There are a number of reasons for this, and all are related to assumptions within current policy. Firstly, policy assumes that these young people are not employable. Research does not bear this out. My own work demonstrates that a significant proportion of young people at the lowest educational levels are,

or have been, engaged in employment of some kind – sometimes within the informal economy. Others, particularly young women, have caring responsibilities for disabled parents or younger siblings. Almost without exception, however, they aspire to ‘good’ jobs which they conflate with ‘secure’.

Policy also pre-supposes that there is a particular and specific range of attributes which make someone ‘employable’. Again, this is not necessarily the case. The employers who say that young people are not ‘employable’ often have competing and different requirements. A painter and decorator require different employability skills to a shelf-stacker or a receptionist. Therefore, somebody needs to articulate the fact that employers have a responsibility to prepare young people to work for them by training them in the requisite skills.

Thirdly, policy assumes that all young people have planned, ‘ladder-like’ transitions. Research dating from the seminal work in this area led by Hodkinson in the 1990s, (e.g. see Ball et al, 2000) all demonstrates that transitions are, in fact, variously extended, broken, and troubled. My own recent research indicates that the lowest level students also highlights the fact that transitions are more problematic for young people from the lowest socio economic groups, and that these young people are more susceptible to the potentially negative impact of serendipity or chance events. Research also indicates that most young people seek careers advice from parents and carers, rather than careers services, and this suggests that finding a way of making information available to those parents and carers who themselves have very low levels of education, and who may have experienced long periods of worklessness, may support more productive transitions for their children.

5. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

A broad policy agenda is clearly necessary. However, local circumstances are very variable across the country, and local communities or schools, colleges and employers are best positioned to support transitions given their cognisance of the local educational and employment landscape.

6. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

As recommended in the Nuffield review of 14-19 education, local, strongly collaborative partnerships would support more productive school to work transitions. Such partnerships would be well placed to respond to local imperatives, and to work with employers to facilitate employment opportunities for young people. In the current landscape, it is difficult to see who might co-ordinate this. LEAs are now significantly weakened, and Local Economic

Partnerships do not always include an education arm, but these were the facilitators and co-ordinators in such partnerships when they developed as part of the 14-19 agenda under New Labour – there were some notable examples of best practice at that time, which could usefully be drawn on in the future.

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3 September 2015

Professor Fiona Devine and Professor Yaojun Li – Written evidence (SMO0062)

Submission to House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

Executive Summary

- The size of the 'missing middle' is larger at the younger ages (16-19) (31%) than at the later age (16-24) (23%) as young adults move into full-time employment.
- The proportion of men and women is about equal in the 16-19 age range but more women than men are found in the 16-24 age range (22% v 25%).
- Ethnic differences are in evidence. Among the 16-19 age group, it is men whose ethnicity is white, mixed, Pakistani or Chinese who are found in the missing middle.
- For the 16-24 age group, it is men whose ethnicity is white, mixed, Bangladeshi or Chinese who are to be found here.
- For women aged 16-19, it is those whose ethnicity is white, black or mixed who are likely to be found in the middle.
- People with limiting long-term illness are notably at risk, with nearly half of boys and 42% of girls under 19 in the missing middle category.
- Those from lower classes are generally more prone to the risks of being in the missing middle category.
- The risks are highest for those young people whose parents are long-term unemployed, have never worked or where there was no earner in the family.
- The risk stands at 40% for the 16-19 age group for both men and women, and 41% for boys in the 16-24 age group.
- 42% of those aged 16-19 who lived with relatives as compared with 31% living with parents were in the missing middle category (44% men/40% women)
- Young people in Scotland aged 16-19 are most vulnerable, with 38% of men and women being in the missing middle group (34% for boys and 43% for girls).

- The figure for women aged 16-19 in Scotland is markedly higher than that found in England, Wales and, in particular, Northern Ireland.

Opening Remarks

This submission draws on our previous academic research on patterns and trends in social mobility in the UK. Against the background of considerable public concern about declining upward social mobility, our most recent work indicates that it is too early to say that upward mobility is actually declining although early indicators suggest that working-class men are experiencing reduced life-chances. Please see:

Yaojun Li and Fiona Devine (2011) 'Is social mobility really declining? Intergenerational class mobility in Britain in the 1990s and 2000s', *Sociological Research On Line*, 16: 3
<http://www.socresonline.org.uk/16/3/4.html>;

Fiona Devine and Yaojun Li (2013) 'The changing relationship between origins, education and destinations in the 1990s and 2000s', *British Journal of Sociology*, 34: 5-6
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01425692.2013.816039>

On mobility and the middle classes, please see:

Fiona Devine (2004) *Class Practices: How Parents Help Their Children Get Good Jobs*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

We have devoted most of our attention to Question 2 in the 'call for evidence'. The reason for this is that we have obtained data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) that is the best evidence available to us to provide answers to the questions posed. We have drawn on our substantive and technical skills to understand the 'missing middle' that is of considerable academic and policy importance.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1.1 The economic climate in which young people enter the labour market has a substantial impact on life chances and social mobility. Young people aged 16+ with low-level qualifications (not academic achievers) entering the labour market from 2008 onwards were confronted by limited job opportunities. If not unemployed, they would have faced insecure, low-paid jobs with limited chances for career advancement. Academic research suggests these conditions have **scarring** effects on people's employment careers limiting or slowing the pace of career progression and mobility over the lifetime.

1.2 These young people will now be in their early to mid-20s and the main group who have borne the brunt of the period of austerity. Young people aged 18+ plus now will be

enjoying a slightly improved position as the economy picks up although low-paid work in the service sector remains significant. Despite interventions by different governments to improve education and training opportunities, those who are not on an academic route into HE, however, still face a complex array of vocational qualifications of which some are more valuable than others.

1.3 The vocational qualification system, therefore, remains highly complex and difficult to navigate. The implementation of the Wolf Report (2011) has made the system more simple and straightforward although many regret that the Tomlinson Report (2004) was overlooked. The 'reinvention' of the apprenticeship system has widespread support as apprenticeships are seen as the gold standard in vocational training. It will be important to watch whether the apprenticeships available are much more valuable for career advancement for young men more than young women as was often the case in the past.

1.4 Against this background, young people face a complex landscape of qualifications. If they do not know what job or career they would like, which applies for many, it is then very difficult to make the 'right' decision about which course to choose at which institution which will lead them to a certain path. Confronted by information overload, they may take short cuts, drawing on the advice of family and friends, who could be limiting in the future. When the right decision is not obvious, the ideal scenario is to pursue education and training which does not close down future options.

1.5 Parents who seek to advise their adult children encounter the same issues. Highly-educated parents can advise their children with greater confidence than less-educated parents who will be intimidated by the complex qualifications system. Teachers are confronted by similar issues. Employers also face a highly complex qualification system which they do not necessarily understand although they find young people do not have the literacy and numbers skills they expect and need. Everyone is challenged by the current system of arrangements although young people especially.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

2.1 The source of data we use for this analysis is the Labour Force Survey for Quarter 3 of 2014 (LFS2014c). It has a sample size of 95,950. The most important reason for using this dataset is that it is the most current dataset we can find which includes (1) the educational and economic activities for the age group concerned, (2) the living arrangements and main earner's class position at the respondent's age 14 and (3) a whole range of demo-geographic indicators such as ethnicity, immigration status, health, country in addition to age and gender.

2.2 It is important to address definitional issues with regard to the educational and occupational status of the age 14-24 group. In order to address the questions above with special attention to the 'missing middle' group, we first need to measure the 'NEET' group. Hence, NEETs are those who are not in paid work, not away from paid work, not doing unpaid work for family or for relatives' business, not currently doing a formal apprenticeship, not currently engaged in a government scheme or failing to give a response due to just turning 16 years of age, not currently working or studying towards a qualification, and not enrolled on a course, or enrolled on a course but has stopped attending.

2.3 On this definition, we find that of all the 11,845 respondents aged 14-24 in our sample, 12% are 'NEETs', with a further 16% falling into ages 14-15 (Table 1). As the LFS2014c did not ask detailed educational questions on the group aged 14-15, we cannot explore this group further. As we can see, the proportion of the 'missing middle' is generally higher at the younger ages (16-19), and that of full-time employment rises with age, up to around 60% at ages 23 and 24. Also noted here is that only a very small number of young people post 16 are in full-time studies doing GCSE. As the number concerned is very small, we have decided that it may be best to omit this group (N=479) from further analysis in our focus on the 'missing middle'.

Table 1 Educational and economic activity of people aged 14-24 in the UK (row %)

	Missing middle	Age 14-15	FT GCSE	FT AS/A Level	FT prof bel deg	FT degree	FT employed	NEETs
Age								
14	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
15	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
16	35	0	30	26	5	0	2	2
17	24	0	6	43	15	0	6	5
18	30	0	1	20	9	13	15	12
19	24	0	0	3	6	27	25	14
20	20	0	0	0	2	30	33	15
21	19	0	0	0	2	21	38	20
22	21	0	0	0	1	12	47	19
23	17	0	0	0	1	7	58	18
24	14	0	0	0	0	6	61	19
All	19	16	3	8	4	11	28	12
N	2,161	2,463	479	1,107	451	1,087	2,849	1,248

Note: weighted analysis and unweighted Ns, same below.

Source: The Labour Force Survey 2014 (Quarter 3), same below.

2.4 Of the remaining 8,903 respondents aged 16-24, we have put them into four broad groups: full-time employment; full-time students in AS or A-Levels, professional qualifications below degree, and first or higher degree studies; and NEETs. As shown in the lower part of Table 2, **31%** of the 16-19 year olds are ‘missing middle’, which falls to **23%** including ages 20-24. Due to increasing rates of employment with age, the proportions of full-time students and the ‘missing-middle’ go down with age. At ages 21-24, the proportions of NEETs stay fairly stable, at around 20%. Young people at age 16 are most vulnerable to becoming ‘missing middle’, at 50%. For the 18 year olds, the proportions are still around 30%. In the following, we focus on this ‘missing middle’, doing it for the 16-19, and 16-24 age groups respectively where appropriate.

Table 2 Educational and economic activity of people aged 16-24 in the UK (row %)

	FT employment	FT students	Missing middle	NEETs
Age				
16	3	44	50	3
17	7	62	26	5
18	15	43	31	12
19	25	36	24	14
20	33	32	20	15
21	38	23	19	20
22	48	13	21	19
23	58	8	17	18
24	61	6	14	19
All (16-19)	13	46	31	9
All (16-24)	34	28	23	15
N	2,849	2,645	2,161	1,248

Note: FT students include those in AS/A Levels, Professional qualifications below degree, and degree or above; those doing GCSE are omitted (the same below).

2.5 We now look at the patterns of gender, ethnicity, disability, social class, living arrangements at the respondent’s age 14 and regional association with this ‘missing middle’ group. Table 3 shows the proportions of respondents who are found in the ‘missing middle’ category with three sets of information: for males and females combined; for males, and for females. Within each set, we also show the risks of being in this category by ages 16-19, and 16-24. For estimates with small marginal (N under 20), the entries are listed in italics and are to be treated with caution.

2.5.1 Gender differences: firstly with regard to gender differences, we find no such differences for the age group of 16-19, both at 31%. But for the 16-24 group, women are more likely to be in this groups by 3 percentage points: 25% as compared with 22% for men.

2.5.2 Ethnic differences: Among the 16-19 age group, it is men whose ethnicity is white, mixed, Pakistani or Chinese who are likely to be found in the missing middle. For the 16-24 age group, it is men whose ethnicity is white, mixed, Bangladeshi or Chinese who are to be found here. For women aged 16-19, it is those whose ethnicity is white, black or mixed who are likely to be found in the middle. For women aged 14-24, no ethnicity stands out in particular.

2.5.3 Health differences: We use limiting long-term illness as an indicator of health status. People with limiting long-term illness are notably at risk, with nearly half of boys and 42% of girls under 19 are in the missing middle category.

Table 3 The ‘missing middle’ by socio-demographic factors in the UK (% ‘missing middle’)

	Male and female		Male		Female	
	16-19	16-24	16-19	16-24	16-19	16-24
Gender						
Male	31	22				
Female	31	25				
Ethnicity						
White	32	23	32	21	32	25
Black	26	22	21	19	30	24
Mixed	35	28	35	30	34	26
Indian	21	15	19	13	22	18
Pakistani	31	24	35	24	27	24
Bangladeshi	21	26	18	37	25	20
Chinese	26	27	34	42	21	9
Other	24	23	31	27	16	17
Limiting LT illness						
No	30	22	30	21	30	24
Yes	46	31	49	31	42	31
Main earner class at R age 14						
Higher salariat	25	20	25	18	25	21
Lower salariat	29	22	29	20	29	23

Clerical	32	24	29	21	34	27
Small employer/own account	33	21	31	18	35	25
Technician	31	24	33	24	29	24
Skilled manual	23	23	28	22	18	23
Unskilled manual	33	26	31	22	34	30
Never worked, LT unemp, no earner	40	29	41	28	38	31
Missing	33	23	33	23	32	24
Living with at R age 14						
Parent(s)	31	23	31	21	30	25
Relatives	42	25	44	27	40	24
Foster care, children's home, care by friends	55	23	41	19	78	27
Missing	32	24	33	23	32	24
Country						
England	31	23	31	22	30	24
Wales	37	28	36	25	38	30
Scotland	38	24	34	22	43	27
NI	24	19	22	14	25	23

Note: cell values are marked in italics if the marginal Ns are under 20.

2.5.4 Class differences: with regard to class differences as measured in terms of the main earner's occupational class at the respondent's age of 14, we coded the occupational groupings into the National Statistics for Socio-Economic Classifications (NSSEC). Seven main classes from higher professional-managerial (called 'salarial') to the unskilled routine manual working classes are coded. In addition, we added a group for the 'never worked', 'long-term unemployed' or 'no earner', as well as a 'missing category'. **Those from lower classes are generally more prone to the risks of being in the missing middle category, but the risks are highest for those where the parents were long-term unemployed, never worked or where there was no earner in the family, at 40% for the 16-19 for both men and women, and 41% for boys. People from the higher salariat families generally do better than those from other families.**

2.5.5 Living arrangements: Living arrangements at people's adolescence is closely related to parental class. Further analysis shows that those living with one or both parents have their parental class in higher positions (32% in salariat positions) than those living in relative's homes where only 14% were in salariat positions. People who were living in foster care, children's home or who were looked after by friends reported no 'main earner' class. The sample size for this group is very small and the figures here are only suggestive. But if we compare those living with parents and those living with relatives, we notice a salient difference: **42% of those aged 16-19 who lived with relatives as compared with 31% living with parents were in the missing middle category, which break down into 44% for boys and 40% for girls. The figures here are around 10 percentage points higher than those living with parents.**

2.5.6 Regional differences: with respect to the regional differences with the UK, we find marked differences. **Young people in Scotland aged 16-19 are most vulnerable, with 38% of boys and girls being in the missing middle group (34% for boys and 43% for girls).** The figure for girls aged 16-19 in Scotland is markedly higher than that found in England, Wales and, in particular, Northern Ireland.

2.6 Outcomes of being the 'missing middle': We have, in the above, looked at the characteristics of the young people aged 16-19 and 16-24 respectively. Using this cross-sectional data, we cannot address the questions of the educational and occupational trajectory of being in the missing-middle category as compared with those in employment, in full-time education or being NEETs. That would need longitudinal panel data. If the Committee like the evidence presented above and wish us to conduct further analysis, we can use Understanding Society Waves 1-4 for this purpose, using the categories we have constructed at Wave 1 (2009-2010) and trace their educational and occupational careers in Wave 4 (2013-2014).

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

3.1 This call for evidence indicates that not enough is known about transitions of the 'missing middle'. Attention has focused on the increasing number of those young people going onto higher education as part of a policy commitment to increasing the percentage of young people, including those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, going to university. Similarly, attention has focused on NEETs because they are a group of young people who tend to have the lowest levels of educational attainment and the lowest levels of labour market participation.

3.2 More attention needs to be focused on the definition of the 'missing middle' as this influences the reliability and transparency of the data supporting our understanding of this group. Our analysis showed that you get a somewhat different picture when you focus on the 16-19 age-group than when you focus on the 14-24 age-group. Data on 14-16 year olds still at school or college tends to be more scant in some important data sets. We might also want to consider the group of young people who start on the academic route into HE but either fail their AS levels or do not secure high enough grades for entry into HE.

3.3. We have already suggested that young people are confronted with a vast array of courses and qualifications at 14 and 16. They have lots of choices although it is almost as if they have too much choice. This may well make it difficult to decide on what is the best course for them and for parents and teachers to advise them accordingly. Given there are now so many vocational qualifications that can be taken, it is difficult to know, without

extensive research, if they have currency with employers and/or higher education institutions. Having such a detailed understanding of potential transitions requires time and inclination.

3.4 Apprenticeships in the past were seen as the gold standard of vocational training. Before they started to disappear from the mid-1970s onwards, they were largely the preserve of young men going into manufacturing. The reinvention of 'modern apprenticeships' in the 1990s and beyond sought to develop apprenticeships for both young men and women in both manufacturing and services. The same is true today with government attempts to increase the number of young people going into apprenticeships. The problem is apprenticeships for young women in service sector employment in particular are often derided.

3.5 We concur with Prof Paul Gregg's comments made before this committee in July 2015. Too many professional and managerial positions have been turned into graduate entry-level positions only. The system has become rigid and inflexible over time by accident than design. There should be more opportunities for young people to progress through all the levels (levels 1-4) of qualification. The profession of accountancy, mentioned by Gregg, is a great example of a professional occupation which allow such progression. Many of the 'missing middle' are highly capable people who require a second or third chance to succeed.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

4.1 As academics primarily engaged in research documenting patterns and trends in social mobility, we do not have expertise in policy areas. We can say that a lot of academic research focuses on the acquisition of educational qualifications as the key to occupational success. It is as if education is the 'only game in town'. To be sure, we would want our young people to be as educationally successful as they can. Work experience in the labour market, however, is critical to career advancement and we know so little about it which is a considerable oversight.

4.2 In other words, a lot of work has been done on inter-generational social mobility (between parents and children) while intra-generational mobility or work-life mobility has been neglected. We know much about the traditional professions like medicine, law and accountancy – especially from the Social Mobility Commission – but much less about success into managerial positions for example. We do not know very much about the journeys people take through employing organisations and the factors that contribute to success.

4.3 Everyone needs some up-to-date labour market information to understand the major patterns and trends in employment and the opportunities they present for young people

in localities and regions. Local Enterprise Councils often take this overview and it might be that more of this information needs to be shared with careers services and schools. LEPs know what local what employers want in their new employees with literacy and numeracy skills being high on the list of priorities. They do not just want formal qualifications however. They also want young people with certain 'attitudinal dispositions' who are hard-working, open and flexible.

4.4 The role of careers guidance must be to help young people – and the people that are mostly likely to advise them – to navigate the qualifications system. It should help them understand the choices in front of them, the decisions they need to make and the consequences of those decisions if it closes off some avenues that might be of interest later on. The appropriate interventions, guidance and support should be made in the run-up to the critical time when decisions are being made at different 'branching points' in the education and training systems.

4.5 The government has an important role in persuading employers to offer work placements and input into vocational education and training. There needs to be a set of positive incentives that encourage employers to do so. Large employers find this easier to do than SMEs. There are various costs associated with these activities – which detract from core business narrowly defined - and they should not be denied. These activities are long-term investments which do not always flow back to an individual employer. It might be that tax relief is an area that encourages SMEs to step up to this activity.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

5.1 Young peoples' parents and wider family – or local authorities for young men and women in care – play a pivotal role in supporting them in the transition from school to work. So too do teachers and careers advisors in school and further education colleges as the institutions outside the family most involved in school-to-work transitions. The role of government must be to help both families (which come in many forms and some need more support than others) and education providers in their support of young people as well as direct support for young people too.

5.2 As transitions change with the possibility of 14-year-olds attending college for particular courses for example, it will be good to see schools and colleges 'hooked up' to each other so that youth transitions can be monitored and reviewed. This would ensure nobody disappears off the radar and successful transitions are noted and copied. This could be done at local and regional level by local authorities. They should work in tandem with local enterprise partnerships that are especially cognisant of employers and employment opportunities in a locality and the training and skills required to match young people to available jobs.

5.3 Of course, parents are usually mostly concerned about the life chances of their children. It is important for government – via the appropriate bodies – to take an overarching view to ensure that all young people – irrespective of gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, family circumstances and locality – have equal life chances and possibilities for career advancement and social mobility. If review and monitoring suggests any such group is being disadvantaged, intervention is needed to help those in disadvantaged positions achieve their full potential as much as the advantaged.

5.4 Lots of other organisations can help school-to-work transitions. Alliance Manchester Business School (Prof Devine is Head) is involved in a Business in the Community Initiative (part of the Prince's Responsible Business Network) which has led to a local partnership with inner-city schools, Levenshulme School for Girls and Whalley Range School for Girls (led by Head Patsy Kane). Collaboration has taken the form of Alliance MBS staff becoming school governors, participating in open days, coaching sessions and parent and young people visiting the Business School.

5.5 These activities support the University of Manchester's commitment to social responsibility as an elite Russell Group University in a city which is economically vibrant but still blighted by high levels of social deprivation. It is just one modest example of how education providers in different parts of the education system can connect. Arguably, the same point can be made with regard to schools, colleges and employers. Many interventions of this kind are being made already and all of them contribute to the improvement of young men and women's transition through education into employment.

Professors Fiona Devine and Yaojun Li, University of Manchester

14 September 2015

Professor Saul Becker and Dr Joe Sempik – Written evidence (SMO0137)

Young Carers: the impact of caring on education, social mobility and life chances

Professor Saul Becker, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Head of the College of Social Sciences, University of Birmingham.

Dr Joe Sempik, Senior Research Fellow, School of Social Policy, University of Birmingham

Imagine this...

You read in your newspaper that some investigative reporter has uncovered a group of young children, some as young as eight or nine who have to go work to support their families. This happens in a country where child labour was effectively abolished by legislation passed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The children work full time, often longer than the average adult working week of thirty seven and a half hours – sometimes fifty hours or longer. They work in a local care home and carry out the same tasks and duties as the adult care workers, for example, washing and bathing disabled people, older people, those with terminal conditions and others, feeding them, helping them to use the toilet, and administering medication. They are not protected by any health and safety legislation. They have to try and fit in their schooling around the work at the care home and often miss school and do badly in exams. They complain of a range of ailments, including mental health and emotional problems.

You learn from the newspaper that the children are not paid but there is some sort of arrangement in place that helps their families. You also learn that by not paying the children, the proprietor of the care home saves himself an awful lot of money. And finally, you read that this is not a small group of children, there are not tens, or hundreds, or thousands, or even tens of thousands but hundreds of thousands of these children. You say to yourself “Something must be done about this”. But the only difference between these fictitious children, and young carers and young adult carers is that the ‘care homes’ of the former are the family homes of the latter.

Young Carers: a brief introduction

According to Census figures and other statistics from the UK, Australia, the USA and other countries, at least 2-4% of *all* children in advanced societies provide unpaid care-giving within their own families.⁵⁰⁸ These children, ‘young carers,’ can be defined as young people under the age of 18 who provide care, assistance or support to another family member. They carry out, often on a regular basis, significant or substantial caring tasks and assume a level of responsibility that would usually be associated with an adult.

⁵⁰⁸ Becker, S. ‘Global perspectives on children as caregivers: research and policy on “young carers” in the UK, Australia, the United States and sub-Saharan Africa’, *Global Social Policy*, 7(1) (2007). pp. 23-50.

The person receiving care is most often a parent (usually the mother) but can be a sibling, grandparent or any other relative who has a disability, chronic illness or other condition that requires support or supervision.

The 2001 Census of the population showed that around 150,000 children in England and Wales could be classified as young carers. By the 2011 Census, the number had increased to 178,000, a rise of 19%. The data show that children as young as 5 are caring, and some for over 50 hours per week. Indeed, there was an 83% *increase* from the 2001 Census to the 2011 Census in the number of children *aged 5-7* in the UK who are young carers. Our research shows that many children are introduced to caring from a very early age. For example, this is the experience of a young woman caring for her mother:

“I first started picking things up off the floor for my mum before I could talk. She made it into a little game. But as the years have gone on, her condition has deteriorated greatly and now [she] is nearly always using her crutches except in the house and needs a wheelchair for moderate to long distances.”⁵⁰⁹

The UK Census figures may under-represent the true prevalence of children’s involvement in unpaid care work because they rely on parents’ self-reporting of their children’s caring roles, and many parents may be reluctant to disclose that their child is a carer. In 2010, the BBC and The University of Nottingham conducted a national survey of 4,000 secondary school pupils, asking them *directly* whether *they* provided certain types of caring roles within their families. This survey found that 8% of young people reported carrying out intimate personal care such as washing and feeding their parents and other family members – much higher than the Census figures suggested.⁵¹⁰

Three UK-wide surveys conducted between 1995 and 2003, of young carers in contact with dedicated support services, provide a statistical profile of the characteristics of these young people⁵¹¹. The surveys show that the average age of young carers supported by projects is just twelve years. Hence, the caring role has the potential to cause severe impact on these children’s education and exam results, and on their transition into adulthood, leading to poorer employment opportunities and advancement in the workplace.

⁵⁰⁹ Comment provided by young adult carer in the online survey, 2013

⁵¹⁰ BBC News, ‘Cameron warns on child carer cuts’, BBC survey, 16 November 2010.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-11757907>

⁵¹¹ Dearden, C. and Becker, S. *Young Carers: The Facts* (Sutton: Reed Business Publishing, 1995); Dearden, C. and Becker, S. *Young Carers in the United Kingdom: A Profile* (London: Carers National Association, 1998); Dearden, C. and Becker, S. *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report* (London: Carers UK, 2004).

Response to request for evidence

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

For young carers and young adult carers (those aged 14 to 25) there are barriers to them engaging with further and higher education, and obtaining good qualifications and securing employment. Their caring responsibilities substantially interfere with their schooling and their ability to engage with education. Our recent research has shown that due to their caring role, those young people still at school miss, on average, 5% of their school days, are late on 14% of the days; and have to leave early on 6% of days. In total, therefore, a quarter of their school days are compromised because of their caring role.⁵¹²

Our research shows that almost all of those at school (94%) say that they would like, at some time, to go to university (and therefore find a good job) however around a quarter (26%) feel they were unlikely to get good enough grades to go to university. Hence, there is a need to provide some form of additional help to those who would like to go to higher education but are experiencing some difficulties at school. But in response to our survey, only a minority of those at school (29%) said that they had a particular individual who recognised their needs as young carers and supported them; hence, there is a need for recognition of their caring role by school staff and appropriate educational (and probably pastoral) support.

Our results also show that the young people are unsure about whether they can afford to go to college or university; 24% thought they could not afford to go, and 41% were 'Not Sure'. Additionally, they were unsure or unaware of the financial support that could be available to them through university and college scholarships. Only 27% of respondents knew that they could get a scholarship, whilst 31% thought that they could not, and 43% were unsure⁵¹³. This suggests that schools, colleges and universities should make more information available that describes the different funding opportunities available for young carers (and also for other vulnerable young people).

In addition to the difficulties caused by the time demands of their caring roles, our research suggests that many of those young adult carers have other difficulties of their own which can further hamper their progress through education and into employment. Thirty eight percent reported having mental health or emotional problems⁵¹⁴. However, there was no clear relationship between the extent of caring as measured by the Multidimensional Assessment of Caring Activities (MACA) questionnaire and the likelihood of reporting mental health problems⁵¹⁵. It is not clear whether the caring role

⁵¹² Sempik, J. and Becker, S. (2013) *Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education*. London: Carers Trust, p. 11

⁵¹³ Op. cit p. 14.

⁵¹⁴ Op. cit. p. 8.

⁵¹⁵ Unpublished analysis of survey data.

causes the difficulties or whether they are present because of the underlying difficulties of the family. It is more than likely that the impact of the caring role is affected by the context in which it occurs i.e. socioeconomic, geographical and demographic factors and further research is urgently needed to explore those factors.

There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

We do not have specific data for young carers and young adult carers in relation to this question. However, we can surmise that there is a group of young adult carers who, because of their caring role, will be unable to take A levels and go into higher education. Their caring role may also prevent them from seeking and obtaining employment. If they are sixteen or over, they will be eligible for Carer's Allowance and they may, therefore, become full time adult carers who are reliant on benefits (and hence with a low income). We do not know how many carers have followed such a path. It would be helpful in this respect to have data on the number of 16 to 24 year olds who are drawing Carer's Allowance (broken down by age). We do not know what eventually happens to such individuals. At what age does their caring role end? And how many of them are subsequently able to resume their education or find employment? These issues highlight the need for longitudinal studies of young adult carers. We suspect that issues around gender may also be involved, and that more young women than young men may end up in such a situation. We have included a brief (unpublished) comment on gender, caring and Census data in the Appendix at the end of this document. This explores this issue further.

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Our data show that those young adult carers who were in work were more likely to have higher qualifications than those who were not in work and not at college or university⁵¹⁶. While it may not be surprising that young people in work have higher qualifications than those who are not in work, in the context of young adult carers it may be important. Controversially perhaps, these findings suggest that the young people may be failing to find work because of their educational qualifications rather than choosing not to work to fulfil their caring roles. However, the reality is that it is likely to be a combination of lower qualifications coupled with growing expectations for young adult carers to provide

⁵¹⁶Sempik, J. and Becker, S. (2014) *Young Adult Carers and Employment*. London: Carers Trust p.13

ongoing care that lead to a higher proportion of lower qualified young adult carers who are not in work.

Because of their caring role, many young adult carers have to seek employment that is close to their homes, or provides them with the flexibility that enables them to continue to care. This means that they will not always obtain the jobs that are best suited to them or that offer the best opportunities for advancement. Because of these limitations, some may be not able to find work at all. Our research has shown that, overall, around 40% of young adult carers who are in work seek employment close to home, and that for the same percentage it is 'the only work they could find'⁵¹⁷. However, more of those who have been to college or university are able to find work that suits them. Whilst again this is not surprising, the limitation on where they can work makes the need for decent qualifications the more important.

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

There is a need for recognition of the caring role by schools and appropriate provision of support. In our research, many young adult carers did not inform school staff that they were carers because they felt "there was no point". Services and support that are provided should be clearly visible (and so should their outcomes) so that these young people feel that there is a point in telling their teachers and school staff.

Employers need to understand the demands placed upon young adult carers by their caring roles and be able to provide flexibility in their working arrangements. Importantly, they should not penalise those young people by limiting their opportunities for promotion and advancement, but instead should support them, including where appropriate, in their continuing education by funding courses and providing time for study. Employers should recognise the skills and maturity that these young people have gained from their caring roles and capitalise upon them (to the advantage of both parties).

In our recent research, only a minority of young carers (15%) reported that they had had a formal assessment of their own needs by their local authority. This confirmed findings from a previous survey of young carers carried out in 2004 (Dearden and Becker, 2004⁵¹⁸) which showed that only 18% had received an assessment of their needs. The recently enacted Care Act 2014 places a duty upon local authorities to be strategic (i.e. proactive) in their approach to identifying young carers and in providing proper assessments and services. Hence, there is a need to monitor the situation in order to see that young adult carers are, indeed, receiving assessments and support as required.

⁵¹⁷ Op. cit p.14.

⁵¹⁸ Dearden, C. and Becker, S. *Young Carers in the UK: The 2004 Report*. London: Carers UK, 2004

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

For young adult carers, schools should provide appropriate educational support (as mentioned above) and also good career advice. Less than half of those young carers at school (46%) reported receiving good career advice and only 19% reported that such career advice took into consideration their caring role⁵¹⁹. Appropriate career advice is particularly important for this group of young people. Our subsequent research with young adult carers at college and university has shown that around a third (32%) were taking courses that could be described as 'caring' (child care, nursing, social work etc). By this stage, only 22% reported that they had received good career advice.

Caring jobs are frequently low paid and there is a danger that young people who have been immersed in a caring role for a substantial part of their lives will not necessarily be able to see other opportunities. This notion is supported by previous research. For example, (Dearden and Becker, 2000⁵²⁰) write: "There may be a danger of young adult carers moving into caring jobs or professions because they feel these are the only skills they have to offer. Many of these jobs will be low paid with few prospects". In a study by Frank et al (1999)⁵²¹, half of a sample of former young carers aged 19-65 attributed their choice of a caring profession to their experiences of a caring role.

Careers advice and advice on education can also be provided through young carers and young adult carers projects. However, more resources may need to be made available for this to be conducted more effectively. Our research shows that young adult carers benefit in many ways by attending such projects. This includes gaining self-confidence, improving school attendance and sometimes finding employment. However, our sample of respondents was recruited through such young carers and young adult carers projects. There are many young carers who do not attend projects like these and so are missing out on the support they could get. Resources are needed to identify those young people who do not attend projects and who would benefit from them; and also to help fund projects if the demand increases.

As mentioned above, there is a duty for local authorities to be strategic in their identification and provision of support for young carers and young adult carers. Part of this support should focus on career guidance and advice.

⁵¹⁹ Sempik, J. and Becker, S. (2013) *Young Adult Carers at School: Experiences and Perceptions of Caring and Education*. London: Carers Trust, p. 10

⁵²⁰ Dearden, C. and Becker, S. *Growing Up Caring: Vulnerability and Transition to Adulthood - Young Carers' Experiences*. Leicester: Youth Work Press for the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000.

⁵²¹ Frank, J., Tatum C. and Tucker C. *On Small Shoulders: Learning from the Experiences of Former Carers*. London: Children's Society, 1999.

Young Carers: a 'special group'

At a recent seminar hosted by NIACE and the Department of Education (March 2015) there was some discussion about whether Young Carers and Young Adult Carers constituted a 'distinct' or 'special' group, or whether they should be considered as part of the more general group of vulnerable children or children in need.

We are strongly of the opinion that they are a distinct group for the following reasons:

- Young carers and young adult carers carry out a role that in the general workplace (care homes, hospitals and other similar institutions) is normally performed by trained adults
- That role involves a high level of responsibility, and also empathy which in the general world of employment would be classed as 'emotional labour'.
- The role often involves a high level of specialist skill and knowledge
- They are not paid, and by not being paid they save a substantial amount of money for health and social care services.
- Their role as carers does not end when they reach adulthood. Whilst for many vulnerable children the transition into adulthood is difficult, slow and often painful, services and support posit 'a light at the end of the tunnel' where the young person can develop as an independent adult. For many young carers the transition to adulthood simply means a change from being young carers to being adult carers. That role often becomes more intensified as the condition of the person they care for deteriorates.

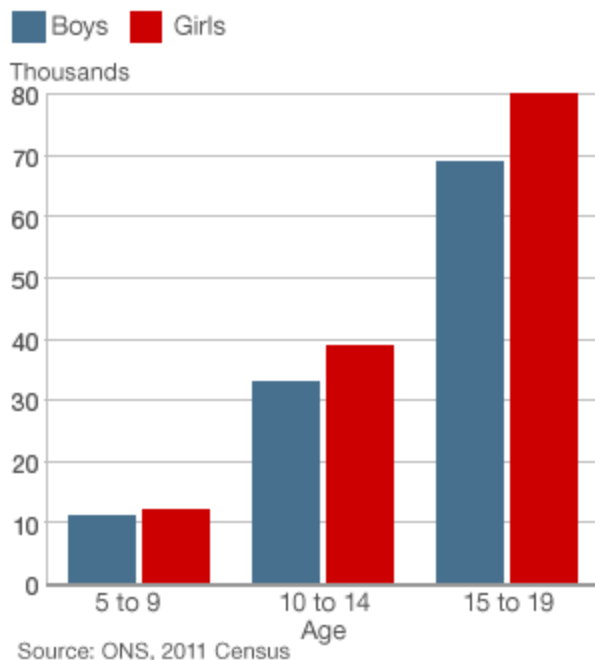
Appendix: Some issues and questions regarding gender, age and caring

The BBC in their analysis of the 2011 Census Data⁵²² wrote:

“Girls are slightly more likely to be carers than boys. Among 15-to-19-year-olds, about 5% of girls are carers and about 4% of boys”

and presented the data in the graph below.

Young carers in England and Wales



Source: BBC Online

This suggests that there is a small difference between genders. Their method of analysis, by grouping all levels of caring together, obscures the fact that at the higher end of caring more girls than boys are involved in providing care. Their use of language also serves to make this difference appear small – the difference between 4% and 5% is one percentage point, but proportionately the difference is a quarter; and in human terms this, is 10,000 young people.

The following table shows caring by number of hours of care provided and gender.

⁵²² <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-22529237>

Caring by hours of care provision and gender

	Number in population aged 0 to 24	Hours of caring and numbers caring		
		1 - 19 hours	20 - 49	50 +
Male	8,549,033.00	150,191.00	28,632.00	18,733.00
	Percent	1.76	0.33	0.22
Female	8,242,910.00	171,699.00	34,095.00	28,900.00
	Percent	2.08	0.41	0.35

What this shows, is that 0.35% of girls and 0.22% of boys provide more than 50 hours of caring; over 10,000 more girls (around 60% more) than boys provide this high level of care.

So, it would seem that more girls than boys provide the higher levels of care. But even this analysis obscures another important fact – that more older girls do the high levels of care provision than older boys. See tables below. The yellow section highlights the older ones and the highest level of care provision.

Male

Age	Population	Hours of care provision, number caring					
		1 to 19		20 to 49		50+	
		Population	Percent	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
0 to 4	1,788,307	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000
5 to 7	984,846	3,324	0.338	589	0.060	817	0.083
8 to 9	618,600	4,426	0.715	584	0.094	771	0.125
10 to 14	1,652,753	27,457	1.661	3,136	0.190	2,860	0.173
15 to 16	348,319	9,110	2.615	1,167	0.335	797	0.229
17 to 18	696,036	22,336	3.209	3,237	0.465	2,057	0.296
18 to 19	652,967	22,842	3.498	4,893	0.749	2,637	0.404
20 to 24	1,807,205	60,696	3.359	15,026	0.831	8,794	0.487

Female

Age	Population	Hours of care provision, number caring					
		1 to 19		20 to 49		50+	
		Population	Percent	Population	Percent	Population	Percent
0 to 4	1,705,731	0	0.000	0	0.000	0	0.000
5 to 7	941,257	3,853	0.409	577	0.061	825	0.088
8 to 9	588,490	4,998	0.849	620	0.105	749	0.127
10 to 14	1,580,308	31,805	2.013	3,907	0.247	3,101	0.196

14							
15	329,352	10,486	3.184	1,322	0.401	966	0.293
16 to							
17	662,596	24,973	3.769	4,283	0.646	2,785	0.420
18							
to19	628,362	25,334	4.032	5,893	0.938	4,016	0.639
20 to							
24	1,806,814	70,250	3.888	17,493	0.968	16,458	0.911

So, almost twice as many young women as young men aged 20 to 24 provide 50+ hours of care, 16,458 compared with 8,794, i.e. 0.9% of the population in that age range versus 0.5%; or put another way, almost twice as much.

If you add the figures of the 16 to 24 age groups to get the total, you find that 23,259 females provide more than 50 hours of care, compared with 13,488 males. A difference of almost 10,000 or around 75%. For the 18 to 24 age group the difference is around 80%. This part of the data simply highlights the issue that more girls than boys are involved in providing unpaid care.

24 November 2015

Professor Karen Evans and Professor Ingrid Schoon – Written evidence (SMO0056)

The ‘Missing Middle’: How young people make their way through combinations of further education and work.

Co-authors: Karen Evans and Ingrid Schoon

UCL Institute of Education, University College London

Centre for Learning and Life Chances (LLAKES)

1. Despite efforts of governments and policy makers to increase participation rates in post secondary education, such as the “Europe 2020” goals aiming for at least 85 percent of all 22-year-olds in the European Union to complete upper-secondary education and maximum 10% of all pupils to leave school early by 2012, the rate of early school leavers in the UK has remained higher than in most other European countries. In 2012 the rate of early school leavers was still above 10% (European Commission, 2012) and the participation rate in higher education among 17 to 30 year olds was 49% (BIS, 2013). Thus a large group of young people in the UK do not continue in education or go to university. This group has been identified as ‘The Forgotten Half’ (Birdwell & Margo, 2011; Halperin, 2010; Rosenbaum, 2001, Schoon, 2015) raising the challenge of providing appropriate institutional support for all young people, not only those who go to university. There is still a lack of understanding of how young people negotiate the transition to independent adulthood. A more detailed understanding of the pathways taken by young people and associated push and pull factors can provide better insight and leverage of how to target policy interventions.
2. We used data from the Longitudinal Study of Young People in England (LSYPE), a cohort of young people born in 1989/90 to examine their transitions through education and into employment, following their lives between ages 16 to 19. Using monthly data on economic activity we could identify six distinct clusters, comprising a group of young people with extended education, i.e. those on an academic track (45%), a group who entered into apprenticeships (6%), those who entered employment after some further education (14%), a group who entered employment directly after compulsory school leaving age (21%), a small group that was mostly unemployed after

some further education beyond age 16 /7%), and a group who were for a long time not in education, employment or training (NEET) (6%).

3. The findings suggest that even in a current cohort extended educational participation and attending university is not the norm. Instead we find a large group of young people who make their way through attachment to the labour market (comprising about 41%), as well as two different groups, comprising about 13% of the population, who encounter a problematic employment transition (i.e. either long-time NEET or experience of unemployment after some further education).
4. Young men and women from relative disadvantaged background are generally more likely to leave school early than their more privileged peers, even those with good abilities and high motivation. In the UK, for example, there is evidence to suggest that privileged young people with low academic ability have benefited most from the expansion of higher education, not the most able. Young people from less privileged backgrounds continue to be over-represented among early labor market entrants and longer-term NEET (not in education, employment or training) populations (see also Crawford, Duckworth, K., Vignoles, A., & Wyness, 2011). Social housing and low parental education are key markers of this social disadvantage. Young people in apprenticeships and those who experience unemployment after some further education do not differ regarding their social background from young people on the academic track. We furthermore found area differences, and compared to those on an academic track, those in apprenticeships, who experience unemployment after some education or are longer-term NEET come from areas characterized by high deprivation (measured through the index of multiple deprivation indicating high levels of unemployment, crime, lack of education, hospitals).
5. We also assessed levels of life satisfaction among the different groups and found that those on the academic track, the apprentices and those who were employed after some education showed the highest level of life satisfaction. And those who experienced unemployment after some education or long-term NEET were least satisfied with their lives. There is thus more than one optimal pathway associated with

the successful negotiation of the transition to adulthood, suggesting different strategies in the pacing and sequencing of transitions.

6. The heterogeneity of pathways stands in contrast to current debates focusing on a new norm and ideal-type pathway. Acknowledging the complexity of transition experiences, it is important to highlight the diversity of pathways, and the existence of a 'forgotten middle' who try to make their way through attachment to the labour market and a combination of work and further education and training. Current policy thinking is dominated by the assumption of a linear career path moving from full time education to full time employment. The findings presented here suggest the need for the revision of currently dominant templates and the introduction of new, more flexible and diversified models, taking into account the experiences of different subgroups of the population, their need for career path flexibility including combining different social roles, and opportunities for achieving a tolerable living standard.
7. Leaving education relatively early with a good post-secondary qualification and engaging in continuous full-time employment is not a minority pattern in youth transitions, neither is it necessarily a bad strategy if there are jobs available that pay a decent salary. Income earned through longer-term full-time employment enables financial independence, the move into one's own home, and supporting one's own family at an earlier pace than among those who continue in higher education. What is required is the creation and provision of pathways to prosperity among future workers at every education level (Symonds et al., 2011). Regardless of formal training requirements, however, workers of the future will be expected to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge throughout their labour market career, not just at the beginning. This might also imply shifting to new lines of work when old ones have become obsolete. It is thus important to introduce options for career flexibility, for life-long learning, and the introduction of a national qualification framework that enables not only greater articulation and movement between different educational tracks and systems, but also clear routes and 'lines of sight' to future opportunities. The Tomlinson Report (2004) previously mounted arguments and evidence for such frameworks. The arguments and evidence in support of a unified Baccalaureate

framework, including the Technical Baccalaureate, have become increasingly compelling. Pathways to successful transitions should also enable the combination of education, work and family commitments along a flexible time table.

8. ***Improving Economic Prospects and Support for Young People*** -Furthermore, there is a need to improve the economic prospects of young people without an academic degree and to pay a living wage for those in full-time employment. As described by McLanahan and Jacobsen (Chap. 1), wages for low-skilled men have declined since the 1970s – a trend that needs to be reversed. Since the 1970s, economic growth has continued. Yet, the incomes of the poorest fifth have increased by just 16%, while incomes of the richest fifth have soared by 95% (Mishel & Shierholz, 2013). In addition, the incomes of middle class families have not kept up with economic growth. For young people the situation looks worse, as they have seen their wages stagnate, even for some years prior to the recession. In the UK, those aged 16-29 not only experienced stagnation – they saw a decrease in wages since 2003 (Hurrell, 2012). Another issue to be considered is that in the absence of institutionalized support structures for young people, parents are expected to pick up and accept the financial responsibility for their children, paying for their continued education or prolonged transitions (Andres & Wyn, 2010; Settersten & Ray, 2010), although there is no legislation increasing the age limit for parental responsibility (Jones, 2009). There have been legal battles over parental responsibility in different European countries, and parents and adult children will likely continue to seek clarification through litigation (Jones, 2005). For now, this leaves a gap in the social protection arrangements for those unable to draw on parental support and a situation where parents have to decide whether to support their children's access to further education or a prolonged dependence because they control the financial resources. This lack of support also comes into play regarding the weak position of young people entering the housing market and difficulties in finding accommodation at a reasonable rent.
9. Many young people have to make the transition to adulthood with only minimal or no assistance or support, especially those who are not on an academic track. While the

route to a university education has been described as a well signposted motorway (which is supported through state subsidies), the route into work for 16-20 year olds is more like “an unmarked field of landmines” (ACEVO, 2012). Young people need information and guidance about how to navigate their way into the world of work, and clear, high-quality progression routes should be available - in particular for those who do not obtain a higher education degree. Leaving young people without the support they need to forge their pathways to independence and prosperity will have implications for generations to come. Since young people of today are the parents of tomorrow’s children and also have to feed the pensions of the older generation, their welfare and pathways to independence should be a major concern to policy makers and governments.

10. **Barriers and alternative routes** - There are a number of deep-seated interrelated factors that have contributed to this country’s inability to deliver a coherent, comprehensive, high-quality vocational education and training route for the young. These include an education system that in some cases produces young people who want nothing more to do with formalized learning; a society that has low expectations of what many young people can achieve, an implicit belief that many are destined for unemployment or a life of low-skill work that requires little in the way of formal preparation; cynicism (often well-founded) about the quality of provision on government training schemes aimed at the unemployed; the continued existence of employment opportunities for the young that offer little or no training and preferences of some UK employers to recruit overseas rather than invest in the home grown workforce. The result has been that work-based learning and much vocational education and training for the young that have, in effect, been aimed largely at the lower achievers from the schools system. Reforming our system so as to provide high quality opportunities for those young people not in full-time education is a priority both because all young people need to be able to participate productively in further learning not only up to the age of 18 but also beyond the period of compulsory participation, and also because without a high-quality system that includes work-based

learning for the young, the foundations necessary for an effective system of lifelong learning will be missing.

11. If there were a simple solution to these issues, it would have been discovered and adopted long ago. Furthermore, economic and political circumstances, combined with recent institutional and political history, significantly constrain the avenues that are available for policy development. The effort invested in the creation of institutional mechanisms and modes of delivery that have subsequently been discarded has led to disillusionment and cynicism about future developments. Simply tinkering with the institutional mechanisms is not a sufficient response. The case for a quality vocational route that incorporated young people's labour market attachments and was 'good enough for any young person to enter' was promoted through the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) paper 'Working to Learn' more than fifteen years ago. That report concluded that failure to attempt more far-reaching reform, based upon higher expectations and active partnership between all those involved in the provision of learning opportunities for the young, would mean that '10 years from now we will still be bemoaning the inadequacy of provision for young entrants to the labour force.' (p.46). More than fifteen years on from that report, a Technical Baccalaureate and a levy system on larger employers to support apprenticeship are at last in view but with much remaining to be done. There is a need for government stimulation of the capacity of small and medium-sized firms - which account for a very large proportion of employment of young people- to offer more and better work-based learning opportunities, with public funding of the broader educational elements, and entitlements of learners to job-specific, occupational and general education secured through nationally agreed frameworks. It is realistic and right for such employers to have the right to choose their levels of involvement, and this should be balanced by an acceptance of nationally and locally agreed programme standards, and partnership structures where employers have a key role and a strong voice, as should others such as education representatives and the trade unions. Group training

schemes could also have a greater role in stimulating the training capacity of small and medium-sized firms.

12. **Conclusion.** Young people have to carve their pathways to adulthood based on the resources and opportunities that are available to them. Not all young people can pursue an academic career, and access to educational opportunities remains shaped by social background. The findings presented here question the assumption of universality in the timing and sequencing of the transitions to adulthood as well as the link between early role transitions and subsequent well-being. There is more than one optimal pathway to a happy and satisfying life. Moving towards a more flexible and dynamic understanding of youth transitions and the recognition and support of diverse pathways, implies better support for viable and high quality alternative routes to success for those of the 'missing middle' who try to make their way through attachments to the labour market and a combination of work and further education and training.

Karen Evans and Ingrid Schoon

14 September 2015

Professor Alison Fuller and Professor Lorna Unwin – Written evidence (SMO0010)

Note for the House of Lords Committee on Social Mobility

Smoke and Mirrors: the progression challenges facing young people in England

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1. Introduction

In this note, we argue that the current approach to education and training from the age of 16 inhibits social mobility for some young people and lacks the level of consistency and support required to provide them with an adequate platform for further progression in both education and the labour market. Furthermore, the approach is based on an impoverished and short-term view of the skills and knowledge required in the workplace. We focus particularly on the challenges facing young people from the age of 16 (the majority) who do not continue in full-time general education to take (only) A levels in order to enter university (the ‘royal’ route). The continued dominance of the ‘royal’ route reflects an education system designed (to borrow an analogy from Bauman)⁵²³ to produce ‘waste’. Since the mid-1970s when the youth labour market began to collapse, the system has created a waste recycling industry (in the form of endless ‘schemes’) to cope with the fall-out⁵²⁴. As a result, we are not only failing young people, but also doing harm to our economy and society more generally.

Unlike in some other European countries, non-royal route 16-24 year olds in the UK do not participate in a nationally consistent programme of vocational education and training (VET). Instead, they are presented with a complex variety of programmes of different lengths⁵²⁵ and levels, leading to qualifications with different exchange values provided by a mix of private and public sector organisations. In addition, there has been no standardised curricular requirement for all those pursuing full-time vocational qualifications post-16 to receive formal classroom tuition in English and Maths⁵²⁶. The degree of choice of programme varies from one geographical area to another as does the

⁵²³ Bauman, Z. (2008) *Wasted Lives* (Cambridge, Polity Press).

⁵²⁴ Unwin, L. (2010) ‘Learning and working from the MSC to New Labour: young people, skills and employment’, *National Institute Economic Review*, No.212, April.

⁵²⁵ So-called full-time education and training for this age group generally means 15 to 16 hours per week, in comparison to the 30 to 35 hours per week common in other European countries.

⁵²⁶ It should also be noted that those following the academic route have not been required to continue studying English and Maths alongside their choice of A levels either.

extent of a work-based component, the amount of genuine off-the-job training/education, and the strength of connections between the providers and employers. Setting out to navigate this bewildering landscape has been made increasingly difficult due to the collapse in careers advice and guidance. At the end of this note (see Appendix), we provide an example from the UCAS website of the type of information that young people and their advisers have to sift through to make sense of the array of qualifications on offer following GCSEs. Though the variety might be appealing, there is a noticeable confusion of purpose here.

There is, however, a nationally shared understanding about the purpose and value of A levels and Degrees (albeit with some caveats about certain types). Outside that box, however, it is not surprising that young people and their parents/guardians are unsure about which route to take, whilst employers complain about not being able to recruit suitably qualified and work-ready people. There are, of course, notable exceptions to this story. They include some world-class apprenticeships and excellent full-time vocational programmes, which develop both occupational expertise and underpinning theoretical knowledge to a level that takes the learner beyond the level required for the immediate job. The problem is they shine as beacons in a foggy landscape and continue to be seen as exceptions rather than the foundations on which to build a better and more equitable system.

This note is structured round three interrelated themes: a) bringing an occupational purpose to post-16 education and training; b) standardization of qualifications; and c) capacity to do better.

2. Bringing an occupational purpose to post-16 VET

Post-16 VET is a fluid space accommodating everything from remedial basic skills through to sub-degree level courses, including Higher Apprenticeships. Various factors can account for this including the serendipitous history of Further Education (FE)⁵²⁷, a largely unregulated labour market, attempts to provide 'second chance' education, and the frenetic activity of government ministers anxious to introduce new initiatives and 'reforms'. For the past 30 or so years, the VET component of post-16 has been conceived in terms of preparation for and attainment of the 'competence' required to perform specific jobs tasks. This is based on the assumption that people can and should be assessed against individual competences when they are ready, rather than being assessed in relation to their achievements during a whole programme of education and training.

⁵²⁷ Bailey, B. and Unwin, L. (2014) Continuity and Change in English Further Education: a century of voluntarism and permissive adaptability, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 62(4): 449-464.

This is in stark contrast to an occupationally-based approach, which has at its heart the concept of participation in a staged ‘journey’ towards occupational proficiency. The most stark illustration of the difference can be found in the current approach to apprenticeships, which are offered at Levels 2, 3, and 4, and now include Degree Apprenticeships. This fragmented approach sets the UK apart from other countries where apprenticeships are only available for occupations, which the State recognises as ‘skilled’ (taking at least two and usually three plus years to complete), and where there is one integrated apprenticeship per defined occupation.⁵²⁸ With an approach that differentiates apprenticeship programmes by level, it will be necessary for someone to complete more than one apprenticeship and/or other courses of training and associated qualifications to climb the relevant ladder of occupational expertise. Similarly, not all full-time vocational programmes lead to occupational proficiency.

The allocation of apprenticeships, programmes and qualifications to levels might, on the surface, seem to provide a transparent and sensible way to organize a VET system. Yet, there has been an ‘anything goes’ approach to the inclusion of job titles and job roles across and within the levels. In relation to apprenticeships in STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) fields, the fact that apprentices from Level 2 to Level 5 can be classed as a ‘technician’ shows that there is no shared understanding of this term and what it might signify in terms of the level of skills required in an occupational field. Where apprenticeship has been grafted on to an occupation with a strong history and culture (as was traditionally the case in the UK), supported by institutional regulation and professional registration, it is more likely that there will still be a strong connection between occupational identity and apprenticeship. However, the overall picture is one of a weak relationship as apprenticeships and VET provision more generally are conceived first and foremost in terms of job-related competences. An occupation-based approach would require both apprenticeships and full-time VET programmes to be standardized in terms of content, length, and attainment expectations. In the Netherlands, for example, employers know that a young person who has completed a full-time vocational programme will have studied for three years, completed both vocational and general education courses, completed three mandatory 10-week work placements, and be qualified to a level recognized in their industry. We need to develop a similar supportive framework for young people to enable them to make the journey of maturation required to prepare for, enter and succeed in the labour market and to continue to progress both educationally and occupationally. At the moment, if a young person completes a Level 2 apprenticeship or vocational programme at 17, they are likely to remain vulnerable as they may not have matured sufficiently to find decent employment or developed the

⁵²⁸ Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2013) *Apprenticeship and the Concept of Occupation*, London: Gatsby Foundation.

necessary grounding of skills and knowledge to enable them to progress. In addition, analysis of the rates of return (in terms of wages) to vocational qualifications has consistently shown they vary by sector, by gender, and by level.⁵²⁹

The features that characterize the English system limit progression and, therefore, the opportunity to reduce skills inequalities, in contrast to models providing longer, standardised higher level provision for all participants are more likely to achieve. Andy Green and Nic Pensiero's (2015) recent analysis⁵³⁰ of OECD survey data has shown that those countries with strong upper secondary vocational provision offered either via the dual system of school-based approaches have been more successful in reducing skills inequalities in literacy and numeracy than England. Young people with low level skills are more likely to be NEET, have access to poorly paid precarious forms of employment and, hence, diminished chances for social mobility.

We do, of course, know how to develop VET programmes equivalent to the best in Europe. A very good example is the training required to become a dental technician. The General Dental Council specifies the occupational standards (including theoretical and practical elements) that candidates have to meet in order to qualify for entry to the statutory register of dental technicians. These standards can only be achieved through successful completion of approved courses including a BTEC Extended Diploma in Dental Technology (Level 3) and an occupationally specific Foundation Degree (FD). Registration gives the individual access to the protected occupational title, a portable qualification, which is in effect a licence to practise, and recognition by registered dental laboratories who have to recruit and train staff in accordance with statutory regulations. The irony here is that, currently, these highly successful courses do not qualify for Advanced Apprenticeship funding.

The model used for dental technician training is an apprenticeship in the sense that there is a shared understanding within the occupation that there is a lot to be learned and a lot to be practised to achieve full occupational status with the capabilities to earn a living as an autonomous skilled practitioner.⁵³¹

This equates to what we have termed an 'expansive' apprenticeship.⁵³² Apprenticeships with expansive features have a range of characteristics including:

⁵²⁹ Lynch, S., Sims, D. and Wespieser, K. (2015) *A Literature Review of the Value of Vocational Qualifications*, Slough: NFER.

⁵³⁰ Green, A. and Pensiero, N. (2015) *Policy Briefing: The Effects of Upper Secondary Education and Training Systems on Skills Inequality*, London: LLAKES Research Centre, UCL IOE

⁵³¹ Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2009) *Change and continuity in apprenticeship: the resilience of a model of learning*. *Journal of Education and Work*, 22 (5): 405-416.

⁵³² See for example, Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2003) *Learning as Apprentices in the Contemporary UK Workplace: creating and managing expansive and restrictive participation*, *Journal of Education and Work*, 14 (4): 407-425; and Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2014) *Creating and Supporting Expansive Apprenticeships: A*

- the development of occupational expertise to a standard recognised across the relevant industry;
- training as a member of an occupational community with access to its rules, history, occupational knowledge and expertise;
- participation in different communities of practice, including inside and outside the workplace;
- qualifications that have labour market currency and support progression to the next career and, or education level;
- recognised status as a learner as well as an employee; and
- off-the-job training that includes time for reflection and stretches apprentices to reach their full potential.

By contrast, the characteristics of ‘restrictive’ apprenticeships include: treatment as essentially a productive employee, an extra pair of hands who only needs access to limited knowledge and skills to perform a narrowly conceived job role; limited opportunity to build capacity to progress beyond the current job; and limited opportunity to gain valuable and portable qualifications. We have argued that the practice of registering existing employees as apprentices (known as ‘conversion’) in programmes which amount to little more than providing accreditation of existing competence is indicative of a restrictive model of apprenticeship.⁵³³

3. Standardisation of qualifications

As was noted above, we currently have a highly cavalier approach (apart from some notable exceptions) to the part of post-16 education and training that involves the majority of young people. This is particularly problematic in relation to the currency and exchange value of vocational qualifications. . Given the continuing importance of qualifications in our society (as all A level and university students know), vocational qualifications should be playing an important role in relation to social mobility. The continued plethora of both general and vocational qualifications is a consequence of being the only country in the world with independent awarding bodies and, hence, a market-based approach to their development and promotion. There is considerable confusion on the part of employers and individuals about the status and content of qualifications. For example, some think NVQs are different from what they refer to as ‘a City and Guilds’ (they think this is special/better) and that all BTECs are of the same value. We have met civil servants who don’t know that HNDs/HNCs still exist or that they pre-date Foundation Degrees. Does this matter

guide for employers, training providers and colleges of further education, Coventry: National Apprenticeship Service.

⁵³³ Fuller, A., Unwin, L. Leonard, P. and Davey, G. (2015) *Does Apprenticeship Work for Adults? The experiences of adult apprentices in England*, London: UCL Institute of Education.

from a social mobility perspective? There are three reasons why:

1. At the moment, we cannot properly assess the quality of VET programmes because of the smoke and mirrors effect of the concept of 'Level' - at Levels 2 and 3, we have 'full fat' programmes and qualifications as well as 'skinny milk' versions - the student/apprentice/employer may not know the difference and assume, to paraphrase Gertrude Stein, that a 'Level 3 is a Level 3 is a Level 3'.
2. In relation to progression, we have already noted that despite being called 'vocational', some qualifications will not guarantee occupational proficiency. In addition, very few vocational qualifications are in the UCAS tariff and those that are do not always guarantee university entry on their own (i.e. a university may require an additional A level).⁵³⁴ In short, neither occupational nor educational progression routes are certain or transparent.
3. Level 2 vocational qualifications are officially classified in the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) as being equivalent to GCSEs at Grades A* to C. Yet some do not provide the necessary rigour in relation to mathematics and/or English for progression to Level 3. The majority of apprentices are on Level 2 apprenticeships and the majority of female apprentices are at Level 2, predominantly in lower-paid sectors (see Appendix 2).⁵³⁵

In considering the value of vocational qualifications in apprenticeship, we need to be particularly mindful of the 19-24 year old age group. The majority of apprentices (two thirds) are already in work when they start their apprenticeship ('conversion'). Survey data estimates that the 'conversion rate' in some personal service sectors such as Health and Social Care, where older apprentices dominate, is as high as 90 per cent. The use of NVQs as mandatory qualifications in apprenticeship has meant that it is possible (and certainly at Level 2) for an individual to complete an apprenticeship largely through having their existing competences accredited and with very little new training involved. This means that a 19-24 year old who has already been working for some time in a care home or in a restaurant, for example, may be classed as an apprentice, but will have not progressed in terms of their skills or knowledge. Apprenticeship is a litmus test of an economy and of a country's commitment to both VET and to young people.⁵³⁶

⁵³⁴ Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2012) *Banging on the Door of the University: The Complexities of Progression from Apprenticeship and other Vocational Programmes in England*, SKOPE Monograph 14, University of Oxford: SKOPE.

⁵³⁵ Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2013) *Gender Segregation, Apprenticeships and the Raising of the Participation Age in England: are young women at a disadvantage?*, LLAKES Research paper 44, available to download at <http://www.llakes.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/44.-Fuller-and-Unwin.pdf>

⁵³⁶ Fuller, A. and Unwin, L. (2011) The content of apprenticeship. In T. Dolphin and T. Lanning (eds) *Rethinking Apprenticeships*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

The development of intermediate level (Levels 3, 4 and 5) courses depends on whether there is demand from local employers. In our research in the health sector⁵³⁷, we found that in one area a shortage of qualified radiographers (a statutory profession) coupled with technological innovation had created scope for the devolution of some tasks, formerly only undertaken by radiographers. This created an opportunity for semi-skilled healthcare workers to be trained to fill new 'Radiography Associate Practitioner' posts via completion of a specially designed Foundation Degree. Local employer – education partnerships were put in place to develop the course and to enable 'top-up' progression to a bachelor degree in radiography. This model worked well at the local level by filling the local NHS Trust's workforce skill gaps and providing excellent intermediate education and training, and career development for a cohort of individuals. However, the lack of a national occupational and employment framework for creating jobs has meant that demand is uneven, the course is hard to sustain and the portability of the qualification is relatively weak.

Through research in healthcare sciences, we found that the separation of 'professionals' and 'laboratory assistants', had left the 'intermediate space' underdeveloped. In the past, many laboratory assistants would progress to the higher level via work-based training programmes. However as in other areas of healthcare, a move to graduate level entry aligned with professional registration requirements has disrupted this route and consequently intermediate level provision (HNC) has faded. The prospects for developing intermediate positions supported by appropriate vocational education are weakened by the wide availability of biomedical science graduates seeking work. This has lessened the need for employers to train existing workers to undertake intermediate tasks as they can recruit new graduates instead.

Another example comes from maternity support where there is now an intermediate gap between the Midwife (graduate entry) and healthcare assistant (no formal qualifications required for entry). In this occupational field, there is no clear link between the attainment of intermediate level qualifications at Level 3, 4 or 5 and career progression. It is left to individual employers to determine if they need to develop new intermediate roles and education and training pathways, as well as how they would articulate with subsequent entry to midwifery (or nursing) training. In this scenario, there is little incentive for colleges to invest in the development of new courses when the demand signals from 'the market' are weak.

The key message from our research is that without the development of clearly articulated and transparent training and qualification progression pathways, individuals are more likely to find themselves in occupational and educational cul-de-sacs. Again, opportunities

⁵³⁷ Fuller, A., Turbin, J., Unwin, L., Guile, D. and Winthrop, J. (2013) *Technician and Intermediate Roles in the Healthcare Sector*, London: Gatsby Foundation.

for vocational programmes and work-based routes to support social mobility and compensate for earlier shortcomings in the compulsory education system are being missed.

4. Capacity to do better

As we have already noted, we can and do organise and deliver excellent post-16 education and training in this country and we have a flexible FE/HE interface admired in other countries. Some of our local authorities are highly enterprising and persistent in their use of planning and procurement powers (though the latter are heavily restricted despite attempts to persuade successive governments to be bolder) to secure and open up access to apprenticeships and employment through regeneration and other types of public project.⁵³⁸ The public sector, including educational institutions, has been surprisingly deficient in this regard. Excellent practice, however, is fragmented and scattered across certain parts of certain sectors and institutions, and across the country. For young people (and indeed older adults) and for employers, this inconsistency is both wasteful and frustrating, whilst for the country it is the outcome of not taking initial and continuing VET, or the transition from education to employment seriously. Creating a system where what is currently considered excellent practice becomes the norm could make a powerful contribution to social mobility for young people and adults.

The devolution of the adult skills budget to Greater Manchester and further plans for stronger city-regions could provide the much-needed powers and stimulus to develop the type of locally determined strategies common in European countries with more effective youth transition systems. At the moment intermediate level VET is a much smaller part of our education system than in many other European countries because much of the labour market is unregulated – it has long been perceived wisdom in the UK that the skills required in the majority of jobs can be acquired without much training and that only a tiny minority require a ‘licence to practise’. This is an unacceptable truth so we create a veneer of a VET system through tricks such as re-badging government-supported youth and adult training as Apprenticeship (with a capital A) and paying employers to have the skills of their existing employees (who are converted into ‘apprentices’) accredited⁵³⁹.

The smoke and mirrors problem is further exacerbated by the lack of transparent and publicly available data. Data sources related to vocational learners and apprentices are

⁵³⁸ Fuller, A., Unwin, L. and Rizvi, S. (2013) Apprenticeship and regeneration: the civic struggles to achieve social and economic goals, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 61(1): 63-76.

⁵³⁹ Fuller, A., Leonard, P., Unwin, L. and Davey, G.(2015) Does Apprenticeship work for adults? The experiences of adult apprentices in England, London: UCL Institute of Education

fragmented and non-specific (e.g. types of vocational qualification are not differentiated) and there is limited ability to cross reference (e.g. by background, age and sector). As researchers, we have to put considerable effort into compiling charts and cross-referencing statistics.

Building a robust VET system also means investing in better trained and better paid specialist vocational teachers and trainers who then have the capacity and are afforded the discretion to work with employers and professional bodies to design programmes with serious content. We must also stop treating employers as an homogenous lump who all run businesses which need skilled people and who are willing to invest in workforce development. This distorted view of reality is causing us to repeatedly make poor policy decisions. Many employers struggle to understand the benefits of workforce development because they themselves have not participated in good quality VET (unlike for example managers and directors in a company like Rolls-Royce who were former apprentices). Some employers have low levels of educational attainment. This means providing employers with access to high quality business support to help them improve their businesses and hence create jobs and workplaces that are skill rich and where VET thrives. This means consolidating the types of providers who receive public funds for VET into a network of high quality institutions capable of providing business support as part of a holistic service for employers. Those employers, and particularly the large firms, who have consistently shown they provide excellent skill formation and workforce development opportunities for young people and adults could be funded to take on more apprentices (perhaps distributed through supply chains) and offer more short-term work placements.

4. Conclusion

We have tried to argue that significant improvements need to be made to facilitate social mobility for young people who do not follow the 'royal' route from the age of 16. We should add at this point, however, that many of the points we have made in relation to the value of qualifications would also apply to young people who leave university and find they need to undergo a training programme of some kind in order to find employment. Our examples point to the need for thinking about the problem and potential solutions in the round, not just from a supply-side perspective. The nature of the labour market is a key factor in explaining the spread and intensity of employer demand for skills, particularly at intermediate level. Where there is an established occupational labour market based on collective understandings of standardised education and training pathways, and recognition of qualifications, demand is likely to be high. If this is reinforced by regulatory requirements, such as licence to practise, then portability and exchange value for the individual are assured and providers can have confidence in the

sustainability and popularity of the relevant courses.

Changing forms of production and work organisation enabled by new technology and/or by efficiency imperatives mean that work tasks and roles are being reconfigured and redistributed up and down workforce hierarchies in a variety of sectors with consequences for how jobs are designed and distributed across the skills hierarchy. The creation of an hourglass distribution of skills, with the middle levels hollowed out acts as a real threat to the ability of the vocational system and work-based routes to provide the ladders of progression necessary to tackle the social mobility problem. Whilst, this is certainly not an easy nut to crack, we would argue that the fluidity and dynamism in the English labour market does provide an opportunity for colleges to work with employers to think through the potential for developing intermediate roles, and the potential to design and create education and training pathways that help them to 'grow their own' skills pipelines. Finally, registration and regulation are very important levers. Access to professional body membership and qualification ladders provides a clear signal that the development and recognition of occupational expertise at each level is valued. This in turn can help to stimulate both employers' demand for skills and their motivation to develop 'good quality' jobs, making a positive contribution to social mobility.

19 August 2015

Appendix 1

The following information was taken from:

<https://www.ucas.com/ucas/after-gcse/find-course/qualifications-you-can-take-after-gcse>

NVQs

NVQ stands for National Vocational Qualification. Each one includes practical work-related tasks and goals. They're available in more than 1000 subjects ranging from childcare, plumbing and catering to IT and hairdressing.

How are they studied?

NVQs can be based in a college, school or workplace – or a combination of the two.

- They're a good choice if you know what job you'd would like to do and you want to move into the world of work.

- There are five NVQ levels – so you can start at a level to suit you and work your way up.
- There are no age limits and no special entry requirements, although you might need to complete a Level 2 NVQ before starting a Level 3 programme.

BTECs

BTECs are specialist work-related qualifications. They combine practical learning with subject and theory content. They give you the knowledge and skills you need to prepare you for further study, training and employment. There are over 2000 BTEC qualifications across 16 sectors – they are available from entry level through to professional qualifications at level 7 (equivalent to postgraduate study).

Who are they for?

BTECs are designed for young people interested in a particular sector or industry but who are not yet sure what job they'd like to do. After GCSEs, you could study a BTEC at level 2 or 3, either alongside A levels or other academic qualifications, as part of a wider programme (such as an apprenticeship) or as a stand-alone course. There are over 2000 BTEC qualifications across 16 sectors.

TechBac

The TechBac is a new technical and work-related training programme. It is not a new qualification, but a programme made up of three elements including; an advanced (Level 3) vocational or work related qualification (such as a BTEC), a Level 3 maths qualification (such as AS level Maths or the new core maths), and an extended project - to develop and test students' skills in extended writing, communication and research.

Cambridge technicals

Cambridge technicals are a new type of vocational qualification which offers flexibility – a wide range of subjects to choose from and a choice of units that make up the qualification. This means you can specialise in the specific areas of the subject that interest you most. You can study at Level 2 and Level 3 and go on to employment or further education, or from Level 3 specifically you can progress to higher education.

Who are they for?

Cambridge technicals are for young people aged 16-19 who have completed their GCSEs/Key Stage 4. They're a good option if you want to study in a more practical way – providing an understanding of the subject that fits with the needs of the workplace.

Cambridge technicals are currently available in the following subject areas:

- Art and design
- Media and communications
- Business
- Performing arts
- Health and social care
- Science
- ICT
- Sport, leisure and recreation

They're offered at Level 2 and 3 (some also have 4) – but not in all subjects.

Appendix 2

Chart 1: Top 10 Apprenticeship Frameworks Under 19 year olds 2012/13

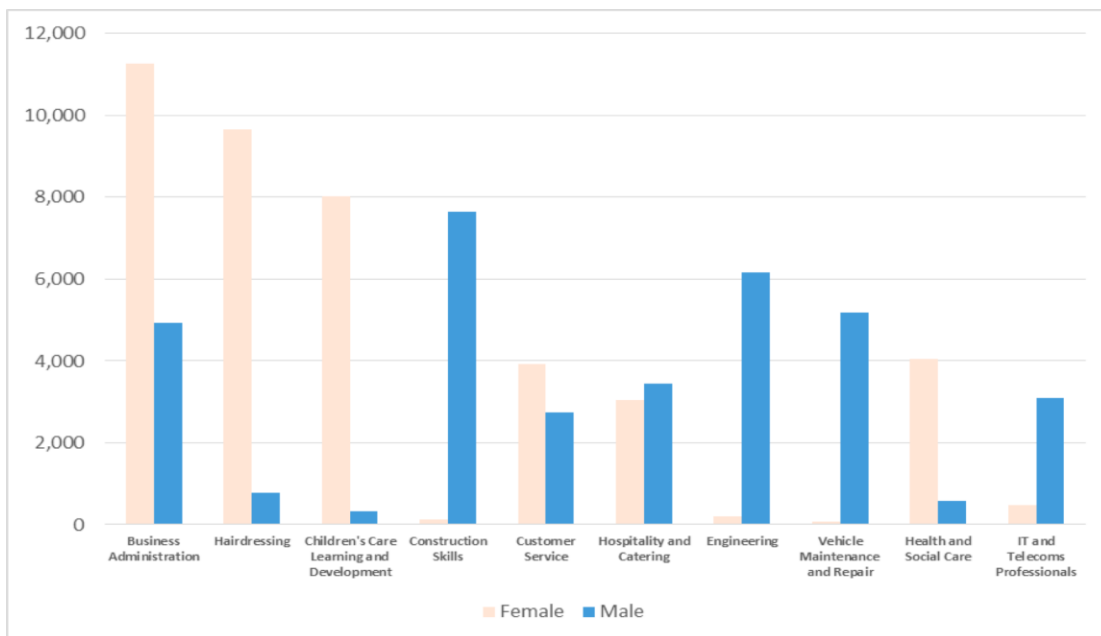
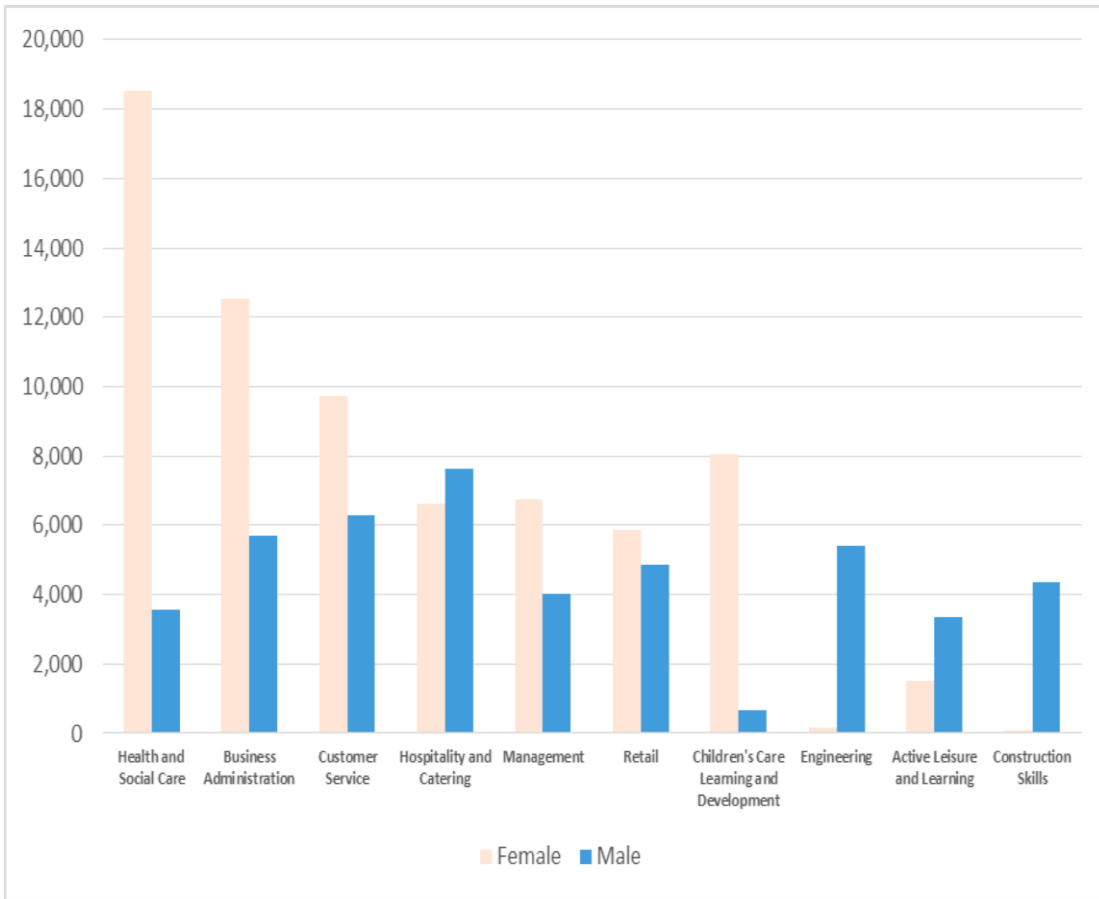


Chart 2: Top 10 Apprenticeship Frameworks 19-24 year olds 2012/13



Professor Alison Fuller and Professor Lorna Unwin – supplementary written evidence (SMO0147)

In our previous evidence to the Committee, we discussed three inter-related themes: a) bringing an occupational purpose to post-16 vocational education and training; b) standardisation of vocational qualifications; and c) building the institutional capacity to do better. We highlighted why and how policy and practice in these three areas needs strengthening and how this could make a positive contribution to improving the social mobility of young people. In this supplementary note, we take the opportunity to summarise the key messages deriving from our critique of England's current approach to vocational education and training (VET) and to present recommendations for change. The seriousness of the social mobility problem has been clearly revealed and articulated in the evidence that has been submitted to the Committee not only by us, but also by many others representing different parts of the stakeholder landscape. In reviewing 'the problem of social mobility', the supplementary questions that have been posed by the Committee, as well as our own thinking, we have developed a range of recommendations for reform (outlined below). We appreciate that these suggestions are challenging and may be considered radical, but argue that only long-term systemic reform is likely to facilitate the improvements in young people's social and economic mobility desired by the Committee, and across society more generally.

Before turning to our recommendations, we want to urge the Committee to set the debate and analysis of evidence in context. The Committee's original and supplementary questions can be best understood and interpreted in light of extant explanations and critiques of the performance and outcomes (including in terms of social mobility) of the UK's approach to VET. The danger is that the questions (and issues) become separated from and treated differently from each other as if they can be debated in a vacuum. This is, in itself, a major part of the problem we face. Successive enquiries and government policies have tended to address features of the VET landscape (and indeed education more broadly) as if they were unconnected. We suggest a conceptual framework for analysing context, which could be used by the Committee to test out responses to its questions, and to help reveal and understand the issues that are hindering the development of effective solutions. The framework includes three dimensions as follows:

- a) Macro and micro economic context
- b) Political context
- c) National and local contexts

Our response to the first of the Committee's supplementary questions starts by outlining aspects of the historical, economic and political context that have shaped current approaches to VET and which need to be taken account of in any attempt at policy reform.

What labour market policies, if any, would stimulate the development of intermediate and technician-level level roles within the labour market?

The UK's economy has undergone considerable change since the 1970s and rapid developments in digital technologies (as well as other factors) will continue to affect the nature of and entry to jobs and occupations.⁵⁴⁰ The concept of occupation is much more limited in the UK than in some other EU countries, in the sense that it has become associated with fewer areas of work than would have been the case even 40 or so years ago. Entry to a wide range of occupational fields (for which substantial training was required) was available through apprenticeships (e.g. for plumbers, carpenters, electricians, engineers) as well as other forms of work-based training (e.g. for nurses, chartered surveyors, journalists, solicitors, accountants). Today, the concept of occupation is becoming restricted to areas of employment (the traditional professions and intermediate level occupations now classed as professions) for which a degree (and even a postgraduate degree) is required. The so-called hollowing-out of the UK's labour market has seen a bigger rise in low-level jobs (especially in social care and other personal services) than in many other EU countries and a decline in middle-ranked jobs in administration and production.⁵⁴¹ The long-standing voluntarist approach to labour market regulation means that the UK lacks the well-understood and valued concept of skill formation (apart from in the case of the professions) that is still strong in some EU countries and in the US (where labour market regulation is still surprisingly widespread). Crucially, in this voluntarist context, there is no connection between full employment and good quality jobs (see supplementary question no. 1).

Creating the conditions in which intermediate and technician-level jobs (Levels 3, 4 and 5) could be expanded will require a concerted effort that connects economic and education policymaking and that focuses on both the demand and supply side, including:

- incentivising and supporting employers to develop jobs at this level (intermediate/technician/associate professional) e.g. through the expansion of the well-respected Group Training Association model (see supplementary question no. 6), tackling the hourglass distribution of jobs within well-articulated career ladders associated with transparent education and training pathways;
- working with professional bodies and trade associations to promote and develop this level and its articulation with ladders of progression;
- expanding licence to practise arrangements;
- providing nationally recognised and collectively understood programmes of skills formation and associated qualifications at intermediate/technician/associate professional level;

⁵⁴⁰ Marsden, D. (2007) *Labour market segmentation in Britain: the decline of occupational labour markets and the spread of 'entry tournaments'*. *Économies et Sociétés*, 28, pp. 965-998.

⁵⁴¹ McIntosh, S. (2013) *Hollowing out and the future of the labour market*, BIS Research Paper 134, London: BIS.

- improving joined up thinking between local, regional and national labour markets, education and training, and employment and industrial policies. For example, local and national government procurement and planning requirements can be used to drive up provision and quality of education and training (including apprenticeships) as part of their expectations of those bidding for publicly funded contracts.

The FE/HE, skills and employment interface

The need for more thought to be given to the articulation between education and economic policy can be seen in the currently uneven and fragmented relationship between the VET programmes offered in both the further and higher education sectors, the types of skills that are needed in workplaces and how young people might best acquire these skills. In some well-defined occupational areas such as engineering, accountancy and parts of the healthcare sector the relationship is well-understood and transparent. From the young person's point of view, they can see that there is a clear and transparent link between a specified education and training pathway, related qualification and acquisition of recognised occupational expertise and access to good quality employment at the appropriate level. In other parts of the labour market, there is a much weaker occupational field which is characterised by an often obscure and opaque 'line of sight' (CAVTL 2013) between VET provision, qualification and employment. There may be relatively plentiful jobs in these looser occupational areas, including for example, in retail, care work or hospitality management, but compared with more well-defined occupations the line of sight to work is not transparent and it is not clear whose responsibility it is to develop, articulate and quality assure the relevant skill formation pathways and their connections with appropriate jobs.

One consequence of this fragmented relationship has been the proliferation of bachelor degrees that appear to be vocational (in terms of title and website descriptions), but which do not clearly articulate with an occupational qualification recognised in the labour market. Another consequence is the challenge for careers guidance. In the transparent scenario, providing careers guidance is relatively straightforward, in its opaque counterpart it is much more difficult. Where the relationship between VET, occupation and the labour market is strong, the young person's social mobility will be effectively facilitated but where the relationship is weak, there is a real risk that their trajectory will end in a cul-de-sac and their progression will stall.

The issues we are raising here, call for considerable development work to think through the implications for skill formation in different occupational areas and to coordinate and tailor interventions most effectively. With this in mind, policy-makers should stop focusing on the creation of one-off schemes and begin to take a holistic strategic approach to building a robust VET system. To enable this, we recommend a three part response to supplementary question 8):

1. The creation of a more highly standardised and transparent upper secondary phase for all, with the explicit expectation that the vast majority of young people will graduate with a 'full fat' Level 3 qualification. For those following vocational routes, all programmes would include general as well as vocational education and mandatory work placements. Vocational programmes would last between three and four years. This is necessary to provide the time and support structures to enable those young people who need longer to achieve Level 3 (see supplementary question 1).
2. The creation of a tertiary sector to help overcome the FE/HE divide (including in funding see supplementary question 5) and facilitate the development of an applied tertiary pathway. This will require tertiary level institutions specialising in particular occupational areas. HEIs that provide vocational degrees would have to design their courses to comply with a relevant national standard (similar in concept to a licence to practise) in order to be approved for public funding (through the student loans system). This standard could be attained either through the completion of an apprenticeship or the relevant vocational sub-bachelor or bachelor degree. In some cases, this would mean that HEIs would need to work with FE providers to ensure that their students gained and were accredited for the vocational skills and competences (e.g where these are at Level 3) that are required by employers.
3. The creation of a new institution (directly responsible to a combined BIS/DfE – see supplementary question 7), similar to the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), to act as the single body encompassing research and, very importantly, development in all vocational specialisms requiring skill formation at intermediate/technician/professional levels (see supplementary questions 1 and 4). The institution would sit at the interface between education and economic policy making to develop and sustain a national skill formation system to generate intermediate and professional levels of occupational expertise across the economy and facilitate individuals' access to skilled work and progression. The institution would work with key stakeholders including upper secondary and tertiary education providers and employers. Whilst it would work with relevant partners to develop nationally recognised programmes of skill formation, there would be scope for these to be interpreted and adapted at regional/local level to meet local needs. A crucial part of its capacity building remit would be a focus on both the training of managers and workplace trainers to support the development of workplaces as good quality learning environments. This institution would also be responsible for designing new robust monitoring, and information, advice and guidance (IAG) systems, which will only be possible when we have established strongly connected skill formation pathways in to occupations (see supplementary questions 2 and 3)

We acknowledge that this is an ambitious agenda, but there is plenty of excellent practice and expertise to build on. The main inertia comes from a lack of political will to take a holistic approach, which, by necessity, will mean disturbing some long-standing patterns of behaviour, including the political privileging of targets over quality.

Annex 1: Supplementary questions

1. What labour market policies, if any, would stimulate the development of intermediate and technician-level level roles within the labour market? Will the duty to be imposed by the Welfare Reform and Work Bill to report on full employment have a positive effect? Or will local labour market policies be more effective?
 - a) We have heard a lot about apprenticeships, and the importance of making sure that they are of high-quality, and at Level 3, the level that has some value to employers. We have also heard about the need to improve Level 3 vocational qualifications. What about those learners who are not ready for Level 3 learning or training at the age of 16?
2. It has been suggested to us that the first priority of the education system should be to prepare all young people for adulthood and the world of work, and one of the ways to do this might be to add employment and education destinations data as part of the accountability framework for schools. What are your views on this? Does it go far enough?
 - a) Would the addition of destinations data into the accountability framework be enough to drive changes in the inspection regime?
3. We have heard that careers advice would be better delivered by a new independent organisation. What are your views on this? Alternatively, can changes be made to the way schools are funded to encourage schools to deliver information, advice and guidance that incorporates information about the full range of options available to students?
 - a) We have heard that the way in which schools are funded affects the quality of careers advice. What changes could be made to the funding rules that would allow schools to promote more diverse career options to their students?
4. Evidence to us has demonstrated a need for a co-ordinated, high-quality, transition system across the further education sector, and has warned against continually changing the policy. In 2004 the Tomlinson Review recommended a system based on 'core' learning and 'main' learning. Does this still apply today? If co-ordinating bodies for transitions for school leavers were to be established, what should be their main features?

- a) We have heard that flexibility within the system, and one-to-one support, is necessary to support underserved groups through transition periods. How does this match up with the need for a coherent policy? Who should have responsibility for delivering this support?
 - b) Should transition policy begin at age 14, rather than at age 16 as is usual?
 - c) It has been suggested to us that the transition from school takes longer than the perceived two to three years, and that GCSE failure cannot be remedied in only one year. Should the transition into work be viewed as going up to age 24, and beyond into lifelong learning?
5. Evidence to us has highlighted a marked disparity between further education and higher education funding. What changes to the funding of further education do you believe are necessary to improve quality outcomes for middle attainers and underserved groups? Where could this funding come from? Are there ways of appropriating funding from elsewhere?
- a) Should further education funding be protected in the same way as schools funding?
 - b) The area reviews aim to reduce the number of further education providers, but we have heard it will affect the availability of provision for underserved groups. Is there an alternative?
6. Evidence to us has shown that there are few incentives for employers to input into the system in terms of offering and regulating apprenticeships, offering good-quality work experience, teaching life skills, and offering extended work placements. Is increased local partnership therefore the answer? Can you tell us more about what you believe are the important factors of a local partnership? How should these be facilitated and who should be responsible for doing so? Are there examples of good local practices which would be scalable at a national level?
- a) Would partnership working be enough to incentivise employers (especially SMEs) to work with, provide work experience and training opportunities for and employ middle attainers, and not just seek out 'top talent'?
 - b) Evidence to this committee has shown that the public sector has exerted some influence on the wider labour market through procurement. Are there any ways by which the private sector can be incentivised or persuaded to use procurement powers to improve labour market access for underserved groups?
7. There is no one responsible at a national level for transitions into work. We have heard mixed evidence on this point – some say a change in Whitehall will make no difference, the majority however say that clear accountabilities are important. In your view, who should be responsible?

8. What is your one key suggestion for a change this Committee could recommend to improve upwards mobility, employment outcomes, and opportunities for school leavers?

3 January 2016

Professor Anne Green, Professor Phil Mizen, Gaby Atfield, Professor Kate Purcell, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)

[Submission to be found under Professor Kate Purcell](#)

Professor Ann Hodgson and Professor Ken Spours – Written evidence (SMO0012)

The ‘Missing Middle’ in 14-19 education and training and the role of localities

Written evidence for the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

1 September 2015

Professors Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours

UCL Institute of Education

The Missing Middle

The ‘Raising of the Participation Age’ and the expectation that all young people should participate in some form of education and training up to the age of 18 can be seen to signal the emergence of a universal upper secondary education (USE) phase in England and with that a commitment to ensure that all young people can successfully navigate this emerging phase of education (Hodgson and Spours, 2012).

Current government policy, however, appears to be focused primarily on the poles of the learner cohort and on a relatively small minority. A great deal of statistical and policy emphasis has been placed on high-end academic attainment involving the top quartile of the cohort in the 14-19 phase and the transition beyond it (e.g. those in 2014 attaining:

- the EBacc performance measure (24%);
- AAB in A Level by 18 (17%);
- three A Levels at A*A (10%);
- AAB in a ‘facilitating subject’ (9%);

and those gaining access to a Russell Group university (9%). At the other end, there is a continued concern about those not in employment, education or training (NEET) rates for

16-18 year olds (8%) and a desire for more 16-18 year olds to enter apprenticeships beyond the five per cent that do currently (DfE, 2014; 2015a; 2015b).

Far less policy attention, however, is being given to the participation, progression and transition of a large group of young people who lie between these poles, what we term the 'Missing Middle'. This group of 'middle attainers' constituted more than 50 per cent of the 16+ cohort in 2014. Initially identified at age 11 through Key Stage 2 SATs scores (about 40% of the 11-year-old cohort), they are a diverse group comprising those currently in full-time education at 16+ and who are:

- on the margins of full A Level participation - failing AS, dropping out of AS, reducing the number of A Level subjects taken to two in Year 13; attaining low A Level grades or taking a mixed general and vocational programmes (estimated to be about 20% of the 16+ cohort);
- following Level 3 NVQ or equivalent such as BTEC National Diplomas (recorded as 15%);
- following Level 2 NVQ or equivalent such as BTEC First Diplomas (recorded as 13%);
- following Level 1 NVQ or equivalent such as Foundation Learning (recorded as 6%).

The effects of policy on four transitions

Using a range of national statistical sources and findings from local studies we will suggest that national policy - curriculum and qualifications changes; encouragement of institutional competition and the imposition of funding cuts on post-16 education - could have profound effects on these 'middle attainers', their horizons for action and patterns of 14-19 participation, attainment and progression. We will attempt to illustrate this through the pressures that policy, and its translation by education institutions, has had and will have on four transition points in 14-19 education (Hodgson and Spours, forthcoming):

- *Transition 1.* How young people choose or are chosen for programmes of study for 14-16 year olds at Key Stage 4 (KS4) – the effects of the EBacc performance measure and changes to accountability measures related to vocational qualifications and how these impact on aspirations to study at Level 3 post-16.
- *Transition 2.* How young people choose or are selected for their post-16 route – institutional competition and increased selection practices for post-16 study.
- *Transition 3.* How young people perform in their first year of post-16 study – dropping subjects, dropping out of courses and low attainment at 17+.
- *Transition 4.* How young people gain access to higher education and/or make a transition to the youth labour market at 18+ - the effects of stratified higher education, high youth unemployment and delayed entry to the labour market.

Transition 1. Programmes of study at KS4 and GCSE attainment

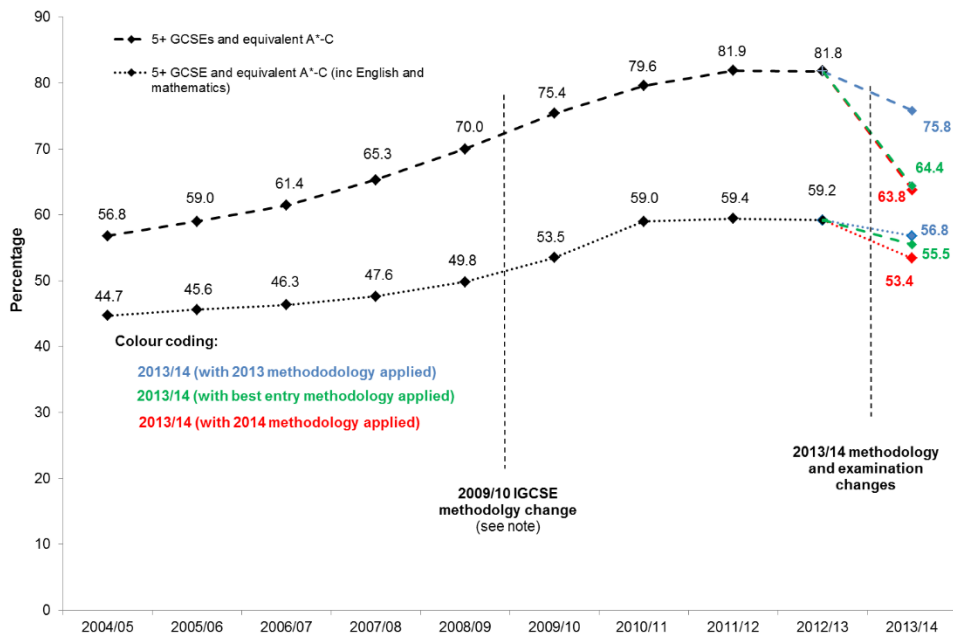
Research undertaken between 2008-12 in two localities (Hodgson and Spours, 2013a) suggested that a broader mix of general and vocational qualifications at KS4 had a highly motivating effect on sections of the 14-16 cohort and increased their aspiration to study post-16, particularly at Level 3. Our research for London Councils (2012-14) showed that students with eight or more GCSEs at A*-C grades including mathematics, English, and vocational subjects, were more likely to remain in Level 3 post-16 study than those with five GCSE-only subjects including mathematics and English. The message here is that vocational attainment as part of a broader KS4 programme of study does not harm students' chances of succeeding at Level 3 post-16 (Hodgson and Spours, 2014).

The introduction of the EBacc has sharply reversed the KS4 curriculum trend of mixed study because it focuses on the attainment of five 'facilitating' subjects – English, mathematics, science, history/geography and a language. While engagement with these subjects has risen from about 20 to 35 per cent (DfE, 2014), the vocational offer has declined, disproportionately affecting the middle quartiles that previously took advantage of this provision. On top of this have come other curriculum and qualifications changes at KS4, including restrictions on what counts as a GCSE in performance tables (see Figure 1);

the abolition of modular GCSEs; and removal of the assessment of speaking and listening in English.

The overall effects of these changes are still unfolding, but some patterns of attainment do seem to be emerging. National percentages of 16 year olds gaining A*-C grades at GCSE increased from 56.6% in 2000 to 69.1% in 2010. Over the last five years (2010-2015) this figure has not increased at all and in 2015 remains at 69 per cent. At the same time, as Figure 1 shows, the percentage of 16 year olds gaining five A*-C GCSEs and equivalent, both with and without English and mathematics, has fallen since 2012/13 due to the effects of changes to performance tables through what has been termed the '2014 Methodology' (DfE, 2014).

Figure 1. GCSE attainment 2004-2014



Source. SFR 2/2015- Revised GCSE and equivalents results in England, 2013 to 2014

There appear, therefore, to be two manifestations of the impact of policy on attainment and its measurement. First, there is the levelling in growth of GCSE attainment that arguably disproportionately affects middle attainers, because in a static situation some

groups suffer reversals. Second, there has been a marked decline of GCSE and vocational equivalent attainment as calculated according to government performance measures. As we can see from Figure 1, between 2005/6 to 2010/11 those recorded as attaining 5+ GCSEs and equivalent A*-C grades rose from 59 per cent to 79.6 per cent, a rise of 20 percentage points. The attainment of 5+ GCSEs and equivalent A*-C grades (including English and mathematics) rose from 45.6 per cent to 59 per cent, a rise of 13 percentage points. In the two-year period between 2010/11 and 2012/13 the percentage increase was two per cent on the wider GCSE measure and only 0.2 per cent on the narrower measure. Since 2012/13 and the impact of the 2013/14 methodology and examination changes the proportion of 16 year olds attaining the wider GCSE measure has dropped from nearly 82 per cent to 63.8 per cent in 2013/14 (a fall of nearly 20 percentage points) and from 59.2 per cent to 53.4 per cent on the narrower measure (a fall of nearly 6 percentage points).

At this point in 2015 it is difficult to predict the precise effect of these developments on middle attainers and their prospects for post-16 progression. Traditionally, the attainment of 5+ 'good' GCSEs has been seen by the majority of post-16 providers as a broad measure of suitability for Level 3 post-16 study. If, as we have shown above, GCSE attainment has broadly stagnated over the last five years and vocational attainment has been dramatically downgraded, then the combination of these factors will undoubtedly affect the progression possibilities of middle attainers.

As important, if not more so, are the ways in which schools and colleges respond to policy. Schools are now routinely stratifying students into several streams (e.g. EBacc, those on broader GCSE programmes; those on mixed programmes and those on special programmes). The more common mixed general/vocational study programmes taken during the period 2003-10 have given way to a much more segmented approach over the last five years (Hodgson and Spours, 2013a). At the same time, post-16 providers are responding to design changes in advanced level qualifications - more external assessment in both Level 3 general and vocational qualifications and a linear rather than modular

approach - by increasing their requirements for prior attainment at GCSE in order to retain high pass rates in these changing conditions. Again both of these trends are likely to impact disproportionately on middle attainers.

From the perspective of social mobility we have moved from a situation in 2010, where the overwhelming majority of the cohort could aspire to Level 3 study, to a position in 2015 where possibly only a minority can progress this way. This is not to minimize the actual difficulties middle attainers experienced in successfully completing Level 3 post-16 programmes under the GCSE equivalences system (Hodgson and Spours, 2013a) – non-completion rates, course and institutional changes and dropping subjects. What is changing, however, is the perceived opportunity to progress within the more segmented and increasingly selective system of qualifications and progression routes.

Transition 2. Institutional translation of policy and the effects of competition

How young people progress within English USE is strongly influenced by the ways in which post-16 providers interpret policy and policy levers (e.g. inspection, funding and performance tables) in a highly competitive education market (e.g. Pring *et al.*, 2009). The effect of these decisions on the middle attainer is complex.

Competition is strongest for high attaining students with selective and high performing institutions often able to 'cream off' the 'top end' from their neighbouring secondary schools in order to boost their own sixth forms. At the same time, less selective 11-18 schools have had to diversify their sixth form provision in order to retain students and remain economically viable. Many have established a couple of broad vocational courses to keep middle attainers on roll, although numbers are often very small and outcomes relatively poor compared to academic courses (Hodgson and Spours, 2014). Some institutions, particularly those starting new sixth forms, have also lowered their entry requirements for A Level courses, thus exposing less academically prepared students to the rigours of A Level study with all the attendant risks.

In the context of competing institutions, impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) becomes difficult to achieve because in some cases institutional self-interest triumphs over the careful matching of students to appropriate post-16 courses (Ofsted, 2013), a problem exacerbated since 2011 when schools were given responsibility for CEIAG. The result is often that middle attaining students are allowed onto A Level courses with the hope that they will manage the first year of study. Or they are compelled to move to a vocational course that is not their first choice. What is often not achieved is an open discussion of realisable options for achievement and progression and alternatives, such as apprenticeships.

Moreover, our local research also suggests that some middle attaining students, and young men in particular, are complicit in schools' desire to keep them in the sixth form due to a tendency to choose 'safe' options for post-16 study. This means opting to stay in the familiar learning environment of the school, to be close to friends and not to have to travel a distance to specialist provision. What we have termed 'comfort zoning', can undermine Level 3 attainment because the learner may not be highly committed to study; may often have to choose from a limited range of subjects; may be involved in small class sizes that lack interaction and challenge and be taught by non-specialist teachers (Hodgson and Spours, 2013a).

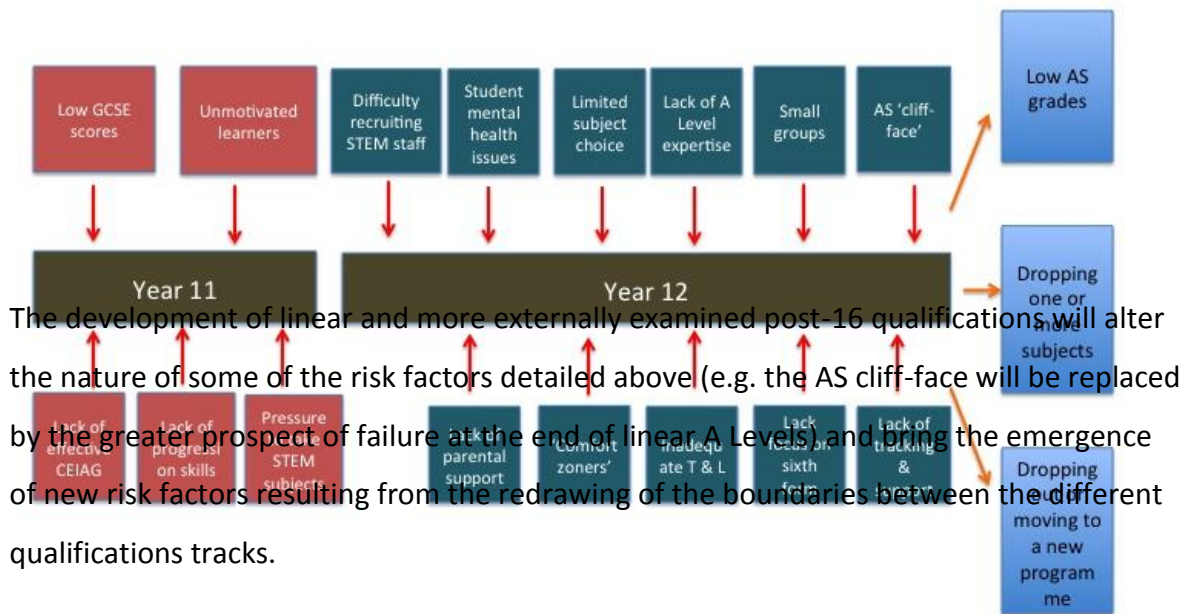
The effects of the reversion to linear A Levels is likely to make the A Level route more selective with middle attaining students being pushed into vocational courses that already have relatively poor retention rates, particularly in schools (Hodgson and Spours, 2014). More external testing in vocational courses is likely to increase failure rates and push some students from Level 3 down to Level 2 courses that themselves have very poor progression rates to the next level (Hodgson and Spours, 2014).

Transition 3. The 17+ barrier and the issue of early school leaving

The problem of the '17+ transition point' comprises two related issues: first, 17+ 'retention' and whether those who stayed on at 16 are also participating in the second

year of study; second, how well students attain at 18, which for most marks the end of USE. Our local research suggests that middle attainers are likely to experience difficulty at 17+ due to drop-out from A Level and vocational Level 3 courses at the end of the first year of study (between 20-30%) and having to start over again; or dropping the number of subjects taken and eventually leaving USE with low cumulative A Level scores. Hence our term the '17+ barrier'. Through our London-based research we were able to identify a range of 'risk factors' (see Figure 2), several of them related to ways in which 11-18 schools, in particular, translated policy to organize their sixth form (Hodgson and Spours, 2014)

Figure 2. Risk factors affecting 17+ attainment



Transition 4. Moving on from USE into higher education and the labour market

At 18+ government policy is overwhelmingly focused on promoting access to research intensive universities that currently serve less than 10 per cent of the 18+ cohort. At the other end, it has promised three million apprenticeships for young people, although it is difficult to see where they will come from given current labour market arrangements, the

lack of employers willing or able to take on 16-18 year old apprentices and what their quality might be. Following more than a decade of policy emphasis, the work-based route at 18 still remains very small (8.4%). At the same time, youth unemployment continues to be high with a rate three times that of adults (Boffey, 2015). As elsewhere in USE, government policy is focused on high academic attainers and apprenticeships (constituting a small minority of the cohort) and appears to be leaving it to the 'market' to sort out prospects for the rest.

Perfect storm conditions for the Missing Middle

Policy is thus creating 'perfect storm' conditions for this diverse group of learners as it moves through the 'four transitions'. It is important to understand the impact of repeated points of selection on the groups of learners who are not on a strong A Level programme or high quality apprenticeship pathway. Gradual processes of stratification take place that make the progression opportunities for an increasing number of learners less direct and clear by 18+. Here we suggest that a combination of inter-related factors come together to affect social mobility:

- A more academic and selective GCSE regime that for the third quartile in particular could change young people's attitudes to progression to Level 3 at 16 from 'I think I can' to 'I think I can't'.
- Linear A Levels that narrow learner programmes of study, reduce students choice, create less porous boundaries between the academic and vocational tracks and force students from the first to the second, when they may be less committed to vocational study and have even more reason to consider it second best.
- Less accessible Level 3 vocational study that, through increased external assessment, attempts to imitate the academic track and, in doing so, excludes learners who are then relegated to the level below.
- Intensified institutional competition that produces less viable and less expert providers; reduces subject choice for students and leads to poor vocational provision with unclear progression routes.

- Spending cuts that will reduce the size of learning programmes and engagement with wider activities and that will also remove the prospect of a three-year sixth that many middle attainers will need to reach Level 3 by 19 (SFCA, 2015).
- A small work-based route that stubbornly refuses to grow.
- A continued depressed youth labour market that cannot offer the scale of opportunities required, compounded by competition from educated migrants.
- An economic policy of austerity that disproportionately affects young people.

These perfect storm factors will not impact in an even or predictable way. As the data on page 1 show, the Missing Middle is internally stratified with some young people being more vulnerable than others. Those being decanted from A Levels to BTEC National can still keep open a Level 3 route, but the prospects for those relegated to Level 2 and below at 16+ look more precarious.

A new local opportunity landscape

We have argued throughout this paper that stratified provision and competitive institutions create significant barriers for young people at the four 14-19 transition points. The current market-based and selective 14-19 arrangements effectively serve a minority of the cohort – broadly speaking those bound for prestigious universities or on high quality apprenticeships. These arrangements fall far short of supporting a universal upper secondary education system in England.

As we have seen from earlier sections of this paper, decisions about the progression and transitions of 14-19 year olds are made at the local level. It is schools, colleges and work-based learning providers who set the admissions requirements for entry to post-16 courses and programmes within broad national parameters. Moreover, decisions about what courses and programmes are on offer and which employment and training opportunities are available are mainly determined by local actors.

A more collaborative and networked approach at the local level

We conclude this paper by suggesting that the Missing Middle can only be effectively served by a more collaborative and co-ordinated local 14-19 system that is fully supported by national policy. It is the local and national working together that may be capable of producing a new local opportunity landscape.

Our experience of working at the local level tells us that specific action is required to open up clear progression routes and opportunities for study and employment for the Missing Middle (and indeed the whole cohort). Recent research on 14-19 partnerships in London (Hodgson and Spours, 2013b) indicated that links between education providers, work-based learning providers and employers were much less developed than collaboration between schools and colleges. The practical first steps to support the progression of all 14-19 learners, therefore, requires the building of a collaborative infrastructure at the local level where schools and colleges work with a wider range of social partners, including employers, third sector organisations, regeneration agencies, local authority services and higher education institutions, to strengthen the transition to working life while still supporting access to higher education. These reformed and expanded partnerships we have termed '14+ Progression and Transition Boards' (14+ PTBs) (Hodgson and Spours, 2013b & c). Given their greater focus on work-based and labour market transitions at 17 and 18+, 14+ PTBs should be built to facilitate better communication between the key stakeholders about the needs of all young people for education, training and employment opportunities; engage local employers who will benefit from better-prepared young local employees; and make an active contribution to the civic life of the area more generally. In particular, 14+ PTBs should be helping schools and colleges to collaborate more closely in focusing on the four major transition points.

National policy support

Building collaborative systems at the local level, however, will require support from national policy. Given the competitive climate, schools, colleges and work-based learning providers will have to be incentivized to work together both financially and through the application of policy levers, such as area-wide inspections and collective performance

measures that focus on the attainment and progression of 100 per cent of students in an area. National policy support would also involve the longer-term reform of qualifications so that, for example, 14-19 year olds experience more common learning that prepares them more effectively for further study, working life and citizenship. Elsewhere we have argued for a unified baccalaureate system that promotes the type of holistic curriculum needed to underpin an increasingly diverse universal USE (Hodgson and Spours, 2012, 2015).

We need more research data

Finally, we lack sufficient detailed data on the Missing Middle. This paper was compiled based on three local studies reported through academic papers and reports and triangulated by a selection of new national statistics. Our precise identification of ‘middle attainers’ by tracking those with KS2 SATs scores through 14-19 education was confined to one three-year local study which was completed in 2010. What is now required is a concerted effort by the national agencies and the education research community to find out more about this diverse but vital group of young people. It is what we have termed the Missing Middle that will act as a ‘bellwether’ for our ability to develop a high performing, high opportunity universal upper secondary education system in England.

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1 September 2015

Dr Deirdre Hughes – Written evidence (SMO0045)

HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL MOBILITY CALL FOR EVIDENCE

Dr Deirdre Hughes, OBE, Principal Research Fellow, Warwick University, Institute for Employment Research (IER) and former Chair of the National Careers Council in England (2012 -2014) reporting to three Skills Ministers.

Visit: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/people/dhughes/>

1.0 I am pleased to submit evidence to this important inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds. It is very encouraging to find a particular focus on those young people who fall between the route of A-Levels and Higher Education and those classified as NEET. This submission responds specifically to questions 4 & 5 and more broadly covers other set questions drawing upon the historical and current context for careers support for this target group in England. It also briefly highlights recent findings from ‘London Ambitions: reshaping a careers offer for all young Londoners’ which may be helpful to the Committee as part of its evidence-base.

2.0 Historical context

2.1 In 1991, the Conservative government announced the introduction of legislation to remove responsibility to deliver careers services from local education authorities (LEAs) and make the Secretary for State for Employment responsible for providing the service (Bayliss, 2000)⁵⁴². This was a radical shift from previous arrangements and reflected the Conservative government’s ideology and policies. At the time, legislation (the Trade Union Reform and Employment Rights Act, 1993) set out the access of careers services to schools, so that career guidance could be provided to complement careers education. New partnership arrangements included responsibility for supporting the extended duty on schools to provide planned programmes of careers education from Year 7 onwards (DfES, 2004)⁵⁴³. The government aimed to reduce the influence of local authorities (LEAs) on services and increase the influence of local employers. There was money for careers libraries in schools and an extra £87million of funds invested by government in the set up of the new careers services following ‘contractorisation’.

2.2 The 1993 Act paved the way for all kinds of private-and public sector organisations to operate career services. Most services administered under ‘the new arrangements’ operated by various forms of partnership between LEAs and Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). A minority were run by private or voluntary-sector agencies or by services from other areas. The statutory client group comprised those in full-time education at any institution outside of the higher education sector; part-time students in work-related further education; and young people under 21 years old who had left education up to two years previously. Work with adults was encouraged, and if they so wished, services were

⁵⁴² Bayliss, V. (2000). *Joined-Up Guidance: Where for we go from here?* Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

⁵⁴³ Department for Education and Skills (2004) *Extension of the Statutory Duty on Schools to Provide Planned Programmes of Careers Education in the Curriculum to Include Years 7 &8 : Guidance for Middle Schools*. Sheffield: DfES.

allowed to charge clients outside of the statutory group (Killeen & Kidd, 1996:161)⁵⁴⁴. An era of output related funding began (15 per cent of funds was based on completed action plans) with a strong emphasis on contracts, accountability and the 'new market' demanded innovation and flexibility.

2.3 When the Labour Government was in office (1997– 2010) they initially tried to distance themselves from the marketisation and privatisation concept. However, new initiatives such as Education Action Zones (designed to address schooling in deprived areas through match-funding from government and businesses) were labelled as 'test-beds' for privatisation (Chitty, 1997)⁵⁴⁵. In 1998, a new strategy for information, advice and guidance for adults (IAG) was announced by government, with £54m funding made available over three years (Jackson, et al, 2001)⁵⁴⁶. Funding was allocated to 67 Careers Services working in local partnerships, including community and voluntary groups. It is also important to note funding was not allocated for guidance *per se*. In a few cases, there were no plans to introduce a charging policy; however, some services reported steady demand for charged services, including psychometric testing.

2.4 Alongside this, a new universal and targeted Youth Support Service brought an end to unified all-age Careers Service. The Connexions Service was also rolled out across England between April 2001 and April 2003 on a phased basis in 47 Connexions Partnership areas co-terminous with Learning & Skills Council (LSC) areas. The rebranded and refocused service (at a cost to the taxpayer of at least £450 million per annum) established a new brand, a cadre of around 8,000 Personal Advisers, a series of one-stop shops and sub-regional partnerships. This was intended to help all young people between the ages of 13-19, and to support 20-24 year olds with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly those most disadvantaged and disaffected. Many of the Connexions providers were also leading on information, advice and guidance (IAG) Partnerships. Hoggarth & Smith (2004)⁵⁴⁷ raised concerns about the fluidity of young people's transitions and the leakage in young people being 'lost to the system'.

2.5 Significant changes to the delivery of careers support for young people through the introduction of the Education Act (2011)⁵⁴⁸, followed by a dismantling of the Connexions service in England (2012)⁵⁴⁹, and local authorities no longer having responsibility for providing a universal careers guidance offer (but they retain responsibility for providing targeted support for vulnerable young people) has led to a new era in England's careers landscape. The Minister for Skills formally announced a new all-age National Careers Service (NCS, April 2012), through a joint initiative of the Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) and the Department of Education (DfE).

⁵⁴⁴ Killeen, J. & Kidd, J. (1996) *The Careers Service* In *Rethinking Careers Education and Guidance: Theory, policy and Practice*, London: Routledge, 161

⁵⁴⁵ Chitty, C. (1997) Privatisation and marketisation, In *Oxford Review of Education* 23 (1) 45-62

⁵⁴⁶ Jackson, C., Watts, A. G., Hughes, D., Bosley, S. & El-Sawad, A. (2001) *Careers Services Work with Adults*. Derby: Centre for Guidance Studies, University of Derby.

⁵⁴⁷ Hoggarth, L. & Smith, D. (2004) *Understanding the Impact of Connexions on Young People at Risk*, DfES Research Report RR607.

⁵⁴⁸ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/contents/enacted>

⁵⁴⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-12717567>

This became a predominantly adult careers service, with online rather than face-to-face careers support aimed at young people (unless in exceptional circumstances). This self-help and brief-assisted service became the new careers offer for young people and schools. Since April 2012, the overall budget provided by government departments has remained broadly static (circa £106m). In September 2012, schools after four decades of having available a publicly-funded service were given a statutory duty to secure access for their pupils to ‘independent and impartial careers guidance’, with no dedicated government funding to commission such services. Despite this, some schools have risen to this challenge putting in place careers, enterprise and employability support for their students, whilst others continue to struggle to achieve this. In a context of significant tightening of fiscal policies articulated by government, schools, colleges and local authorities were deemed solely autonomous institutions ‘best placed to decide on their own careers provision’. Ofsted, in its sample survey, found that only a fifth of the 60 schools it surveyed were giving the right careers information to pupils (Ofsted, 2013)⁵⁵⁰. The situation remains largely the same in 2015.

3.0 Current situation

3.1 A plethora of published reports from employer, education, trade union and careers sector bodies (as well as the Education Select Committee findings⁵⁵¹; the National Careers Council’s heat map of careers provision across England and two reports commissioned by Government)⁵⁵² reaffirm the urgent need for improved careers provision for young people across England. The careers market is largely unregulated, complex and confusing with a multiplicity of providers offering both free and costed services in a highly competitive marketplace. There is an urgent need to tackle the challenges of diversity and fragmentation. Effective CEIAG provision must span academies, maintained schools, community schools, foundation schools, free schools, independent schools, sixth form colleges, further education colleges, pupil referral units (PRUs) and alternative provision. It also has to connect with universities, be relevant and readily understood by businesses, teachers, advisers and – above all – by young people themselves. Across England, careers support for young people is not working as well as it could. Some major challenges are characterised below:

- The new education landscape requires more young people to make early subject choice decisions (some from 13 years old upwards) and the recent raising of the participation age from 16-18 years old in 2015, signals a new and challenging era for this current generation of school pupils (and their parents and teachers).
- Signals to young people (and parents) about the added-value of learning and work are becoming more blurred. For example, weighing up the cost benefits of higher education can be difficult for some young people even though ‘in difficult conditions graduates continue to experience better outcomes than non-graduates

⁵⁵⁰ Ofsted (2013) Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/careers-guidance-in-schools-not-working-well-enough>

⁵⁵¹ House of Commons Education Select Committee (2013) *Career Guidance for Young People: The impact of the new duty on schools*, Seventh Report of Session 2012-2013, London: Parliament.

⁵⁵² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-careers-council>

in both lifetime earnings and employability (UUK, 2014).⁵⁵³ Many young people have concerns about the added-value returns for their investments in learning and work, job quality, zero hour contracts and future salaries.

- With 1 in 5 vacancies in the UK difficult to fill because of a lack of the right skills in the labour market, the importance of developing the skilled and experienced workforce of tomorrow cannot be overstated. In current (and future) labour markets' individuals will continue to experience new patterns of work, with changing expectations affecting the way we do things and how we behave. This has enormous implications for schools and colleges and their curriculum design and delivery in helping students to look ahead and prepare themselves for a very different world.
- There are growing concerns about young people's lack of awareness in making good connections between their educational experiences and the realities of labour markets. Many young people remain caught in a Catch-22 situation finding it "difficult to get work without experience and difficult to obtain experience without work" (UKCES, 2015)⁵⁵⁴.
- In some geographical areas, for example London, the proportion of young people in apprenticeships and jobs with training stands at half the England average in 2014 and has fallen over the last 12 months (IOE, 2014)⁵⁵⁵. Government has recently set out plans to deliver three million more apprenticeships over the next five years. There is an expectation for increased returns as the apprenticeship programme "grows at younger ages...We also want to see increased growth in higher and degree apprenticeships to support the development of higher level technical skills our economy needs (Boles, 2015)⁵⁵⁶.
- Latest figures show 178,100 16 to 18-year-olds failed to complete post-16 qualifications they started in 2012/13, and are at risk of becoming not in employment, education or training (NEET)⁵⁵⁷. Analysis for the Local Government Association by the Centre for Economic & Social Inclusion indicates the cost to the public purse of this wasted education and skills provision is £814 million – 12 per cent of all government spending on post-16 education and skills (op.cit).
- The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee (December 2014) has raised concerns that one hundred thousand plus young people (aged 16-18) are off the

⁵⁵³ Universities UK (2014) *Patterns and trends in UK higher education*. Available at: <http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Documents/2014/PatternsAndTrendsInUKHigherEducation2014.pdf>

⁵⁵⁴ op.cit.

⁵⁵⁵ Hodgson, A. & Spours, K. (2014) *17+ Participation, attainment and progression in London: Summary Report key Findings and Recommendations*, London: London Councils Young People's Education & Skills.

⁵⁵⁶ The Government Response on 1 July 2015 to The Education Committee report to the House of Commons on Apprenticeships and Traineeships for 16-19 year olds in its Sixth Report of Session 2014-15, published on 16 March 2015.

⁵⁵⁷ http://www.local.gov.uk/media-releases/-/journal_content/56/10180/6951000/NEWS

radar...too many young people simply disappear from all relevant public systems⁵⁵⁸. The Fabian Society (December 2014) puts the estimate higher: “we have lost track of over 150,000 young people nationally, including over 50,000 NEETs”.⁵⁵⁹ This is a serious problem as research shows unemployment in youth can scar prospects throughout working life, not just at the time.

- Young men are a third less likely than young girls to apply to higher education, and the relationship between participation in higher education and disadvantage is such that the more disadvantaged young men are, the less likely they are to apply to higher education (UCU, 2014)⁵⁶⁰. Variations in gender balance in different subjects also persist (HoL, 2015)⁵⁶¹.

3.2 The Chancellors’ Autumn Statement announcement (October, 2014: para.2.227)⁵⁶² highlighted a new £20m investment for careers advice and support for young people (para. 2.227)⁵⁶³. In early December 2014, the Secretary of State for Education announced plans for a new independent careers and enterprise company in England⁵⁶⁴. The company will “ensure employers are supporting young people with decision-making and career development at every stage of school life”⁵⁶⁵. The new careers and enterprise company’s work will be aimed at schools, to transform the provision of careers education and advice for young people and inspire them about the opportunities offered by the world of work. This will focus on young people aged 12 to 18 and will “help to broker relationships between employers on one hand and schools and colleges on the other” (Department for Education op. cit.).

3.3 In March 2015, an updated version of ‘Statutory Guidance’ (SG) on careers guidance and inspiration in schools was issued by Government⁵⁶⁶. The new company was formally established in March 2015⁵⁶⁷. It is employer-led and independent of government with its own governance and advisory board arrangements⁵⁶⁸. The National Careers

⁵⁵⁸ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/hansard/commons/>

⁵⁵⁹ <http://www.fabians.org.uk/publications/out-of-sight/>

⁵⁶⁰ UCU (2014) *Young people’s perceptions of post 18 education and training options – a report for the University and College Union*, London. Available at:

http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/ff/7/lucu_comres_youngpeoplesperceptionsaboutpost18_dec14.pdf

⁵⁶¹ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldselect/lddigital/111/111.pdf>

⁵⁶² HM Treasury (2014) Autumn Statement 2014 available to download at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/382327/44695_Accessible.pdf

⁵⁶³ HM Treasury (2014) Autumn Statement 2014 available to download at:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/382327/44695_Accessible.pdf

⁵⁶⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-careers-and-enterprise-company-for-schools>

⁵⁶⁵ op.cit.

⁵⁶⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/440795/Careers_Guidance_Schools_Guidance.pdf

⁵⁶⁷ Secretary of State for Education evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee available to download at: <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/education-committee/careers-guidance-followup/oral/17257.pdf>

⁵⁶⁸ Secretary of State for Education evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee available to download at: <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/education-committee/careers-guidance-followup/oral/17257.pdf>

Service should form part of the new arrangements and will have a formal 'Memorandum of Understanding' with the new company. (It currently has a 5% allocated budget from the Skills Funding Agency for 'brokerage services' to schools and colleges). The extent to which employers within the new careers and enterprise company may lead the way in setting out new careers policies and practices has yet to be determined. A recent report by Warwick University IER, on behalf of the Department for Business Innovation & Skills (BIS), sets out findings from a study focused on understanding the link between employers, schools and the National Careers Service (BIS, 2014)⁵⁶⁹. Whilst many employers are doing great work with schools, colleges and universities more need to step up and offer young people more work experiences and opportunities. This is a major challenge given findings from a survey of just over 300 employers which highlights over 50% did not engage, had no plans to engage in working links with schools because they saw no real benefits to their business and there are too many restrictions to navigate (BIS op. cit.). This may also help explain the Government and Skills Funding Agency's focus on the need to strengthen 'brokerage arrangements' between schools and employers.

3.4 In September 2015, the company will formally announce successful bids to extend a new programme of Enterprise Co-ordinator and volunteer Enterprise Adviser arrangements working with local enterprise partnerships. The balance of investment funding for enterprise and dedicated careers provision that will reach schools and young people (14-24 years old) has yet to be determined. In a very crowded landscape, the new company will have to be clear on the actual problem it is trying to solve. This may be to:

- set up brokerage arrangements between schools and employers (something the National Careers Service has in its delivery remit from 1st October 2014 onwards with small-scale funding; Business in the Community (BiTC) also has a remit in this regard;
- target 'cold spots' where careers provision is weak working closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and other local agencies;
- quality-assure and invest in scalable and sustainable careers and enterprise initiatives that help build capacity in schools and colleges;
- strengthen working links with career development professionals; and/or
- evaluate careers and enterprise policies that have been proven to work well and disseminate good and interesting practices.

3.5 The extent to which Lord Young's enterprise agenda⁵⁷⁰ becomes the dominant theme is something to be reconciled. Concrete agreements will need to be reached and radically improved careers information, advice and guidance for students needs to be achieved. The current Government is now looking ahead to assess the efficacy of existing arrangements and it seems likely further measures will be considered to help move

⁵⁶⁹ Bimrose, J., Brown, A., Behle, H., Barnes, S.A., Hughes, D., Andrews, D., Davies, E., and Wiseman, J. (2014). *Understanding the link between employers and schools and the National Careers Service*. London: Department for Business, Innovation & Skills (BIS) Research Report Series, December 2014. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/386030/bis-14-1271-understanding-the-link-between-employers-and-schools-and-the-role-of-the-national-careers-service.pdf

⁵⁷⁰ Lord Young (2014) *Enterprise for all: The relevance of enterprise in education*. Available to download at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/338749/EnterpriseforAll-lowres-200614.pdf

beyond current statutory and non-statutory requirements for schools and colleges. This is truly a new era for careers work in England and this ‘experiment’ needs to work. The DWP Youth Guarantee⁵⁷¹ and Queen’s Speech (May 2015)⁵⁷² with a new Full Employment and Welfare Benefits Bill includes a commitment from government to provide a Jobcentre Plus adviser in schools). It is very timely for the Committee to take stock and situate not just problems and challenges but also to identify solutions that will improve social mobility and opportunities all young people, not just a few!

3.6 A recent report⁵⁷³, launched by the Mayor of London, sets out a vision for achieving improved careers provision for all young people, including those who fall between the route of A-Levels and Higher Education and those classified as NEET. The report sets out seven key features upon which a pan-London Careers Offer should be based, and adopted by all as follows:

1. Every young Londoner should have access to ***impartial, independent and personalised careers education, information, advice and face-to-face guidance in their local community.***
2. Every young Londoner should have completed at ***least 100 hours experience of the world of work***, in some form, by the time they reach the age of 16. This may include career insights from industry experts, work tasters, coaching, mentoring, enterprise activities, part-time work, participation in Skills London and The Big Bang Event, work shadowing, work experience/supported work experience and other relevant activities. Lessons from this and other elements of a young Londoners’ employability journey should be captured in ***a personalised digital portfolio***. This will provide a strong foundation for London’s young people to take responsibility for capturing learning and experiences from an early age (and beyond the age of 16) and support their careers activities with employers.
3. Every secondary school and college should have in place ***an explicit publicised careers policy and Careers Curriculum on young people’s experiences of the world of work, links with business, careers provision and destination outcomes.*** That policy should be reviewed and approved by the governing body at least every three years. All schools and colleges should also report annually on delivery of the careers policy and curriculum.
4. Every good institution will have ***a governor with oversight for ensuring the organisation supports all students to relate their learning to careers and the world of work*** from an early age.
5. Every secondary school and college should have ***up-to-date, user-friendly labour market intelligence/information (LMI) readily accessible*** by young people, teachers and parents/carers drawing upon the Skills London Match, UKCES ‘LMI

⁵⁷¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/helping-people-to-find-and-stay-in-work>

⁵⁷²

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/430149/QS_lobby_pack_FIN_AL_NEW_2.pdf

⁵⁷³ Hughes, D. (2015) *London Ambitions: Shaping a careers offer for all young Londoners*. London: London Enterprise Panel & London Councils. June 2015

for All', National Careers Service local LMI data and other reliable sources of information.

6. The quality of careers provision should be strengthened by ***developing 'careers clusters' to share resources in improving awareness of London's labour market and supporting school and college leaders in a whole-school approach to plan and deliver careers provision.***
7. The ***London Ambitions Portal*** should enable more schools and colleges to easily find high-quality careers provision designed to support the career development of all young Londoners.

3.7 A 'Careers Curriculum' from Key Stage 2 – Key Stage 5 is designed to support teachers with their own particular offer for their students. An implementation plan is now underway in London. Since July 2015, responses from within and outside of London suggest there is significant potential to replicate or customise this approach in other parts of England, in particular finding ways to identify and maximise resources at a local and national level.

3.8 A culture change in careers, enterprise and employability education is needed, building upon successful careers policies and practices studied or seen at local, national, EU and international levels. Recent findings from an International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy (Iowa, 2015 – see UK Country Report⁵⁷⁴) indicate England is now lagging behind other countries in its approach to careers provision for young people. This inevitably has an impact on social mobility and fair access to opportunities in a fast changing and complex education and labour markets.

13 September 2015

⁵⁷⁴ <http://www.is2015.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/UnitedKingdom.pdf>

Professor Yaojun Li and Professor Fiona Devine – Written evidence (SMO0062)

[Submission to be found under Professor Fiona Devine](#)

Mary Alice McCarthy– Written evidence (SMO0141)

What are the key components of effective and high quality education, training, and skills development pathways that are valued by employers and young people?

High quality education and training pathways enable students to acquire skills and credentials with immediate value in the labor market but that also provide a foundation for continued learning and career advancement. Below are five essential components of high quality pathways:

1. ***Blend of core academic and technical skills:*** High quality vocational programs are not narrowly focused on technical or occupation-specific skills. Good programs contextualize core academic skills – math, writing, reading comprehension, problem solving – into programs that prepare students to work in particular industries or careers. The skills should be general enough to be transferrable across a range of employers, but specific enough to enable a graduate to move quickly into an occupation and add value for an employer. For information on U.S. approaches to integrating academic and vocational learning see:
 - a. https://www.acteonline.org/clearinghouse_integration/#.Vnc3cdDYf_QA
 - b. <http://www.nrccte.org/core-issues/curriculum-integration>
2. ***Include work experience:*** High quality career and technical education includes a work-based experience for students. Ideally, the work experience is extensive, structured, paid, and includes a trained, on-site mentor. European apprenticeship models are, of course, the ideal. But other forms of work experience can also be valuable, including paid and unpaid internships. The key to making the internships valuable is that they expose students to the core activities of a particular occupation. The more structured the better and the more schools can support employers with professional development or other tools for supporting the interns, the better. In the United States, work-based learning is not a requirement of schools receiving federal funding for career and technical education, but some states do require it.
3. ***Mechanisms exist to keep curriculum is up-to-date and relevant:*** In contrast to many academic programs, the skill requirements of vocational programs are constantly changing. Technology-driven change and globalization are affecting the nature of work in virtually all occupations, transforming how and where tasks are completed and the underlying skills necessary to do them. Students need access to up-to-date equipment as well as an understanding of how work is organized and tasks are executed. Keeping programs current is a constant challenge for vocational programs and requires significant on-going investment and employer engagement to ensure curriculum and faculty are up to date. Externships and professional development opportunities for faculty can help them keep abreast of industry changes. Strong relationships with employers

willing to donate equipment and mentors (or allow programs access to their equipment) can also help keep the programs relevant. The fact that vocational programs require constant upgrading and investment is often not well appreciated among policymakers, particularly if the programs are considered to be less desirable than more traditional academic pathways.

4. ***Programs are not terminal, but rather connect to additional education pathways:*** Historically, vocational education has been an alternative to either a university degree or other types of advanced education and training. Over the last three decades, the employment and earnings returns to university and post-graduate degrees have significantly outpaced the returns to vocational programs, making the latter unattractive to students and their parents. However, many students would benefit from more applied learning opportunities at the upper secondary and postsecondary level. Ensuring that these programs are not terminal, but can also be a starting point to an advanced degree is essential for making them more attractive to students.

Connecting secondary and postsecondary vocational education programs has been a major focus of federal and state policy in the United States over the last decade. There is also growing interest in creating more opportunities for students who graduate from shorter career-focused programs at the postsecondary level to continue on seamlessly to a four-year degree. See the following links for information on connections between vocational and academic pathways:

- a. <http://www.careertech.org/programs-study>
 - b. http://ocrl.illinois.edu/projects/nsf_applied_baccalaureate/
 - c. <https://www.newamerica.org/education-policy/flipping-the-paradigm/>
5. **Demand-driven – and data driven:** Vocational education and job training programs in many countries, including the United States, have a reputation for supplying graduate for jobs that no longer exist. Making education and training more demand-driven requires strong and on-going coordination with employers as well as access to timely and accurate data about labor market trends. It also requires policies that enable education and training providers to adapt quickly to changes in local labor markets and skill demands – a flexibility that is often not a feature of national or local education policy.

Good education and training systems are also underpinned by a strong data infrastructure that connects education and labor market outcomes. But data alone will not solve the challenge of making programs more demand-driven.

Employers also need help assessing their own skill needs and building their capacity to send clear signals to the education and training community. For information on U.S. initiatives aimed at improving data and employer hiring and signaling practices, please see the following:

- a. <http://www.opportunityatwork.org/#opportunityatwork>
- b. <http://www.workforcedqc.org>

Which features does the UK have?

I am not an expert on the UK VET system, but I am aware of the impressive growth in the apprenticeship sector over the last decade. In fact, US policymakers often cite the UK's success as evidence in support of their own efforts to grow the apprenticeship sector here. England's "Further Education Colleges" also seem to be excellent examples of flexible institutions that can respond to local labor market needs and serve a wide variety of learners, including older and working learners.

England's Qualification and Credit Framework along with the Framework for Higher Education in England, Wales and Northern Ireland also seem like an important step toward providing an infrastructure for greater mobility of students across technical and academic/university programs.

What do we know about how other countries prepare this middle group of attainners for the transition from school to work?

As mentioned above, actual on-site work experience, through apprenticeships or internships, appear to be the most successful way to facilitate school to work transitions. Beyond work experience, high quality career navigation services can help students identify potential employers, develop resumes, and practice interviewing. Strong linkage between schools and local employers are at the heart of strong transition into the labor market.

The transition from school to work is the weakest link in the American technical education system. We have made much more progress connecting secondary and postsecondary technical education programs. At the secondary level, schools are charged with making students "college and career ready", but there is very little emphasis on the latter – or even consensus on what "career ready" means at the secondary level. At the same time, there is growing interest in exposing secondary students to more career information and experience. Two high school reform efforts

– [Linked Learning](#) and [Career Academies](#) – have been shown to be effective at helping secondary students successfully transfer to postsecondary career education programs. Both programs operate within traditional upper secondary schools (high schools) but students choose a career focus and their coursework is contextualized around the skills and knowledge of related occupations. [Early college high schools](#) have also been successful at increasing both secondary completion rates and transitions to college. Like the former two

Academics and experts

examples, these schools integrate career education into academic programming at the upper secondary. The goal is not to prepare students to enter the labor market directly, but to prepare them for postsecondary career education programs.

There is also growing interest in building the capacity of students, parents, advisors and faculty to interpret and use labor market information. Career navigation is not well developed in the United States, making it difficult for students to make well-informed decisions about the value (or not) of particular career education programs. There is growing interest in scorecards and other consumer-facing tools that can help students and advisors see the cost and average returns to particular programs. Last year, the U.S. Department of Education released the [College Scorecard](#) to help students better understand the returns to particular programs.

The Department plans to extend the scope of the tool to include one-year postsecondary vocational programs. The U.S. Department of Labor also has a number of [tools](#) designed to help inform student decision-making when it comes to education and training.

How do other countries balance the need for developing specific vocational skills sought by employers and the broader employability and life skills that are important for future employment?

I think there is a growing understanding within the employer community that broad skills – both academic skills and “soft skills” – are just as important as technical skills. The “T-shaped” employee is a popular metaphor in the United States for describing an ideal employee who has depth and breadth. In fact, [surveys](#) of employers in the United States reveal a strong preference for graduates with broad knowledge over narrow technical competencies.

Nevertheless, it is true that local colleges do find themselves under pressure at times to customize their programs to the needs of local employers. In these cases, state legislatures and accreditors can serve as a counterweight to employers by requiring a minimum amount of “general education coursework” in any program – and also through their program authorization processes. Industry associations can also be very helpful for identifying broad, industry-wide competencies. The U.S. Department of Labor has worked with a number of employer associations to develop industry competency models that begin with broad-based, transferable skills as a foundation. These models can be a valuable reference point for local education providers when explaining to individual employers why they are focusing on broad skills. For more see: <http://www.careeronestop.org/competencymodel/>.

How do other countries involve employers, educational institutions, employer representatives, and third sector bodies in the preparation of young people for the workplace? Who is responsible for this? What would work in the in the context of the UK?

Effective brokerage among educational institutions and employers is indeed a key feature of successful career education and training systems. It is essential that the brokerage

Academics and experts

system be sufficiently flexible to allow for intermediaries to adapt to the needs of local and regional economies. At the same time, it can be very helpful to have intermediaries at the national level that establish broad parameters and expectations for the relationship between schools and employers.

In the United States, our [public workforce system](#) is designed to provide brokerage at the state and local level. It is a devolved system, which is funded through the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#). Every state is required to establish a Workforce Investment Board (WIB) that is led by employers and includes representatives from state education and training agencies, local schools (secondary and postsecondary), unions, and community-based organizations. The WIB is responsible for giving strategic direction to the state's workforce development efforts and must submit strategic plans outlining those efforts to the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education. Within each state, there are local workforce investment boards charged with coordinating education and training at the local level, in keeping with the state plan, but also adapting to local circumstances.

The system is highly devolved – and highly uneven. In some states and local areas, the WIBS are very effective brokers. In others, they are not. One of the biggest challenges for effective brokerage is the degree to which the employer community is organized. Where employers are willing to work collectively to identify skill needs, it is easier for schools to work with them. It is far more difficult for schools to work with individual employers. Industry associations or sectoral organizations can be particularly valuable for supporting brokerage efforts.

OECD research has shown a disparity in the earning potential of someone in the UK who has completed upper secondary education in comparison to someone who has not. Does this disparity exist in other countries?

The disparity exists in the United States and is widening. Over the last thirty years, the real earnings of adults without a postsecondary credential have declined, while the earnings of college degrees have increased modestly overall (but significantly in select technical fields). Individuals who earn graduate and professional degrees have seen the greatest wage growth. Not only do non-college graduates in the United States earn less money, they are significantly more likely to experience regular and lengthy bouts of unemployment, require public assistance, and have poor health outcomes. For more information see:

- <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2014/02/11/the-rising-cost-of-not-going-to-college/>
- <https://www.clevelandfed.org/newsroom-and-events/publications/economic-commentary/2012-economic-commentaries/ec-201210-the-college-wage-premium.aspx>

In the United States, the question of what is driving these growing gaps is much less clear than the fact that it is happening. Some researchers ascribe it to the effects of [technology](#) and the changing [skill requirements](#) of jobs, others to globalization and trade, and others to the [decline of unions and loss of bargaining powers](#) among workers. Either way, individuals

Academics and experts

lacking postsecondary credentials in the United States are at a severe disadvantage in the labor market and are far more vulnerable during economic downturns.

What is known about the differences in participation in education and training for groups who may be considered more disadvantaged or vulnerable (either by lower socio-economic grouping, ethnicity, gender, disability, and other protected characteristics). How does this compare across OECD countries?

In the United States, college-going rates varies considerably among ethnic minorities, with high rates among Asian Americans and lower rates among African Americans and Hispanics, though rates among the latter two groups have increased over the last two decades. African Americans and Hispanics are over-represented in postsecondary vocational programs and are more likely to attend non-selective public and private, for-profit colleges, many of which offer vocational programs.

While enrollment rates have been growing, completion rates continue to differ considerably among groups, with African Americans and Hispanics completing at lower rates. One common explanation for the completion difference is that Black and Latino students –for a variety of reasons – are more likely to attend non-selective institutions (community colleges and for-profit vocational schools). Black and Latino students who have above-average college entrance scores go to college at the same rate — 90 percent — as whites. But once enrolled, white students are more likely to finish, in part because they attend more selective colleges, where the resources are better and overall graduation rates are higher.

[Parental education](#) is also a strong predictor of a child’s educational trajectory in the United States, with children of college graduates significantly more likely to enter and complete college than children whose parents did not complete college.

An interesting difference among OECD countries revealed by the 2012 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Skills (PIAAC) is their relative success at educating [immigrant populations](#), many of whom arrive with very low numeracy and literacy skills. Canada and Sweden appear to be particularly successful at building skills of immigrants while the [United States](#) is less so. The reasons may have to do with the availability of adult education programs aimed at low-skilled adults, as well as other support services for new immigrants.

How does the UK compare with other countries in terms of funding for intermediate or technician level vocational education and training? Does funding come from national government, regional government, employers, or individuals?

I am not an expert on VET financing, but my understanding from the OECD’s [review](#) of England’s postsecondary VET system is that the sector is quite small.

Does more funding equate to better sustainable employment outcomes and increased participating in the labor market from those most distant from it?

Funding is clearly important for both increasing access and quality in vocational education. That said, additional funding on its own does not guarantee successful school to work transitions or high quality. It all depends on how the funding is channeled. In the United States, the majority of the federal funds that support postsecondary vocational programs come in the form of grants or loans to pay for tuition – which means the funding is enrollment driven, not outcome-driven. The grant program (the largest of which is the Pell Grant program) has significantly expanded access to postsecondary vocational programs to students who would not otherwise have been able to afford it. The student loan program has also expanded access, but with many [negative side effects](#) – including high levels of financial risk for students and perverse incentives for institutions to raise tuition. Institutions pay no penalty when students with large amounts of debt fail to graduate and the federal government places no limits on tuition that colleges can charge. Together, these factors are an important reason for the increasing cost of higher education – including postsecondary vocational education – in the United States. For more detailed analysis, see this recent [report](#) by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Additional funding that is not linked to outcomes (i.e. employment and earnings) may expand access, but will likely do little to improve transitions from school to work.

What is the balance in other countries in their policy focus on vocational and academic routes through upper secondary education and on to tertiary routes? Does this make a difference in how academic and vocational routes are valued?

Policy attention – and policy coherence – matter for ensuring the quality of vocational programs. In the United States, the federal programs supporting academic and vocational education are out of balance, particularly at the postsecondary level where the demand for vocational programs is very strong. The federal program dedicated to ensuring the quality of postsecondary vocational programs – the Carl D Perkins Career and Technical Education Act (Perkins) – has an annual budget of just \$1.5 billion. The Higher Education Act (HEA), by contrast, provides more than \$150 billion annually in direct financial aid to students in the form of grants and loans to support their participation in postsecondary education. Many of these grants and loans – around \$30 billion annually – go to support students in one and two-year vocational programs. But the rules and regulations surrounding access to HEA have little to say about the quality of vocational education since the law was designed with university students and academic programs in mind. In effect, our postsecondary vocational system is hiding inside our higher education system and nearly invisible to policymakers.

The imbalance between the two federal programs is particularly important given the strong and growing demand for postsecondary vocational education. One-year certificate programs that train individuals for particular occupations represent the fastest growing postsecondary segment in the United States – but they are funded primarily from a

Academics and experts

program designed to support university-level degree completion. The educational market – particularly private providers – has responded to the demand from students, but policymakers have not adjusted the program to reflect the needs of the new students for programs that are well-linked to the labor market. The lack of adequate policy has opened the door to many low quality providers – particularly private, for-profit schools – that are eligible to accept federal student aid dollars but are not responsible for ensuring students graduate or secure good jobs. Not surprisingly, given the large amounts of dollars with almost no accountability for outcomes, postsecondary vocational programs have the worst outcomes of all postsecondary programs in the United States – with high levels of student indebtedness and [loan defaults](#).

What approach should the government take in looking to improve upwards mobility, employment outcomes, and opportunities for school leavers who do not follow an academic pathway? What policy should be maintained and what should be introduced?

The challenge of increasing connections between education, training, and upward mobility for all students, including those not interested or well prepared to follow academic pathways, is common among many OECD countries. As good jobs increasingly require more advanced skills and knowledge, the education sector is playing an ever-more central role in opening or closing doorways to economic opportunity. But there are many ways to deliver education and training and meeting today's skills challenge requires flexible approaches that combine academic and vocational learning and pathways. Below are four brief suggestions for policies that can support those flexible approaches and create more options for students:

Continue expanding apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities:

The United Kingdom has defied predictions by many observers that apprenticeship models could not be expanded beyond the Central European countries in which they have deep roots – or to nontraditional sectors like healthcare or retail. The country's success in this area is noteworthy and should be the foundation for continued improvements in the educational quality, scope, and reach of the programs.

Connect vocational and academic pathways: Students who opt for vocational programs should never be sacrificing their ability to move into academic programs that lead to higher education degrees or more advanced technical training. Building seamless connections between vocational programs and further education can also help reduce the stigma associated with the programs as well as allay the concerns of parents or school advisors who may be reluctant to send a student into a vocational pathway. The qualification frameworks are an important foundational piece for supporting greater mobility across systems and should be strengthened.

Develop more second chance opportunities for adults: Young people often make false starts in life. Second chance opportunities are crucial for adults who were not able to get onto a stable career pathway and lack the skills and credentials necessary to thrive in today's economy. Programs designed to meet the needs of

adult learners who are often working and raising children while studying are an increasingly essential part of any country's skills development system. These learners may need different instructional approaches that help them regain (or acquire for the first time) core academic skills as well as job-relevant technical skills. [Integrated education and training programs](#) that contextualize basic academics with job training have been shown to be particularly effective for adult learners. [Sector strategies](#) that engage employers and help them hire and skill-up adult workers have also demonstrated promise.

Support innovative approaches to the design, delivery, and certification of skills:

As educational content becomes increasingly open and available, students and workers have more opportunities to learn outside of formal educational institutions. A growing number of countries are developing agencies capable of certifying and credentialing skills wherever they are acquired. The focus on the validation of skills, rather than the delivery of instructional programs, opens up space for alternative education providers that may be effective with particular groups of learners or building specific types of skills. In the United States, many new "[learning accelerators](#)" are popping up that teach a variety of information technology and data analytic skills in much less time than traditional institutions. Other innovations include competency-based education models, digital badging, micro-credentials, and new employer-education partnerships. Much of the new innovation is focused on the need to better deliver technical skills, which is directly relevant to efforts build opportunity for upward mobility for nontraditional students.

22 December 2015

Academics and experts

Professor Phil Mizen, Gaby Atfield, Professor Anne Green, Professor Kate Purcell, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)

[Submission to be found under Professor Kate Purcell](#)

Academics and experts

Professor Kate Purcell, Gaby Atfield, Professor Anne Green, Professor Phil Mizen, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)

Precarious Pathways into employment for young people? An ESRC-funded project based at the Institute for Employment Research at the University of Warwick, in conjunction with colleagues at Aston University, the University of Leicester and the Open University

Preliminary findings from the project fieldwork submitted as evidence to inform the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

Kate Purcell, Anne Green, Gaby Atfield,
Charoula Tzanakou, *Institute for Employment research, University of Warwick*, with Phil Mizen, *Aston University*

January 2016

Preliminary findings from the ESRC-funded *Precarious Pathways into Employment for Young People?* project fieldwork submitted as evidence to inform the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility

1. *The project*

The ESRC-funded interdisciplinary research project *Precarious Pathways into Employment for Young People* ('the Paths2Work project') began on 1st June 2014 and is scheduled to be completed on 31st May 2017. The project aims to investigate the opportunities and obstacles faced by 16-24 year olds entering the current labour market, from the perspectives of young school and college leavers, recent graduates, employers, careers advisers and those working in other youth labour market stakeholder organisations.

The research focuses on the Midlands, and especially Birmingham, Coventry and Leicester, so that interrelationships between the supply of and demand for young job-seekers can be considered in relation to one another within a specific regional context. An advantage of this case study approach is that it allows us to explore the historical antecedents of the current economic and social industrial and commercial situation, along with documented trends and experiences of young people's transitions from education to employment and the impact of national and regional policies related to this, during previous periods of recession in the 1930s and 1970s. There are four component sub-projects, as illustrated by the diagram below, but the research team members are working closely across the project as a whole and the findings will hopefully contribute more than the sum of its parts.



Further detail can be found on <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/paths2work>

Given that we are only half-way through the project, we are in the very early stages of the research with employers (Sub-project 4), but we are well into the second half of the investigation of the experiences of school and college-leavers (Sub-project 2) and have completed two-thirds of the interviews with graduates (Sub-project 3). This note consequently draws on some of our emerging themes and findings from the research with the young people themselves, in particular from the interviews with young people 16-24 who have not gone on the higher education and the early career interviews with recent graduates, following collection of detailed survey data during their undergraduate careers⁵⁷⁵.

The core of the project brief is to investigate the extent of what we define as 'precarious employment' and 'unpaid work experience', both while young people are in education, in the transition from education to employment and in their early careers. As a result, we have been more concerned in the interviews to investigate the transitional opportunities and obstacles to employment, training and career opportunities rather than in-work training and development experiences, although this is something that we are currently addressing in the second round of interviews with school and college-leavers and will be a focus of the interviews with employers.

2. *Background to the research*

The increasing expansion of higher education since the end of the 1980s and the resulting increase in the graduate labour supply, along with the accelerating information and communication technology (ICT) development since the late 1990s, led to innovation and

⁵⁷⁵ See <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/Futuretrack>

Academics and experts

restructuring of administrative and technical support occupations within virtually all organisations. The knowledge and skills required to conduct managerial and administrative jobs had changed radically as a result of ICT and organisational restructuring, in many cases exacerbated by the opportunities and requirements of globalisation of production and services. Consequently, job design and divisions of labour in organisations changed.

Political and economic changes have modified labour market boundaries for both highly skilled and less skilled job-seekers. The increase in UK higher education participation from less than 10 per cent of school-leavers in the early 1980s to well over 40 per cent in recent years (and over 50 per cent in Scotland) has meant that employers recruiting junior management and administrative staff and technicians have been faced with different recruitment and selection choices, resulting from a labour supply that includes increasing numbers of graduates, as well as immigrants at all levels of skill from EU countries.

There is evidence that the UK economy is shifting to what a recent UKCES report⁵⁷⁶ described as an ‘hour glass labour market’ with continued demand for professional and higher managerial jobs in a context where supply of the knowledge and skills required for these jobs has been growing faster than demand, increasing demand for a smaller proportion of ‘higher middle skilled’ professional and technical jobs, decline in ‘traditional middle skill jobs (e.g. clerical and blue-collar)’, continued demand for low-skill (e.g. care, hospitality) and stability in the ‘low pay/no pay’⁵⁷⁷ base. This has implications both for demand for those entering the labour market with mid-level skills, and for training and progression for those with lower level skills, given fewer mid-level jobs into which they can progress.

Our findings, along with other recent research⁵⁷⁸, suggest that the ‘low pay/no pay’ base appears to have grown in the period since the research for the UKCES report has been published, as zero-hours contractual relations between workers and employers has increased and that further, the fragmentation of jobs in all strata of employment into part-time rather than full-time ‘living wage’ opportunities has grown. These trends provide challenges, in particular, to young people seeking entry to the labour market and the opportunity to develop careers and access secure employment. One of our strongest findings so far is that for both graduate and non-graduate jobs and training opportunities, experience of having undertaken unpaid work or having work-based experience prior to applying for employment was strongly related to successful outcomes, whereas reported lack of such experience and inability to access or take advantage of such opportunities as existed was associated with lack of success.

While recognising that qualifications, experience, personal attributes and skills are important to employers, the school and college leavers in this study frequently referred to the importance of work experience in getting a job, and difficulties in gaining such experience. They were all well aware of the importance of ‘soft skills’, directly and indirectly. Confidence

⁵⁷⁶ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/378968/Summer_What_0v41.pdf See p.3.

⁵⁷⁷ UKCES definitions

⁵⁷⁸ <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/lmac/contracts-with-no-guaranteed-hours/employee-contracts-that-do-not-guarantee-a-minimum-number-of-hours--2015-update-/employee-contracts-that-do-not-guarantee-a-minimum-number-of-hours--2015-update.html>

Academics and experts

was a strong theme. Then, depending on the work experience, skills such as communication skills, for example, customer service were emphasised from those in hospitality sector, etc. Apprentices and those who sought them commented favourably on the value of apprenticeship as a way of earning and learning and a route to gaining qualifications or to make up for not having them.

3. *The questions posed by Professor Bathmaker on behalf of the Working Party*

We have been invited to address three questions in particular. These are:

- a) Question 1. Do you have any examples of employers to creating middle skills jobs with opportunities for training or professional accreditation in practice, or employers really having an interest in middle-skills/technician skills?
- b) Question 2. Do you have evidence of how graduates take the middle skills jobs so others don't get them?
- c) Question 3. Do you have any evidence of post-recruitment training for these overlooked middle?

We address these as best we can below.

3.1 *Question 1: Evidence of employers creating 'Middle Skills' jobs*

We question whether focusing on 'middle skills jobs' is helpful, since access to these has been changing so radically. There are major differences between 'higher' and 'traditional middle skills' jobs. Many employers (in the public sector in particular) are committed to facilitating employee occupational and professional development **for their contracted employees** and access to these opportunities is the major obstacle that young people encounter. The big issue is the fragmentation of low skilled and 'traditional middle skills' level jobs and the **shift of responsibility** for the development of skills and competences, and even the requirement for evidence of organisational and commercial work experience prior to recruitment, **from employers to the education sector and individuals themselves**.

What might count as 'traditional middle' today is not the same as 15-20 years ago and the basis upon which many of these jobs are being offered has changed. The dual impacts of longer hours service provision and increased availability of higher education students available to work part-time has led, in many sectors, to the fragmentation of jobs in the interests of 'lean organisational' flexibility, so that organisational recruitment is planned in terms of hours to be covered rather than numbers of employees or jobs to be filled (e.g. the receptionist for a large company who is now recruited on a self-employed basis; the supervisory roles in retail and hospitality filled by students working part-time, whose experience in vocational employment has led to the offer of in-house training and promotion to better-paid jobs).

3.1.i *The importance of work experience to access the first rung of the jobs ladder*

Academics and experts

Members of the non-graduate sample frequently acknowledged that the kinds of jobs accessible to them were *not* 'good jobs', but they accepted them as a way to earn money and some also appreciated their potential longer-term value as work experience;

"It's not the best jobs but it's something that gets you money,.. puts money in the back of your pocket, you know. [you've] got to grab what you take, basically."

Steven, 18, unemployed at the point where he participated in a focus group, talking about a low-skill zero hours job he had applied for, Coventry

"Before I started my first job, I couldn't talk to anyone, and after having a part-time job for about nearly two years, I could come into a place like this and talk to absolutely anyone, get on with them and know what to do basically"

Brett, 22, now a financial services apprentice, Birmingham

They also recognised that having had - and ideally, retained - a job for some time, demonstrates possession of the characteristics and attributes necessary to have a job. These young people realised that it is very important to provide such evidence in a CV/application and believe that that employers perceive them to be 'job ready' if they demonstrate previous work experience. They are conscious of the need to overcome the stereotype that young people are 'lazy', 'unreliable', or 'unwilling to work hard'.⁵⁷⁹ However, they recognised that the cumulative low-skill work experiences to which the current 'zero hours' labour market restricts many of them, does not add much value and may detract from rather than enhance their profiles as potential employees or trainees:

"If an employer looks at your CV and they see loads of things like, even if it's agency and stuff, they're going to look at that and they think, 'well you've had all these jobs in this amount of time' - and they're going to be like, 'Well obviously, it just shows you're not employable because you've only been there for this amount of time'."

Tanya, female, 21, Coventry

"[...] I never put any of mine [short term agency jobs] on my CV, I only put like the main ones ... the main ones that you need."

Dora, female, 19, Coventry

Many young people, including members of the graduate sample, reported how useful work experience has been in providing a better understanding of what 'work' (the working environment, processes, working with colleagues) involves, how it is to work 9-5, how it is to work in an office or as a member of a team in different organisations. They also commented on the value of work experience in helping them to understand the potential and limitations

⁵⁷⁹ See also Green, A.E., Atfield, G., Staniewicz, T., Baldauf, B. and Adam, D. (2014) 'Determinants of the composition of the workforce in low skilled sectors of the UK economy: Social care and retail sector', Report to the Migration Advisory Committee, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/328007/Composition_of_the_workforce_in_low-skilled_sectors.pdf; and Green, A., Atfield, G., Adam, D. and Staniewicz, T. (2013) 'Determinants of the Composition of the Workforce in Low Skilled Sectors of the UK Economy Lot 2: Qualitative Research ? Final Report', Report for Migration Advisory Committee, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/257272/warwick-insti.pdf.

Academics and experts

of their own skills and interests, helping to reveal what they *did* want to do and were good at and clarifying what they *didn't* want to do or found particularly stressful or onerous.

3.1.ii *Direct routes into 'higher middle-skill' jobs*

Among the non-graduates we have interviewed in Project 2, we have a number of examples of young people who have accessed 'lower middle' jobs (or opportunities to acquire the credentials required to progress within them) in the local authorities, the NHS and with private sector employers, via apprenticeships in purchasing, service delivery, the skilled trades etc. For example: Imaging department assistant –NHS, Job coach-Job Shop, ward clerk –NHS, Assistant estate management officer –Local authority, Associate in public sector assurance –Private company.

Graduate routes into 'higher middle-skill' jobs are discussed in section 3.2.

3.1.iii *Changing boundaries between occupational levels*

Access to opportunities reported by the graduates interviewed for Project 3 and those interviewed for the school and college leavers' sample for Project 2 was generally notably different, with the graduates having access to substantially more career information and guidance in addition to educational advantage and access to a wider range of jobs. However, the boundary between two groups is 'fuzzier' than we expected as far as the early labour market experience of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds who did not have access to family and community networks that could facilitate their career progress. We have examples of young people who, having gone into HE, decided to leave, and of those who have graduated and, faced by their failure to access 'graduate jobs', have then joined apprenticeship programmes. This provides an example of graduates or university students 'trading down' and looking for job opportunities in the 'middle'; but it also means that they have gained access to opportunities originally conceptualised as opportunities for lower-qualified applicants.

Dora, currently 19 years old, she lived independently since she was 15. She enrolled at University but left in first year, she signed on and did part time work until she got an apprenticeship level 3 (Business and Administration) with local authority council. Advice and guidance from her college tutor and youth advisor was crucial and at the time of the interview she was discussing for an apprenticeship level 4 within the same local authority.

Liam graduated from a Russell Group university. For two years after he graduated, he moved between part-time lower skilled jobs and unemployment alongside voluntary work. He was eventually accepted onto a training course designed to provide access to a traditionally graduate profession for lower-qualified, under-represented young people who had struggled to find work. He had to convince the training provider to overlook his degree, as the programme was not designed for graduates.

Conversely, we have held a focus group with highly-qualified school-leavers who had the qualifications to go to university but who chose instead to apply for employment in the

finance sector with one of the largest international accountancy firms who have recently introduced career training opportunities for such candidates. This is more closely related to the strategic human resource policy decisions being introduced by several organisations in the finance sector, to shift the balance of recruitment and training of professional staff between graduate and school-leaver applicants with A-levels or equivalent in the face of changes in HE funding. There is some indication that this is beginning to spread to other professional areas⁵⁸⁰. Such schemes are presented as providing fast-track training and earnings opportunities that can put them ahead of their peers who choose to enter after an undergraduate course, and possibly leading to sponsored university participation as part of their early career development. For the employers, it enables them to develop company-specific training that might in some cases be less concerned to develop transferrable skills and knowledge.

We have follow-up interviews arranged with young people on the finance sector programmes later this year and it is a theme that will be explored with employers in Project 4, which includes a case study in Finance. The Project 4 fieldwork will enhance our ability to address Question 1 in terms of employers' recruitment, training and development policies and practices, and their attitudes towards 'middle-skill' recruitment and deployment.

3.2 Question 2. Do graduates take the middle skills jobs so others don't get them?

As far as the impact of graduate underemployment on opportunities for less well-qualified jobseekers is concerned, the overall picture is complex. There is evidence that in many cases the supply of more highly-educated job-seekers has enabled employers in some sectors to redesign jobs and change organisational structures,⁵⁸¹ while in other cases, there is some evidence to suggest that graduate recruits to previously non-graduate jobs have been able to 'grow' their jobs, convincing employers that their HE-developed contribution could enhance efficiency and productivity and deserved to be rewarded accordingly^{582, 583, 584, 585}). On the other hand, there is no doubt that a progressively increasing proportion of graduates have been under-employed, in occupations that clearly did not require or use the knowledge and higher-level skills that they had acquired during three or four years' investment in HE (Purcell and Elias 2015), and this must mean that they are displacing potentially less qualified candidates.

⁵⁸⁰ .g. The Law Society is introducing a Legal Apprenticeship this year and see Sally Veale in The Guardian 18th January: 'Penguin ditches requirement for a degree.'

⁵⁸¹ See also Green, A., Atfield, G. and Purcell, K. (2015) 'Fuelling displacement and labour market segmentation in low-skilled jobs? Insights from a local study of migrant and student employment', *Environment and Planning A* DOI: 10.1177/0308518X15614327

⁵⁸² Purcell, K. and P. Elias (2015) *Does Britain have too many graduates?*, December <http://theconversation.com/does-britain-have-too-many-graduates-46349>

⁵⁸³ CIPD Policy Report August 2015 *Overqualification and Skills Mismatch in the Graduate Labour Market* <https://www.cipd.co.uk/binaries/over-qualification-and-skills-mismatch-graduate-labour-market>.

⁵⁸⁴ James, S., C. Warhurst, G. Tholen and J. Commander (2013) 'What we know and what we need to know about graduate skills', *Work, Employment and Society*, 27(6), 952-963.

⁵⁸⁵ Mason, G. (2002) 'High skills utilisation under mass higher education: graduate employment in service industries in Britain', *Journal of Education and Work*, 15(4), 427-456.

Academics and experts

In previous research tracking a large nationally-representative sample of 2005-6 UCAS applicants through UK higher education and the transition to early career development⁵⁸⁶, we found that around 30 months after graduation, 11 per cent of those who had completed a three-year course were unemployed and looking for work, 17 per cent were employed part-time in one or more jobs and three per cent were engaged in full-time study. Of those in full-time employment, only 58 per cent regarded themselves as being in a job appropriate for somebody with their skills and qualifications. A significant proportion of those and those in part-time work were in hospitality and clerical/administrative employment, some of which would be classified as what UKCES labelled 'traditional (white collar) middle-skills, some with the potential to progress to higher middle-skills jobs or higher. They included teaching assistant, technician, government and local government administrative jobs and lower-level management jobs such as Human Resource Management Officer and Marketing Assistant jobs for which non-graduates would previously have been recruited and would have provided potential promotion and training opportunities for clerical and administrative staff.

In our *Paths2Work* fieldwork, we have identified graduates in 'higher-middle' and 'traditional-middle' jobs, for example:

Male graduate J, (BA in Theological and Religious Studies from Highest tariff university), after a period of unemployment and succession of clerical/administrative 'traditional middle-skills jobs' was, when interviewed in summer 2015, in a two-year fixed term post in the academic services department of a different university, working on curriculum development administration.

Several of those who had acquired jobs that they considered to be graduate jobs and several en route to graduate careers were in jobs that technically, were not graduate jobs, but were jobs that would not now be accessed by non-graduates easily: for example, tour guides, media administrative, clerical and support jobs that have the possibility of movement into more professional employment.

3.3 Question 3: Do we have evidence of post-recruitment training for 'these overlooked middle'?

The direct answer to this is 'not much'. Our evidence of post-recruitment training for those without degrees has been limited to the examples cited in 3.1, of those on apprenticeships and those in direct-entry training post 'A'-level contracts in the Finance sector. In all other examples of white collar and routine operative jobs done by school and college leavers, many were insecure, zero hours work, mainly accessed on the basis of having some experience of similar work in the past, where induction and basic training appeared to be mainly the traditional low-skill tradition of learning the job 'next to Nellie'. Progression to better, more sustainable employment was not easy for the majority of them. Their problem was accessing a sustainable jobs market, and many, in the face of repeated failure, were fatalistic about their chance of doing so.

⁵⁸⁶ See www.warwick.ac.uk/futuretrack

Academics and experts

“Well, when you apply for a job there’s always gonna be someone that’s got a better qualification than you have, and they’re gonna want them over you, so you’re not really given much of a chance.”

Joe, Leicester, male, 18

Apprenticeships (Public sector such as NHS, City Councils and Private sector accounting firms) were the only reliable route we identified for young people with educational credentials below ‘A’ Level to develop their ‘middle-level’ educational potential get into better roles. These tended to be mainly within the same organisation in which they had undertaken the apprenticeships. Internal labour markets and redeployment processes in quite large organisations enabled such people to access a wider range of opportunities towards the end of their apprenticeship. There were relatively fewer opportunities for apprenticeships and comparable opportunities at this level when we embarked on this research⁵⁸⁷, but the current policy initiatives to encourage employers to take on more apprentices may go some way to improving the situation and we look forward to exploring this with employers in the Project 4 fieldwork.

4. *Is the problem ‘the Overlooked middle’ or is it lack of ‘real jobs’ for labour market entrants?*

In considering the evidence, we are not convinced that ‘overlooked middle’ is a useful concept, except insofar, perhaps, to raise the very significant issue that middle-skills jobs comprise a shrinking proportion of the labour force. Young people in the Midlands cities in which we are conducting the research who did not have adequate school-leaving qualifications to enter apprenticeships or obtain direct-entry access to associate professional opportunities had mainly been confined to low skills, often short term temporary jobs (including agency jobs) and spells of unemployment between those, and perceived little to progress to a better job. We think that the big issues that need to be addressed by policymakers and employers are the growth of numbers of jobs constructed on the basis of zero hours contracts, temporary work and the increasing importance of unpaid work in accessing first paid jobs in many areas of employment.

4.1 *Zero hours contracts and temporary working*

Too many of those to whom we have spoken so far have reported being stuck in a vicious circle where they survived precariously, often with support of family and friends.

⁵⁸⁷ See, for example: Atfield, G., Green, A., Purcell, K., Staniewicz, T., and Owen, D. (2011) The impact of student and migrant employment on opportunities for low skilled people', UKCES Evidence Report 32 <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20140108090250/http://www.ukces.org.uk/assets/ukces/docs/publications/evidence-report-32-impact-of-student-and-migrant.pdf>; Green, A., Atfield, G., Adam, D. and Staniewicz, T. (2013) Determinants of the Composition of the Workforce in Low Skilled Sectors of the UK Economy' London: UK Borders Agency, Home Office, Report for Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/ier/publications/2013/ag_et_al_determinants_of_workforce.pdf; Green, A.E., Atfield, G., Staniewicz, T., Baldauf, B. and Adam, D. (2014) Determinants of the composition of the workforce in low skilled sectors of the UK economy: Social care and retail sectors. Report for Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) of the Home Office. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/328007/Composition_of_the_workforce_in_low-skilled_sectors.pdf

Academics and experts

“You can’t rely on a zero-hour contract, you can’t! How can you live off a zero-hour contract? You don’t know what you’re earning. One month you’re earning £500, the next month you’re earning £20. How can you live off that? You can’t, and you can’t rely on those sort. What we need, what we need is jobs that are, like, proper contracts.”

Abahat, male, 18, Birmingham

“Every month, every day I was travelling up and down, up and down, going to different stores [to provide security] and know what I mean, that’s how much graft I put in. I mean in a week I probably spent silly money in taxis and buses to get to work [...] but until you get a permanent site, because of the zero-hours contract, nothing’s promised, nothing’s promised”.

Azmil, male, 19, Birmingham

We have heard about pernicious situations of agency practices reminiscent of recruitment of casual labour in the 1930s and earlier. For example,

“We’d get a phone call every morning, yeah, from, like, whoever’s working at the agency, and they’ll phone me and they’ll say, ‘Are you available to work tonight?’ [...] and they used to say ‘Pass the message on to your mates as well’. [...] There used to be three other agencies as well [...] so that, altogether [...] there’s about 80 people there [...] The managers would come up who are working the sections and they’ll say ‘Okay... We only need 70 people tonight’, and then with the other 10 people, they used to say to them, ‘Go home.’”

Mo, male, 19, Birmingham

4.2 Unpaid work and internships

For secondary school pupils, college students, undergraduates and job-seekers at all levels of labour market entry, there has been increasing pressure on them and their teachers and advisers to pursue opportunities to gain work experience in order to be able to develop, and provide evidence of having acquired, ‘employability skills’. The focus of the Paths 2 Work project is the extent to which having achieved these leads to better labour market integration (and it does) and the extent to which unpaid work experience and internships have become more common as a prerequisite for accessing paid employment (and we have substantial evidence that this has been the case for an increasing number of occupations). We also have evidence that this mitigates against the extension of equal opportunities, and as such, must raise concerns for the Working Party in relation to its core Social Mobility brief. Having had unpaid work, particularly internships at graduate level, is related to successful acquisition of appropriate employment. This is the case for both graduates aspiring to professional and managerial jobs and recent school-leavers wishing to enhance their job prospects, as the following two examples illustrate:

“Whilst I was at [university] I became increasingly aware that someone from my background doesn’t have as many opportunities, even when you get into a Russell Group university, as someone from a rich family, because the kind of internships that get you into the big business, they were unpaid, a lot of them... and there was no way I

Academics and experts

could ever consider doing so I couldn't find any private sector internships that I could apply for because I couldn't afford them. [...] I'd like to have tried something in advertising and something in publishing just, you know, 'cause that's sort of the main areas that an English degree can lead to."

Female, working class background, neither parent has degree, state school, BA (Hons), 2.1, now secondary school teacher in state comprehensive school.

In this case, the young person has achieved social mobility but her opportunities in doing so were restricted. We had many examples in the much larger Futuretrack survey who reported inability to access unpaid internships and work experience because of financial constraints, who have had considerably more difficulty in accessing employment that uses their knowledge and skills.

In the next (school-leaver) case, the young person tried to gain work experience by undertaking an unpaid placement work but found it unsustainable without financial support.

"I think it was more, yeah, more the location [of his unpaid work experience] really, and obviously to get there you'd have to have money, even if you were getting a bus you need money, you know, you've got to have money at the end of the day, you know, you can only volunteer for a short period of time before the realism of life gets in the way and that's a fact, unfortunately".

Male, 19, Coventry

5. *Messages to the Working Party from the Paths2Work Research so far*

The context within which young people make career and employment decisions has become increasingly complex, opaque and difficult to understand for young people, their parents and other key influencers, and also for employers. However, this is particularly the case for young people and their parents who have little knowledge of the further and higher education systems and the range of jobs and opportunities available, of how to access information, and the questions they need to ask. The institutional structures of education and employment have been in constant change over the last decade and this can add to confusion: there are schools, free schools, academies, UTCs, studio schools, FE and HE. FE does HE and HE does FE, etc. The 'chopping and changing' of policies means that help in 'navigation' is needed by young people and it is clear from our research that access to networks that can facilitate transitions, and lack of these, may result in advantage and disadvantage that can widen or restrict the options available to young people.

Different funding streams add to this complexity. There are local authorities, combined authorities, LEAs, etc. Local actors need to be encouraged to work together across policy domains to help employers and young people to 'navigate' the maze. They also interface with national policies. There is an issue as to whether and how local actors can prioritise policies that meet the needs of local areas and population sub-groups.

Academics and experts

Messages to young people, employers and others are consequently often ‘confusing’; perhaps not surprisingly, given the context of changing institutional and funding structures. All of this means that it is difficult for young people to ‘make their way’ through the system and from education to employment. Some young people are left by the wayside (and are left out of the statistics)– e.g. the ‘hidden NEETs’.

We hope that the Working Party will consider the importance of access to pre-employment work experience, the importance of encouraging employers to offer ACCESSIBLE opportunities, the need for these to be paid or at least participation in them facilitated by provision of expenses, and the responsibility of employers and local and national government support for them.

It is clear that EMPLOYERS have a key role to play in the solution to helping young people ‘make their way’ by helping to address structural issues – e.g. through the provision of PAID work experience, reconsideration of job fragmentation in favour of job rotation or job enrichment schemes where productivity and flexibility might be enhanced rather than reduced.

We believe that MENTORING has a key role to play in combating social disadvantage. Some of the young people who had accessed apprenticeship opportunities, in particular, had done so as a result of encouragement from careers advisers, teachers and others in the community, where one-to-one support had been beneficial in building self-confidence, helping to ‘map out’ different pathways to employment and associated skills needs, and in helping young people to present themselves to employers in a positive way.

Access to ADVICE AND GUIDANCE presents particular challenges to young people from relatively socially and educationally-disadvantaged backgrounds. A ‘do-it-yourself’ online solution to information, advice and guidance is insufficient. Young people need to focus on a ‘career’ and not merely a ‘job’ (i.e. understanding that a particular job may be a useful step on a career pathway). Employers can play a role in the advice and guidance ‘space’ (e.g. going into schools and colleges, providing work experience, etc). Some young people know what they want to do/ achieve and research and adopt a strategic approach to get there. There is a strong correlation between access to careers guidance and advice and socio-economic background, as the Futuretrack study found among graduates when researching their access to information to help them make higher education choices. The same is even more the case among young people whose experience of secondary education has been less positive. There is ‘no one size fits all,’ hence access to individual careers advice and ‘signposting’ to opportunities is important, and this is an area of public service that has been cut in recent years. There is a need to ‘listen’ to the voices of young people, and also of local stakeholders and employers. Prospective solutions to challenges need to involve young people in taking their ‘voice’ into account.

27 January 2016

Dr Simon Reddy – Written evidence (SMO0006)

Evidence

The evidence below is substantiated by a PhD study, which investigated Tutors' and Students' perceptions and experiences of full-time plumbing courses and apprenticeships in plumbing (<https://ore.exeter.ac.uk/repository/handle/10871/15728>).

Although the evidence I present is taken from a small sample, it offers a crucial insight into the problems faced by young people who are not doing A-levels and who are not NEET.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

The most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes for young people in the transition from school into the work place are associated with their levels of social, cultural and economic capital. The findings of my study suggested that students across three colleges progressed mainly as a consequence of family or social network interventions e.g. students had tradesmen in the family or social network contacts to offer a chance of progression into employment or work experience. Those who did not have social networks or family to support their progression often found it very difficult to find a job:

I must have sent off at least 50 letters and I had six replies and they were all saying they were sorry, and you think, "What is the point! No-one is going to employ me". Then, luckily, someone came to the college and I got it, work experience for two weeks (Oz C2, cited in Reddy 2014, p.130).

Young people on preparatory type courses had difficulties in finding employment because:

- The government had paid employers to take on more apprentices than they needed as part of a strategy (see Steedman, Gospel and Ryan, 1998) to reduce wages in the construction sector, which also has implications for reducing macro inflation in the wider economy. Hence young people were exposed to artificially 'inflated' competition for getting onto apprenticeships and 'inflated' competition with each other for jobs, when the apprenticeships ended.
- Growth in 'enterprise culture' for adult students switching career e.g. ex-army personnel, or those wishing to re-train in plumbing has been very successful in FE because of comparatively weak types of labour regulation in the plumbing sector. These adult students are setting up as 'partially trained', unsupervised, self-employed plumbers and are undertaking work that *bona fide* plumbing firms and arguably their apprentices, would have had.
- Competition from highly qualified migrant workers also needs consideration in regard to apprentices' diminishing prospects for progression (Keep and James 2011, p.60).

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

Tutors across the three colleges C1, C2 and C3 perceived vocational provision for their full-time younger students in the following ways (Reddy, 2014, p.132-133):

A lot of it is down to government legislation and they got to be seen to be doing something with these youngsters, the 14 to 19s. (tutor Norman C3)

...but it keeps them off the street, they are doing something. (tutor Darrel C3)

With our younger ones, they hang around in education until they decide what they want to do. In the meantime, it's a holding place for them and that's the most soul destroying part of it. (tutor Mike C1)

...it's not setting them up for a fail, it's just setting them up for a disappointment. (tutor Kim C2)

The scary thing is, is that they have three years of free education and they might lose or waste two on a job that they are never going to do. (tutor Darrel C3)

Tutors in FE were found to be compassionate and caring but generally negative about the prospects of their full-time younger students ever entering the plumbing industry. My study found that this cohort of 16-19 year-olds were often largely unsure about the career they wanted to do. Whilst it is important to remember that the stories in my thesis are not necessarily representative, it could be suggested that they provide the detail necessary to understand why it is that students come to take up different training routes in relation to plumbing in the first place. It was found that media reports of 'skills shortages' followed by stories of high wages and steady work in the plumbing sector had influenced the parents of many students. Parents often recommended the profession for their offspring, without knowing the full details of the occupation and how difficult it was to secure an apprenticeship without the necessary social and cultural capital.

Perhaps most disappointingly, the data in my thesis highlights the fact that the flexibility and inclusion contained in the full-time college training routes might have done little to challenge the disadvantages that many of the young people brought with them to their training courses. Adult students switching careers or going for 'second chance' type self-employment seemed to get the most of out of the full-time courses, which can be argued to have reduced the number of job opportunities in the plumbing sector for younger trainees and apprentices to progress to.

It seemed that it was those young people who were most socially and economically disadvantaged who were most likely to go into the training routes that were less stable and less assured to lead to employment opportunities (Reddy, 2014, p.136-137).

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

The challenges that these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace are complex and varied. For example, the young people aged 16-19 years of age in my study, who were enrolled on full-time courses, were sat alongside highly motivated adult students who took ownership of learning and showed enthusiasm for their plumbing course. Without the necessary life-skills and prior work experience, younger students often lacked the maturity to perform satisfactorily in classroom and practical activities, compared to their older peers. To add to the problem, the plumbing curriculum was weighted toward theory (and an emphasis on English and Maths), there was a discontinuity between theory and practice in the college curriculum, the practical tasks were not real or authentic simulations of the work place, and the assessments were virtually impossible to fail (e.g. continual re-sits for theory tests and low fidelity simulations for practical activities) and did not adequately prepare students for careers in plumbing. Younger students were aware of the fact that the qualification was almost impossible to fail, which affected their levels of motivation and their attitude towards the course and learning as a means of progression.

In short, the college courses did not necessarily support students in performing better in terms of their employment prospects, because many students did not have the work experience that employers demanded. In addition, few failed the assessments for qualifications that employers did not necessarily recognise or respect.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

The qualifications for this cohort need to be reviewed independently. The vocational element is insufficient and wasteful in regard to the fact that many students will not go into plumbing. At the moment the English and Maths emphasis would improve this cohort's future chances to progress, but achieving this will be very difficult for many who perceive their own learning style as 'hands-on'.

I would like to see a qualification such as the City & Guilds Technical Baccalaureate for this cohort which includes at least one visit/exchange to a European Country, with work experience to be included in the qualification. I feel that learning about European culture first hand through pre-apprenticeship, is most important for English students who may broaden their horizons and their learning. The qualification should include some English and Maths, along with project type work which is relevant to a broad field of study. It would be most important to have any written aspects of the course, to be directly relevant and timely, to the practical work undertaken. At the end of the course or by the age of 19, the student should be ready for either work, an apprenticeship or University study. Therefore, an emphasis on 'study skills' is important, along with helping students to work independently and take ownership of their learning, early on in the course. A professional mentoring scheme via a professional body would also be beneficial to this process.

Academics and experts

The general status of vocational training in the UK is poor, and over 60% of employers in the plumbing sector view qualifications as unfit for purpose. However, little has been done to improve the overall status of apprenticeships and vocational training, because of policies involved with flexibility and inclusivity of FE provision. Consequently, apprentices leave apprenticeships after four years of training with an NVQ that few employers respect. Journeyman and Master status need to be re-introduced in UK apprenticeship qualifications, to emphasise the 48 months a plumbing apprentice spends at work, learning skills. NVQs do not recognise or account for the length of training or work place experience, which was considered in my study as being of primary importance to students, tutors and employers.

Work experience, was found in my study to be a very important aspect of learning a trade or for helping with progression into a job. Where students had access to work experience, they could at least collect the on-site evidence required for NVQs and a job was usually more forthcoming.

However, a worrying trend seems to be emerging in the plumbing sector where young people are working unpaid (volunteering) in order to progress from full-time plumbing courses to apprenticeships. Although this may seem like normal practice for students from middle class backgrounds e.g. on internships, poorer students are working unpaid for qualifications with dubious value, which presents an ethical challenge. One apprentice interviewed in my own study was more successful than some of his counterparts as he managed to secure an opportunity through the procurement of unpaid work experience through a plumber who was friend of his father. I asked Connor how long he had been working unpaid and if he had ever asked his employer for wages:

No, I don't like to ask him really. I needed a work placement to come on this course to carry on, so...it's probably about six months...nine till about five. (Connor C2)

Connor's difficulties in obtaining an apprenticeship that paid him were accompanied with other forms of economic hardship. Connor was no longer entitled to Educational Maintenance Allowance, which was a small weekly payment made to full-time students during preparatory training. Consequently, it was difficult for him to buy books for his apprenticeship training at NVQ3. Connor explained that he was reliant upon his parents for support:

Mum and dad help out as much as they can, because they are on low income as well. It's a struggle for all of us. (Connor C2)

In summary, full-time college students are some of the most vulnerable people in our society and it appears that some are susceptible to exploitation. Many of these students are making huge sacrifices to 'get on' and to 'make their own way', but it seems from the data, that they have been largely misled by the way in which some traineeships and apprenticeships in sectors such as plumbing, are marketed and managed by awarding bodies, colleges, stakeholders and respective sector skills councils (Reddy 2014, p.134-135).

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

Consecutive governments have created this cohort of younger students and hence, should have some responsibility, along with the rest of society, for helping them progress and prosper. This can be helped by employers, parents and/or schools encouraging children to consider a career path early and try to secure work experience while still at school e.g. German model. Each student should consider family and social networks when they are choosing a career path. It would be fitting to suggest better careers advice here e.g. get schools to promote apprenticeships. However, we have a situation at the moment where there are forty one applications for each plumbing apprenticeship, so advising/encouraging a school leaver to do a plumbing apprenticeship would not necessarily be good career advice. In conclusion, it is highly questionable that a successful apprenticeship system can work for young people without some form of protectionism. However, some professional status would be beneficial e.g. Journeyman & Master, which is only achievable through apprenticeship (not for fast-track or purely meeting the qualification outcome). Without protectionism, then the standard national minimum wage should also be paid to apprentices at the very least, in the longer term.

6 August 2015

Professor Ken Roberts – Written evidence (SMO0002)

Constructing a middle route for the UK's 16-19 year olds

The Committee should not rely heavily on cross-sectional evidence showing subjects and courses that are currently associated with good outcomes, then prescribe these for more young people. This commits what is known in social science as the 'ecological fallacy'. 'What works' at a micro-collective level will usually not have equal results at a macro-collective level. This kind of evidence-based thinking leads to policy failures. The best guides for UK policy making are UK history and comparative transition systems.

The UK's middle route has been reshaped radically by changes in the economy and education. In the mid-20th century the 'middle' was the top half minus the few who followed the route through Higher School Certs/A-levels to university. The rest, the bottom half, went into jobs without systematic, credentialed training after 1945, which was an improvement on the unemployment and dead-end jobs that awaited 14 year olds before then. The middle route was the most common route into careers in management and the professions as well as into skilled trades and office jobs from which short (sometimes longer) careers were possible. Since then the A-level > university route has been enlarged, most management and professional employment has been graduatised, and currently intermediate office, technical and sales jobs are being graduatised. Employment in manufacturing and the associated craft apprenticeships have shrunk. So the new middle is really the bottom half minus the eight percent or so who become long-term NEET.

Mobility is not the problem. Young people enter this new middle from all class origins, and still exit upwards and sideways (into the middle of the occupational structure) and also downwards. The problem is the absence of a positive definition of the 'middle route'. 'Not good enough for A-levels' is the wrong message! A strong middle route needs its own 'selling points' for young people and employers. In most of continental Europe this is not a problem. In Germany and Germanic countries it is the route through realschule and its equivalents, then into apprentice training, a polytechnical university, or both in either order. In the USA it is high school into community colleges. These are the cheap and cheerful sector of American tertiary education from which progression to a four-year college is possible, but the associate degree can be a useful standalone qualification.

Names matter. 'Vocational' will not do for a middle route. Technological University College sounds too grandiose. TechCom Academies? There needs to be one nationally recognised qualification. The route will be defined by its successes (as are universities). The middle route needs to be the main highway into advanced and higher apprenticeships. These are working well in the UK. Employers alone are able to be the main change drivers in the UK's weakly regulated labour markets. Their incentives will be the ability to recruit the bright and ambitious 18/19 year olds who could alternatively have entered top universities, and the doubts that many have long harboured about whether the universities really do add vocational value except in cases where they teach occupation-specific expert knowledge. The attraction for the 18/19 year olds will be debt-free entry to graduate career tracks at age 21/23. Government in the UK can only facilitate and accelerate. It can do this by ensuring that both sides (employers and young people) receive careers education, advice and guidance.

Academics and experts

A successful middle route must be distinctively different from (not distinctly inferior to) the academic route, and it needs to be distinct from a third 'vocational' route. 'Aiming for a D' must be replaced by curricula at which these pupils can succeed. Their aim will be Level 2 or 3 at 18. There will be late-developers and some will flourish on an alternative curriculum. Like the other routes, it can be defined by its successful graduates. However, there will be many casualties unless the UK can return to genuine full employment.

Increasing social mobility is unnecessary in 'the middle'. The aim is for this middle track to become the best route for young people who are aiming for given occupations, and from which the employers will seek to recruit. The short-term success measures will be better-motivated students, faster and smoother transitions, and less drop-out. Germany has been exemplary, though its hitherto robust system is now creaking. The less regulated UK can retain its own competitive advantage of greater flexibility (alternative routes to specific occupational destinations).

Ken Roberts

29 July 2015

Academics and experts

Professor Ingrid Schoon and Professor Karen Evans – Written evidence (SMO0056)

[Submission to be found under Professor Karen Evans](#)

Academics and experts

Dr Joe Sempik and Professor Saul Becker – Written evidence (SMO0137)

[Submission to be found under Professor Saul Becker](#)

Academics and experts

Professor Ken Spours and Professor Ann Hodgson – Written evidence (SMO0012)

[Submission to be found under Professor Ann Hodgson](#)

Dr Michelle Stewart – Written evidence (SMO0005)

Date: 6 August 2015

To: The Social Mobility Committee of the House of Lords

Inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds

1. I was interested to read about your inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds and your call for evidence. Central to this transition is access to impartial, independent and personalised careers education, information, advice and guidance. A critical factor in the provision of access is ensuring it is of good quality. With reference to the quality of career professionals working in schools, the DfE statutory guidance identifies that the main qualifications for careers professionals are the Qualification in Career Guidance (QCG) and the Level 6 Diploma in Career Guidance and Development.
2. London South Bank University is the only HEI centre in London accredited by the Career Development Institute to deliver the QCG (PG Dip Career Guidance with QCG). Currently this provision is under threat and the last secured intake will be January 2016. The main cause is the lack of investment in the supply of career development professionals. Most applicants have to be self-funded which regrettably also has an adverse impact on the diversity of applicants able to enter the profession, although we have worked hard to provide a modular pathways delivered through blended-learning so as to enable applicants to spread the cost of attaining professional accreditation and to study while remaining in employment.
3. My reason for drawing this concern to your attention is that it would be most unfortunate if in addressing how best to prepare young people for work, access to impartial, independent and personalised careers education, information, advice and guidance is denied to young people in London because the supply of career development professionals ceased without opportunity to consider what steps might be taken to avert this happening.

From:

Dr. Michelle Stewart, FNICEC, CDI, CIPD
Course Director
Careers Education and Guidance
London South Bank University

6 August 2015

Academics and experts

Professor Phil Mizen, Gaby Atfield, Professor Anne Green, Professor Kate Purcell, and Dr Charoula Tzanakou – Written evidence (SMO0145)

[Submission to be found under Professor Kate Purcell](#)

Academics and experts

Professor Lorna Unwin and Professor Alison Fuller – Written evidence (SMO0010)

[Submission to be found under Professor Alison Fuller](#)

Academics and experts

Professor Lorna Unwin and Professor Alison Fuller – supplementary written evidence (SMO0147)

[Submission to be found under Professor Alison Fuller](#)

Further Education

Further Education

The Manchester College – Written evidence (SMO0053)

**The Transition from School to Work for 14-24 year olds
Submission from The Manchester College**

We have been following the current work of your Committee on Social Mobility with great interest, and would like to contribute in as constructive a way as possible.

The Manchester College is the largest College of General Further Education in the country, and part of **The Manchester College Group**, which also comprises divisions for apprenticeships, professional business training by flexible learning, higher education and offender learning on a national scale. Thus, young people's transition from school to work is fundamental to our mission. Since the signing of the Greater Manchester Agreement last November, we have been central to the development and implementation of the Greater Manchester Strategy and the realisation of the skills element of our City Region's devolved powers and responsibilities.

As a member of the **Association of Colleges** we have had sight of, and endorse, the written submission that they have made in response to your call for evidence. However we would like to go further and provide some potent, empirical evidence and ideas on the ground here in Manchester, not simply to supplement the AoC's points but, crucially, to demonstrate both the issues and some potential solutions in a substantive context.

First, we have here in Greater Manchester, simultaneously, both some of the most challenging social and economic issues for 14 to 24 year olds and the most radical approach in the country to tackling them, in the form of the Greater Manchester Agreement. I believe it would be extremely timely for the Committee to take advantage of this large-scale microcosm of the national issues which are your focus.

Just some of our challenges are

- the fact that some Manchester wards have around 60% progression of young people to higher education, while others have around 6%
- a stark example of the often-referred-to "hour-glass" economy in which there are huge barriers for young people to advance from a skill base at levels 1 and 2 to levels 3, 4 and beyond – the higher level technical skills that, by common agreement, are so crucial to national productivity

Our daily mission is to tackle issues such as this, and our key role in the devolution agreement, together with our partnership with Manchester Metropolitan University, would add substantially to the Committee's stock of information and ideas.

Second, as an institution that plays a prominent role in the national skills policy debate, we are well aware of the substantial amount of work that has been done in this field to date: including the CAVTL report "*It's About Work*", several authoritative pieces of research from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills, the Skills Commission, and many more. The

Further Education

AoC's submission provides valuable information and statistics in response to your call for evidence to supplement that.

I also understand the unique parliamentary role of Select Committees and that it is their duty, and in their nature, to take an "ab initio" approach to garnering and understanding facts. However, the Committee's brief for this piece of work runs the risk of focusing on the gathering and analysis of data when, in reality, the missing factor for "the missing middle" has tended to be not information and understanding on the part of policy makers but coherent, consistent action, implementation and the following through of the right policies to completion.

The group that the Committee is focusing on – between NEETs on the one hand and A Level/HE entrants on the other – has not been overlooked by policy makers but, rather, has been subject to continual and radical policy change, under-resourced and denied any realistic planning horizon. It is also of interest to us that there is an assumption that the group you are focusing is somehow "between" one and another state of affairs, when I would argue that this is an unhelpful approach to the issue and could adversely affect the inquiry's outcomes.

I would urge the Committee not to assume that the problem with the "missing middle" is a lack of data, understanding and interest on the part of policy makers. It is not; the problem is continually reduced investment, a lack of coherent, consistent implementation of well-thought out policy and a resulting inadequate planning horizon.

I believe that the Committee is in a position and at a point in time when it can move this debate on significantly: what is happening in our City Region and at The Manchester College can contribute substantively to that.

Submitted by Gordon Hurst, Director of Policy, The Manchester College, on behalf of John Thornhill, Chief Executive, The Manchester College Group

14 September 2015

Northampton College – written evidence (SMO135)

House of Lord Select Committee report – Social Mobility

Area reviews of further education

The Government has announced plans to initiate a widespread review of all 242 further education colleges and 93 sixth form colleges⁵⁸⁸ in England with the aim of moving towards “fewer, often larger, more resilient and efficient providers”.

This exercise is driven by financial expediency. There are currently 70 colleges with poor financial health, largely as a result of government spending cuts, and this is expected to increase to around 170 after the comprehensive spending review this autumn. It is acknowledged that a small minority of colleges have been poorly managed but this is not the case for the vast majority.

The area review process commenced in September 2015 and is due to be completed by March 2017. The process appears to be driven by a deliberate intention to reduce financial support for the further education system without recognising the impact this will make on skills development and the ability of those aged post-16 to make a positive contribution to the economy. There is no substantive evidence that larger colleges deliver higher quality or greater efficiencies.

University technical college (UTCs) and school sixth forms are not as cost effective and do not offer the breadth of curriculum of further education colleges and yet these are not in scope for this review process resulting in a partial review of 16-18 provision. It is worth asking why new UTCs continue to be opened when further education, which delivers similar provision, continues to be subjected to funding cuts.

Funding cuts

These have been extensive in further education over successive years. The budget for adult skills (excluding Apprenticeships) was cut by 15% in 2014-15 and again by 20% in 2015-16 with a view to gradually reducing the adult budget to zero by 2020 (with the exception of support for English and maths skills).

Education Funding Agency

It is a requirement now that further education colleges deliver ‘Study programmes’ for those aged 16-18 that include a main qualification, English and maths plus work experience and employability skills. We are funded to deliver these over a minimum of 540 hours (an increase of 90 hours over the previous programme). There has been a reduction in funding for 18 year old students to £3,700 (compared with £4,000 for those aged 16 and 17). This is despite the fact that an 18 year old requires at least the same level of teaching, learning and support, and some require more support as they have progressed to Level 3 qualifications.

⁵⁸⁸ Association of Colleges, 2015

Further Education

Education reform

All students aged 16-18 who have not yet achieved a grade A* to C in GCSE maths and English are required to continue working towards this goal. Not all students are capable of achieving this, generating high levels of anxiety that impede learning. Other qualifications i.e. Functional Skills at lower levels can really help to improve students' maths and English skills. Colleges should be empowered to make professional judgements on the qualification they follow according to each student's ability.

If a student fails to attend their English and maths classes, all funding is withdrawn for that student. At Northampton College, we have placed around 3,000 students into English and maths classes requiring significant resource. It is difficult to find maths and English teachers; we find that many students are not engaged with these subjects; and the administration is challenging and costly.

The reason so many students need further help in maths and English points to a failure within the primary and secondary education system. While further education colleges are judged to have coped reasonably well with the first year of implementing this reform, it must be supported by future investment and not by additional cuts.

Students starting a GCSE qualification in 2016 will follow the new model where grades will be given at 1-9 instead of A*-G. Under this new system, a grade C will be equivalent to grade four although indications suggest that the minimum expectation will be increased to grade five placing students at greater risk of failure. Increasing the grading criteria will not improve learning but will increase demand for maths and English provision within the FE sector.

BTEC qualifications now have strict assessment criteria meaning that a student who fails one unit may fail the whole qualification. Some BTEC qualifications have final exams while others require continuous assessment. Previously, there were 18 assessed units in an extended diploma (Level 3) enabling students to improve through continuous assessment. This was beneficial for many students and the changes to these qualifications have restricted this type of learner from making their best progress.

A levels are due to become two year linear qualifications with a final exam with a small element of assessed coursework meaning that those who are not good at exams will be disadvantaged. It is likely that only the brightest students and those with proactive parental support will have the best chance of success. An increase in testing does not improve learning by itself; this is dependent on multiple methodologies.

All of the above will impede social mobility for many students and especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The new Ofsted common inspection framework is very challenging and this, set against the pressure of area reviews and financial cuts placing unnecessary burdens on staff, cannot be conducive to running successful colleges.

Further Education

Pat Brennan-Barrett
Principal
5 November 2015

19 November 2015

Schools

Schools

Mr Anthony Ryan (Head teacher, Chiswick School)– Written evidence (SMO0017)

Questions

The following questions cover the full focus of our inquiry. It is not necessary to answer every question in detail in your submission and invite you to share any other information with us that you feel is relevant to the focus of the inquiry. Please consult the staff of the Committee if you have any questions. There is further information on each question attached to this call for evidence. Please focus your answers on young people aged 14-24 who are not on, who do not intend to follow, or who did not follow the A-Level to Higher Education pathway

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Mathematics and English passes to at least C grade are critical to future progress. So many students arrive from primary school with low literacy levels and innumerate. From the age of 11 we are already playing catch up if these students are to have any chance of obtaining a C grade. The solution in my eyes is to incentivize primary and secondary schools to work together to accelerate progress at a far earlier stage. We have involved ourselves (as a response to primary school requests) in level 6 Maths teaching and Literacy support groups). These have been really successful and the outcome data shows a tangible increase in performance for all students. This has been costly for us though and sustainability is essential.... difficult in the current financial climate.

We have also employed our own full time Head of Careers and have invested time and resources to build a personal development programme involving local employers that has last year one a Dragons Award and was runner up in the national Business Awards. This scheme personalises careers guidance making it relevant to each student. In my opinion we do not need another Connexions; but instead need to showcase schools that have taken a leadership role in equipping their students to move from school to work. A basic generic offer is all one will ever get nationally, incentivize schools to innovate with employers in this field.

Finally, one of the biggest barriers to student progression is a lack of personal awareness and self-confidence. We should be championing schools that are using awards such as those offered by ASDAN to allow students to build competency in key skills and attributes alongside academic qualifications. We appear to have allowed the argument to polarise these two important aspects of school curriculum design, the truth is that neither stand alone, we should be assisting all students to build a personal repertoire which includes academic attainment, core skills and competencies together with experiences that encourage students not to 'play safe' but to really stretch themselves out of their natural comfort zones.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Schools

On leaving school (many years ago) I was fortunate to be able to leave at 16 and take up an apprenticeship as a motor vehicle engineer. Fortunately I was not stupid, but for a number of reasons school did not see the best of me!

The apprenticeship prevented me from falling into a downward trajectory, it allowed me to take responsibility for my own development (and actions) and gradually convinced me that I was capable of achieving a lot more than I had achieved academically to this point.

One route does not fit all. My apprenticeship led to a level of self-confidence that was lacking before. I sought out guidance and support as I transitioned from an apprentice mechanic to a teacher, even then this guidance was hard to obtain and required a very proactive stance from me. We need to better assist these students in this often-difficult transition.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

I differ from a lot of my headteacher colleagues here. I do not want a nationally imposed system or a set of rules that I have to adhere to. I realize that we need to work to a set of clear objectives for careers guidance and work related learning but I want the freedom to innovate.

Many employers that we work with are initially hesitant to get involved with a school fearing that our worlds are too far apart for us to have anything in common. We cannot and should not attempt to force employers to work with schools, the approach needs to come from the school.... initially the two parties need to talk, from this common ground can be reached and progress made.

Again, we need a set of qualifications such as those provided by ASDAN, that allow programmes to be flexibly built around a valid qualification which is recognized and valued by all.

T. Ryan
Headteacher Chiswick School

3 September 2015

Higher Education

Higher Education

Cascaid Ltd – Written evidence (SMO0061)

Response from CASCAID Ltd to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility invitation for written evidence

13th September 2015

Written evidence from CASCAID Ltd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Loughborough University and creators of careers guidance resources. See Appendix I for more information on CASCAID.

Every year CASCAID interacts with hundreds of thousands of young people as they are in the process of making transitions.

Following the invitation to submit written evidence to the inquiry into transitions from school to work for 14-24 year olds, CASCAID Ltd is pleased to provide the following submission.

As a provider of careers support in every county of England and to every other nation of the UK, we believe that we can offer insight on a number of issues raised by the Social Mobility Committee.

As requested, our response refers to young people aged 14-24 who are not following, intending to follow or have not followed, the A level to University pathway, and who are not classified as NEET.

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

A key contributing factor which limits the employment outcomes and social mobility of this cohort, is the lack of comprehensive impartial careers education, information, advice and guidance.

With schools now responsible for the provision of careers guidance for the 14-18 year olds in this cohort, they have become the 'squeezed middle' and are not receiving the support and guidance or the access to information and advice that they need.

Schools know the A level/Degree route and are therefore very comfortable advising and routing students via that pathway. Those who are NEET or vulnerable are entitled to support from the local authority.

Unfortunately, schools are simply not equipped with the knowledge or expertise to effectively support students who do not intend to progress via the traditional academic pathway. Our recent [evaluation report](#) has highlighted the gaps in school and college based careers provision.

This leaves those young people to find a route for themselves. Many do not have the confidence or knowledge to seek out guidance themselves, so all too often they fall into either a course, work based learning placement, or work without training without **fully understanding** their options and without having a progression plan which provides them with the opportunity to become more socially mobile.

By their nature, this cohort is less likely to have access to networks either via their parents or wider community which often provide support and opportunities for those pursuing a traditional academic pathway.

A similar scenario applies to those aged 18-24. They do not have access to support to help them either understand their options or provide them with the confidence to seek ways of improving their future.

- 2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24, who do not follow the A Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group– who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?**

Broadly, many of the young people in this cohort can be categorised in the following ways:

- Aged 14-16 in school, studying subjects for which they have limited understanding of where they could lead. Typically they are unsure of their options post-16 and have limited plans for post-16 and beyond.
- Aged 16-18 either in learning, work-based learning, or in work without training. While RPA requires students to remain in education or work with training until the age of 18, there are still young people within this age group who are in jobs which do not have training. Again, typically these young people are uncertain of what progression opportunities they have at their next transition point, and are again likely to 'fall into' their destination rather than considering and planning it. They are also at risk of drop-out because they do not link their learning to future benefits.
- Age 19 – 24 in work which does not have an obvious progression route which will give them the opportunity to advance their career and improve their mobility. Typically they do not know how to, or have the confidence to, move on to a job that would offer them greater progression opportunities or have access to information which would help them engage in training that would help them progress.

- 3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?**

From the perspective of a young person in this cohort, there is no identifiable, accessible system.

Higher Education

There are a plethora of initiatives operated by various government departments (including DfE, BIS, DWP etc.) and government established organisations; however these are not visible to the young people in this cohort. They are not aware of what they can offer or how to access support from them.

As stated previously, school based knowledge of options other than the traditional academic route is incredibly limited so school staff cannot be relied upon to signpost these young people into the fragmented system which exists.

Young people in this cohort need to:

- Be made aware of the options available to them
- Understand the value of these opportunities in terms of their long-term economic prosperity
- Have the support to help them navigate this information
- Be provided with the guidance to evaluate which options are best suited to them
- Receive help to build confidence to make positive decisions
- Get practical support to help them resolve their personal issues before, during and after transition
- Be aware of where to go for help and support post-transition if they encounter challenges
- Be supported in planning their own career development once they are in the workplace

Only when the system provides this up front and ongoing support to this cohort (which incidentally mirrors what the majority of young people following the A level/Degree route receive from their academic institutions), will they be able to overcome more of the challenges that they face as they transition into further learning, training or work.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

Employers need to be encouraged to carefully consider the criteria that they put on job roles in terms of qualifications. They are missing out on the opportunity to employ members of this cohort who would be excellent employees, because in many cases they include A levels or a degree as a minimum requirement, when the job role does not necessarily require it. Employers need to be encouraged to consider more inclusive ways of assessing an applicant's suitability for the role.

Higher profile needs to be given to the advantages of the non-traditional academic route. For too long young people have been encouraged to pursue A levels and a degree as a virtual guarantee to future success. Employers, educational professionals and other influencers, such as parents, need to understand alternative pathways so that young people who do not pursue the traditional academic route are supported through routes that are seen as just as valuable.

There also needs to be greater focus on work readiness in schools. Those who do not continue on an academic pathway are likely to be exposed to employers earlier than

those that do, so schools are well placed to start the development of these skills. Employers can also engage earlier with those who are not pursuing an academic route and help to mould them into the future employees that they need.

5. **Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?**

Schools would seem to be best placed to provide support; however they often do not have the knowledge, skills or drive to focus on transitions for this cohort.

A recognisable system, that young people in this cohort are aware of and easily able to access, is absolutely vital.

Many of the improvements needed would be required to commence whilst young people are still within mandatory education. Therefore, it would seem reasonable that DfE take responsibility. However there also remains a role for BIS and DWP particularly for those beyond 18. What is required is a body that is recognisable but that is equally held accountable. It may be the case that there is not a requirement for significant additional resource, just a rationalisation of funding which is contributed by various government departments and which is currently allocated to an array of organisations and initiatives (all of which seem to operate fairly disparately with a significant amount of overlap in remit).

There is also a role for regional and localised provision that understands and addresses specific needs both in relation to the cohort and the local labour market. This may involve local authorities and LEAs. However there does need to be a national entitlement set out in order to avoid repetition of the current 'postcode lottery', where provision to help this cohort make transitions that improve their social mobility can vary significantly from location to location.

Appendix I

About CASCAID Ltd

At CASCAID, our purpose is to help people make better and informed choices about learning, training, career paths and employment. Our online resources allow anyone, regardless of their background, to explore occupational pathways and help to equip them with the knowledge that they need to choose the right route for them.

We've been doing this for over 40 years, originally on paper, now online.

Today, our trusted products are used in over half of the secondary schools in England, as well as being the foundation of the national online platforms for careers guidance delivery in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Our unique method of raising aspirations and expanding ideas to promote social mobility has been adopted internationally, with versions of our products used in Europe and by over 20,000 education institutions in the USA and Canada.

Higher Education

Every year, hundreds of thousands of young people in the UK use our products to find out what careers might suit their interests, skills and aspirations. They also discover the different ways into those careers. This gives us a unique insight into their future plans and the impact that this has for employers and the wider economy.

Data from our 1.5 million users enables us to identify gaps between the aspirations of the future workforce and the skills needs of local economies. We are working with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and recruitment organisations which service some of the UK's biggest employers, to inform skills priority and talent recruitment strategies.

Through our extensive network in schools, colleges, universities, and training providers, we understand that we hold a unique position in the market, which can help to bridge the gap between learning and work. We intend to harness this in order to enable employers to access young people, and also influence curriculum design, to ensure that those employees of the future are equipped with the skills that businesses need.

Over the last four decades, we have heard expressed many opinions of what careers guidance is or should be. For CASCAID, it's about the outcome for the individual. We want people to understand the options that are available at each transition stage and to make informed decisions about their destinations, based on their own needs and preferences and also the demands of the future labour market. We believe that this will lead to sustainable employment and economic prosperity for the individual, their community and the wider economy.

CASCAID is a Loughborough University company.

14 September 2015

Centre for Vocational Education Research, London School of Economics – Written evidence (SMO0081)

Response to the House of Lords Call for Evidence on “Transitions from School to work”

Invited by the Select Committee on Social Mobility and prepared by the Centre for Vocational Education Research (Claudia Hupkau, CVER and CEP London School of Economics, Sandra McNally, CVER and CEP London School of Economics, Stefan Speckesser, CVER and Institute for Employment Studies, Hilary Steedman, CVER, London School of Economics)

Summary

- Social mobility in Britain is low and this has been linked to poor educational outcomes for families in lower socio-economic groups. The ‘long tail of educational underachievement’ has been linked to low productivity and growth.
- About 60% of a cohort (of 16 year olds) do not achieve A-levels two years later. About 13% of 16-24 year olds are classified as NEET. Thus about half of young people fall into the category of specific interest in this enquiry. Most studies suggest that the economic returns to vocational qualifications are lower than for academic qualifications (particularly lower-level vocational qualifications).
- The post-16 achievements of young people are strongly linked to prior levels of educational achievement. Even early measures of educational achievement are stronger predictors of later outcomes. To enable young people to take advantage of opportunities later on (in education and the labour market), they need good skills and knowledge. Hence, pre-16 policies (e.g. in education) have important consequences for post-16 transitions.
- There needs to be much clearer pathways for young people post-16. In contrast to many other countries, we have lacked a stable, consistent, well-regulated technical education offer with brand recognition equal to that of A-level. While the A-level is a single qualification with different awarding bodies, vocational qualifications are ‘owned’ by different awarding bodies. The path to which different vocational options will lead is often unclear to school leavers, teachers and employers. This means that qualifications cannot perform their role, which is to act as a signal of skills and knowledge that are acquired over a course of study that is well known. Employers need to know what they are getting; learners need a qualification that will enable them to work for a variety of employers.
- The post-16 offer needs to be simple with a fixed duration - two years is the minimum in most countries. Curriculum and assessment should command the confidence of employers and work experience should be integral to the course. The course of study should be vocational and lead to a recognised occupational/technical qualification. It should be sufficiently broad so that learners are able to work on a variety of tasks within an occupation and learners need to be sufficiently skilled to acquire further learning later in life if the labour market changes (e.g. due to technological change). The progression possibilities in further/higher education should be clear to learner in advance of applying to a course of study.

Background

1. For many years, researchers in the CEP have undertaken work about social mobility (e.g. Blanden et al. 2005; Blanden 2009) showing low and declining social mobility in Britain. Social mobility – or ‘intergenerational mobility’ as economists prefer to call it – measures the degree to which people’s social status changes between generations. It is seen by many as a measure of the equality of life opportunities. If ‘social mobility’ is to improve in Britain, a fundamental issue is the education opportunities for young people who do not do pursue A-levels. This is about 60% of a cohort (Hupkau et al. 2015). About 13% of those aged 16-24 are classified as NEET (Mirza-Davies, 2015). Thus about half of young people fall into the category of specific interest in this inquiry. This group are not as high-achieving (prior to 16) as the group that pursue A-levels. They are more likely to fall into the oft-quoted ‘long tail of underachievement’ which is such a problem for the UK in terms of education and productivity (McNally, 2012; LSE Growth Commission, 2013).
2. The (BIS-funded) Centre for Vocational Education Research (CVER) was set up in March 2015. Much of our research is directly connected with the focus of this inquiry. It is early days in our research programme and we will be able to provide much more detailed information on these issues in the coming months. However, we have provided responses to these main issues insofar as we can.
3. Some of the evidence presented in this document resulted from a research project on “Youth transitions to and within the labour market” (commissioned by BIS and led by Stefan Speckesser –collaborating with King’s College (Augustin De Coulon) and the National Institute of Economic and Social Research (Richard Dorsett). Project work ended in March 2015 and three major reports are forthcoming as BIS Research Reports: (i) A literature review, ii) Education and labour market trends affecting 16-to-24 year olds and the impact on adult employment trajectories and iii) Findings of descriptive and econometric analyses.
4. We also draw on new work we are undertaking at the Centre for Vocational Education Research using administrative data on all pupils in England. We make reference to the cohort of students who undertook GCSEs in 2010, where we trace what they went on to do at age 17, 18 and 19 (Hupkau, McNally, Ruiz-Valenzuela, 2015).

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place? (Q1)

5. The project by Speckesser et al. (op.cit) presents findings of a systematic literature review of the quantitative evidence on the changing activity pattern of youth transitions in the UK over the past 40 years. The main aim of this review was to

understand the drivers and barriers of transitions into the labour market and their long-term effects on subsequent labour market trajectories of all young people after the end of compulsory schooling. They present the evidence in relation to six important variables affecting employment outcomes and social mobility of young people:

- Individual characteristics (as gender, ethnicity, disability) to identify particular “at risk groups” in the transition into the labour market
- Educational achievement and experience
- Social and family background
- Drivers and barriers created by the external environment
- The impact of initial transitions on later adult outcomes
- The role of policy facilitating youth transitions (which we discuss in relation to Q3).

Individual characteristics (as gender, ethnicity, disability) to identify particular ‘at risk groups’ in the transition into the labour market

6. There is evidence of a gender-based division in post-16 educational and occupational preferences, although this is situated in the context of a generally improved landscape of educational and labour market opportunities for girls. Females were considerably more likely than their male counterparts to choose a non-vocational educational track post-16 (e.g. Andrews and Bradley 1997). They are also less likely than males to undertake work-based training at the end of compulsory education or to embark on government-sponsored training schemes. While males are more likely to undertake vocational routes, they are also at higher risk of being unemployed or NEET after the end of their compulsory education. (Crawford et al., 2011).
7. There are relatively few studies considering the specific role of ethnicity in shaping young people’s outcomes, both in the short and medium-term (Dorsett and Lucchino, 2013a; Bradley and Lenton, 2007; Payne, 2001). These few studies consider ethnicity as a predictor of youth transitions find that non-white 16 year-olds are more likely to engage in FE after finishing compulsory education than their white counterparts.
8. Young people with a health condition are more likely to choose a non-vocational path in post-compulsory education, and less likely to undertake government-sponsored youth training. Individuals with life-limiting health conditions or disabilities are also less likely to embark on an extended ‘educational trajectory’ (Dorsett and Lucchino, 2013a).

Educational achievement and experience

9. There is strong evidence that the risk of unemployment in the early career of young labour market entrants differs according to their prior level of educational attainment, which can be observed in Key Stage 4 differences in attainment, but also along the whole education trajectory from early on.

10. Attainment at early stages of school education/in mid-childhood – i.e. prior to entry into secondary school – emerges from the literature as an important factor influencing young people’s trajectories upon entry to the labour market. For example, this is shown by Crawford et al. (2011) who use data from the Longitudinal Survey of Young People in England to model the predictors of young people’s destinations at age 17-18 and age 18-19. Amongst their findings is the rather surprising one that at age 18-19, young people in non-university full-time study have lower education achievement at age 11 (i.e. Key Stage 2 tests) than young people who have left full-time education.
11. In recent work using linked administrative data, Hupkau et al. (2015), find a strong correlation between activity from ages 17-19 and KS2 qualifications (i.e. at age 11). We might define ‘achievers’ and ‘low achievers’ (respectively) as those who attain at least the expected level at age 11 (i.e. level 4 and above) and those who do not attain this level. 61% of ‘low achievers’ at age 11 are studying for low-level qualifications at age 17 (i.e. defined as only level 1 or level 2 courses of study) compared to 26.5% of ‘achievers’. At age 18, 44% of ‘low achievers’ are studying only these low-level qualifications compared to 14.4% of achievers. Furthermore both at age 17 and age 18, students who were low achievers at age 11 are twice as likely to be not observed in the formal education sector.
12. Besides educational trajectories and attainment, other experiences of young people in their teenage years are identified as having an impact on their short- and medium-term outcomes. For example, early pregnancy is identified by Dorsett and Lucchino (2013a) as a very significant predictor of negative outcomes in the trajectory from school-to-work. Early labour market experiences, such as having a part-time job whilst at school, have a potential positive effect on post-16 outcomes.

Social and family background

13. The extent to which young people’s opportunities and chances are influenced or determined by their socio-economic and parental background is examined widely in the literature. Some of the central findings are as follows:
 - Parental education and social class are strong predictors of the likelihood of staying on in education post-16. Conversely, individuals from unskilled working-class families (i.e. those working in routine and semi routine occupations) are far more likely to be employed at age 19-20 than their counterparts, and moderately more likely to be NEET.
 - At age 18-19, young people whose parents have degrees are more likely to continue in education (which, at this stage, is likely to be higher education) rather than take a job (with or without training).
 - Young people who do not progress to university are more likely to come from areas of high levels of socio-economic deprivation

Drivers and barriers created by the external environment

14. In the short-term, a number of papers find that high youth unemployment increases the probability of deciding to stay in education (Clark, 2011; Bradley and Lenton, 2007; and Tumino and Taylor, 2012). However, high unemployment rates increase the probability of becoming unemployed after leaving education (e.g. Kalwij, 2004; and Taylor, 2013).
15. Speckesser et al. show the effect of experiencing high youth unemployment on subsequent adult employment trajectories ('scarring' effects of youth unemployment) exploiting the differences in labour market conditions people face when initially making a transition from education to employment. Using a pooled dataset of the birth cohorts 1958- 1997 from the Labour Force Survey (LFS), bad labour market conditions at entry are shown to have significant effects on subsequent life course trajectories confirming the 'scarring' effect found with the National Child Development Study (Gregg 2001) for the 1958 birth cohort.

The impact of initial transitions on later adult outcomes

16. The long-term consequences of initial transitions are a recurrent theme in the literature. The general finding is that unsuccessful transitions into the labour market represent a burden for future career development (Dorsett and Lucchino, 2013b; Kalwij, 2004; Narendranathan and Elias, 1993; Gregg, 2001).
17. Speckesser et al. use UK data from European Union Labour Force Survey 'Ad hoc module' on the 'Entry of young people into the labour market' (AHM 2009) to investigate the long-term impact of initial transitions of young people after leaving education. This analysis shows a significant impact of the duration of the initial transition (i.e. the time between leaving education and first significant employment) on adult employment rates. The long-term employment rate (as percentage of the overall cohort) decreases by about 0.2 percentage points for every additional month of the initial transition.

Summary of the factors affecting social mobility

18. Educational attainment is the most important determinant of long-term labour market success (even if measured early in a person's life) and depends both on schooling and family background. There are also significant differences in transitions patterns by gender and ethnic origin. Furthermore, being outside education or work (after compulsory schooling) has a significant negative impact on adult employment. This suggests the importance of policies which aim to enable young people to gain access to early labour market experience.

Young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group? (Q2)

19. Hupkau et al. (2015) have been documenting the broad routes students between age 17 and 19 (for a full cohort of students in England who undertook GCSE (or equivalent) exams in 2010). At age 17, about 60% of students are studying for AS/A-levels and/or 'level 3' vocational education. By age 18, this group is divided into 3 groups (A-level only: 23%; some combination of A-level and vocational: 16%, and vocational level 3: 21%). A relatively small proportion progress to level 4 or above at age 19 (26% of the original cohort) – most of whom go to Higher Education. Very few students access higher-level vocational education (i.e. 'level 4+') at age 19. The avenue to Higher Education is most likely through A-levels only or a mixture of A-levels and level 3 vocational qualifications (7.6% of the original cohort). Most students who do not do any A-levels at all do not enter higher education (at least at this age).
20. There are many students who only access level 1 or level 2 qualifications post-16. About 34% of 17 year olds fall into this category. At age 18 and 19, the percentages (of the original cohort) are 21% and 15% respectively. There is some transition in and out of education between the ages of 16 and 19.
21. There is a high share of individuals who are stuck on low level learning (level 1 or level 2). Of the cohort analysed in Hupkau et al. (2015), 20% were doing learning on low levels for at least 2 out of 3 years post 16. Unsurprisingly, the share is even higher among 'low achievers'⁵⁸⁹: it stood at 37%.
22. Overall, achievement at age 16 is a very strong predictor of the type of educational path students follow post 16. Only about a third of 'low achieving' students follow a level 3 route at age 17 and 18, and in 75% of cases this does not include any A-levels or equivalents. Hence, these level 3 routes are very unlikely to lead to Higher Education.
23. Apprenticeships are widely regarded as a valuable alternative to more academic routes. But in reality very few young people in the cohort analysed in Hupkau et al. (2015) enter apprenticeships: only 6.4% enter at age 17, 7.7% participate at age 18 and 8.9% participate at age 19. Most apprenticeships of young people in this cohort are at level 2, even though level 3 apprenticeships become more relevant at ages 18 and 19. Apprenticeships above level 3 are almost entirely absent, which is coherent with the overall composition of apprenticeships and also holds true among adult apprentices (Hupkau, 2015).
24. Of those who enter apprenticeship at age 17, 64% had not achieved 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and Maths (versus 44.8% in the overall cohort). This is suggestive of apprenticeships at early age being a non-academic alternative for

⁵⁸⁹ Here defined as students who did not achieve the equivalent of 5 GCSEs at A*-C including English and Maths at the end of KS4.

comparatively “low achievers”. They are also unrepresentative in terms of gender and ethnicity: 58% are male, and 91% are white (versus 82.7% overall cohort).

25. Higher level (level 4 or 5) apprenticeships are extremely rare up to age 19⁵⁹⁰ and they tend to be for ‘high-achievers’ at GCSE and/or A-levels.
26. We do not yet know much about the longer-term effects of young people’s particular transition patterns from school to FE and beyond. This will be a subject of study for CVER in the coming months.
27. However, there is some quantitative evidence on post-16 learning and employment in two recent IES studies. One analysis was based on a rich face-to-face survey of a cohort of young people in Newham (Wiseman et al. 2013) and more recently, we analysed administrative data of school-leavers linked to post-16 data on employment and education outcomes at census-level (Speckesser et al. 2015). These studies show some of the great diversity of people after KS4 if they don’t follow the Sixth Form route or direct entry in the labour market, either directly following GCSE’s or after another year or two of full-time education.
28. In the survey-based project based in Newham, Wiseman et al. (2013) analysed the education and labour market experiences of young people, who decided not to go to Sixth Form. Specifically, it investigated the different activities of 445 young Newham residents, aged between 22 and 25 in early 2013, who lived in the Borough when undertaking their GCSEs. 358 (80%) initially pursued FE, 22 entered Apprenticeship and 65 entered employment directly. Three years later (post-GCSE), 68% of those starting work directly after GCSE were found to be still working, compared to 83% of those who had done an apprenticeship and only 39% who had pursued FE. Those who go to FE at age 16 are a diverse group: there is one group who go to FE so as to orientate themselves towards occupations/professions and make successful transitions after about two years. However, another group continues to invest in education, and continue to study in the FE sector. We don’t yet know the motivations of this latter group and whether or not they have made the right decision to stay on.
29. More recently, IES and King’s College analysed the available administrative data for a recent cohort of school leavers (2010/11 Key Stage 4 census data) merged to the post-16 status information from the National Client Caseload Information System (NCCIS), providing a large monthly panel of labour market and education outcomes for 175,000+ school leavers in England. Based on transition modelling, they find that good GCSEs are important for successful post-16 education and labour market participation, while lower KS4 achievement is associated with complex post-16 activities, including NEET experiences.

⁵⁹⁰ Analysis of ILR data for young people between the ages 16 to 24 undertaken by CVER showed that most apprenticeships at level 4 or 5 are done by 20-22 year olds. The overall share of level 4 and 5 apprenticeship in the academic year 2012/13 among all apprenticeships was less than 1% (1,811 apprenticeships out of 207,643).

What can be said about economic returns to non-A-level, non-HE educational pathways?

30. The economic literature generally finds higher wage returns to academic qualifications compared to vocational qualifications. However, there are positive returns to higher-level vocational qualifications. The evidence on returns to low-level qualifications generally finds a very low earnings returns, with the exception of some areas (e.g. level 2 STEM courses) – e.g. Dearden et al. (2002, 2004), McIntosh (2004). This is often based on analysis of the cohort studies (e.g. British Cohort Study) where it is possible to follow people from birth to adult life and control for detailed characteristics that differ between people who pursue low-level vocational qualifications and others. However, more recent studies using administrative data (Bibby et al. 2014) find positive returns to post-16 low-level qualifications (such as level 1 and 2). The data have many advantages including their huge size. However, estimates of returns are based on comparing ‘completers’ to ‘non-completers’ of particular qualifications. These groups may be different for reasons that are unobservable to analysts. Arguably the ‘control group’ (i.e. non-completers) is worse than used in studies based on survey data.
31. One of the tasks of CVER will be to re-assess this question using all available data sets (survey and administrative) and make use of the more detailed data that will become available to look at this question (i.e. administrative data matching pupil-level data to subsequent educational outcomes in further and higher education, to labour market earnings and employment).
32. However, there should be no presumption that completing education at levels 1 or 2 is at all desirable for young people. OECD studies show how badly the UK fares with respect to higher-level vocational education (Musset and Field, 2014).

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? (Q3)

The role of policy facilitating youth transitions

33. Policy interventions, such as the provision of job centres (labour market support, work experience programmes, etc.) or changes in the funding and availability of further education places can have a direct or indirect impact on the timing of and on the type of transitions made by young people when leaving school. In this respect, some studies consider the impact of participation in specific government-sponsored training initiatives and labour market programmes on the employment prospects of individual participants.
34. Main and Shelly (1990) and Dolton et al. (1994) both assess the impact of the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) on participants’ labour market outcomes. The YTS was introduced in 1983, targeted at 16-17 year-olds, and it offered access to subsidised

training provided by firms, complemented by a component of off-the-job training. Dolton et al. (1994) also assess the effect of the YTS for school leavers on the time it takes to move into their first job and time taken to move into their first 'good job', using data from the Youth Cohort study. Overall the authors find that participation in the YTS lowered the employment opportunities for men but not for women, compared to non-participants. Moreover, YTS participation improved the likelihood of women finding a 'good job'. However the studies have some issues in the extent to which participants are really comparable to non-participants.

What is known about successful routes?

35. Speckesser et al. analyse the impact of in-education experience and initial school-to-work transitions of young people on the first 'significant employment' (i.e. of more than three months) for four birth cohorts (between 1975-1994) using UK data from the European Union Labour Force Survey. This shows evidence of the comparatively higher effectiveness of FE-options in the workplace or when work experience (includes both self-initiated as well as FE-facilitated) form part of the curriculum. Thus people do better when combining education with work experience or when undertaking apprenticeships, which has been a consistent finding in the literature in recent years. This is consistent with attempts by government policy to encourage work-related learning (e.g. apprenticeships), although the system as currently developed is very unlike successful systems in Northern European countries where the emphasis is explicitly on young people rather than those who have been working for some time.

What is currently unknown?

36. In our view, systematic quantitative evidence is lacking on the importance of learning type, quality of education/employment and changes of status ('churning') on long-term measures of labour market success. This is mainly because of limitations of survey data that often do not include indicators of the nature of employment and training quality. We need this information early enough to be able to track longer-term outcomes in the labour market. Analysis of merged administrative data sets on education (NPD-ILR-HESA) in combination with data for employment (HMRC earnings and employment records) will provide a better opportunity to address these questions.

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group? (Q4)

The post-16 offer

37. There needs to be much clearer pathways for young people post-16. The complexity of the system has long been identified (e.g. Steedman and West, 2003) – and yet all the same criticisms can still be applied: confusing complexity of pathways, poor

progression opportunities and weak labour market linkages (note: relatively few young people enter Apprenticeships at the age of 19 or earlier).

38. In contrast to many other countries, France, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Singapore for example, we have lacked a stable, consistent, well-regulated technical education offer with brand recognition equal to that of A-level (Steedman, McIntosh and Green 2004). While the A-level is a single qualification with different awarding bodies, vocational qualifications are 'owned' by different awarding bodies. The path to which different vocational options will lead is often unclear to school leavers, teachers and employers. This means that qualifications cannot perform their role, which is to act as a signal of skills and knowledge that are acquired over a course of study that is well known. Employers need to know what they are getting; learners need a qualification that will enable them to work for a variety of employers.
39. The post-16 offer needs to be simple with a fixed duration - two years is the minimum in most countries. Curriculum and assessment should command the confidence of employers and work experience should be integral to the course. The course of study should be vocational and lead to a recognised occupational/technical qualification. It should be sufficiently broad so that learners are able to work on a variety of tasks within an occupation and learners need to be sufficiently skilled to acquire further learning later in life if the labour market changes (e.g. due to technological change). The progression possibilities in further/higher education should be clear to learners in advance of applying to a course of study.

Careers information and guidance

40. Careers information and guidance has also widely considered to be a big problem in the UK system.⁵⁹¹ This needs to be taken seriously in schools to help students navigate their way through the education system. Schools need to be incentivised to make adequate time and resources available for their role here.
41. Activities and resources involved should to apply coherent model, i.e. with clear standards nationwide and access to all relevant national and local education and labour market information.
42. Good advice should rely on indicators of quality and labour market success of FE and HE, including the use of destinations data and employer feedback. It would also need to consider the diversity of pupils and should take advantage of local employers and post-16 education providers.

⁵⁹¹ <http://www.suttontrust.com/newsarchive/half-university-advice-guidance-schools-inadequate/>

43. Groups with difficulties/schools in difficult areas, etc. should be particularly supported in such activity, for example through further resources for particular activities.

Early labour market experience

44. Early labour market experience, both before and during further education, and vocational education in the workplace significantly reduces the time between leaving the education system and first significant employment.
45. KS4 could involve work experience directly in the curriculum as is the case in many other countries, including Germany (where pupils have compulsory internships in all tracks of the secondary schooling system). A number of proposals have been formulated to enhance the KS4 (or indeed KS3) curriculum by such activities, including for example, the Gatsby standards. To further guide improvements in this dimension, independent research should be used to evaluate the effectiveness of particular interventions.

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14 September 2015

Middlesex University London – Written evidence (SMO0036)

Submission of written evidence to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility by Middlesex University's Social Policy Research Centre

11th September 2015

Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe

The Social Policy Research Centre (SPRC) from Middlesex University London (www.sprc.info) is conducting research to explore the educational and career choices of young people in the current economic climate and identify examples of good practice currently implemented in English schools and Further Education colleges that have proven successful in transferring knowledge and in keeping pupils in education or training.

The project, 'Reducing Early School Leaving in Europe' (RESL.eu) (2013-2018) has been funded by the European Commission and involves nine member states across the European Union, including the United Kingdom (project website: <http://www.resl-eu.org/>).

The RESL.eu project presents a comprehensive, intersectional and gender-sensitive approach to the issue of Early School Leaving (ESL) in Europe, undertaking both an in-depth analysis of existing data and collecting new empirical data in order to explore effective innovations for educational systems at European, national and regional levels.

As part of this research, our team at the SPRC, led by Professor Louise Ryan, is collecting a significant amount of quantitative and qualitative data from a range of stakeholders in education, including policy makers, education professionals and school staff, young people who are following a variety of educational and career trajectories, and parents. Starting in February 2013 and continuing for 5 years, the RESL.eu study allows for a longitudinal approach, whereby we are able to follow the educational and occupational trajectories of the young people involved.

Two different research areas were identified for this project in order to understand how local conditions may play a role in shaping the life chances of young people. We selected London and the Tyne and Wear area in the North East of England as both areas have some of the highest unemployment rates for 16-24 year olds in England. On the other hand, the two areas are differentiated in terms of the proportion of ethnic minorities present and other socio-economic factors.

As of September 2015, we have collected:

- Survey data from over 3,000 young people. This comprehensive survey was administered in 18 schools and FE colleges from London and Tyne and Wear in 2014. The aim of the survey was to elicit the views, experiences, trajectories and aspirations of young people coming towards the end of their compulsory education;
- Interviews and focus group data from education policy makers at national, international and local level;
- Follow-up survey data in 2015 - from a sub-section of the initial survey participants;

- Survey data from teachers and other school staff members from England (2015);
- Biographical interviews with 26 young people including students in FE colleges, apprentices, and young people who have left education and are currently working, volunteering or looking for a job;
- Interviews with parents - ongoing;
- Case studies with 1 FE college and 3 secondary schools from London, where we have completed interviews and focus groups with students as well as staff members to investigate their support measures provided for their students.

Starting from this September, the focus of our research will move to vocational education settings such as apprenticeships and traineeships, which are different from the mainstream education route of A-levels but still provide recognised qualifications.

Young people who have participated in the survey (3,000) and the interviews (26 so far, eventually 34 in total) will be followed up in subsequent surveys and interviews to track their transition from education to work.

Research findings from this study have already been published in a number of publications, including:

- [Policies on Early School Leaving in nine European countries: a comparative analysis \(Publication 1\)](#);
- [Early School Leaving in the European Union: Data Availability and Reporting \(Project Paper 3\)](#);
- [Preliminary analysis of the data collected by Survey A1](#) - a preliminary analysis of the survey data with young people in international comparison written by the SPRC team ([Project Paper 5](#));
- and others (<https://www.resl-eu.org/publications/>).

1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

Since our longitudinal survey of two cohorts of young people started in 2014 when they were reaching the end of compulsory full time education, at this point of our research we only have limited amount of quantitative data on the transition process from school to work as the majority of these young people are still in mainstream education. The timeframe of our research does not allow us to develop any conclusions on the social mobility outcomes of the participating young people. However, the significant amount of primary survey data collected will form a solid base for future research.

Based on our extensive interview data with young people and interviews and focus groups with school staff and key stakeholders, our preliminary findings are that:

- **School staff in most cases are working very hard to support young people:**
'They inspire us and they motivate us to be interested in what we are learning but they don't do it evidently (...) which is the best way because it makes you want to do it yourself, it doesn't feel like you are forced to do it' (a pupil in one school) .

- **Disadvantaged socio-economic background has a negative impact on young people's decisions to continue in education:**

Based on interviews with those who have already left education, we found that clearly there are persistent challenges particularly for young people from disadvantaged socio-economic background especially in areas of high youth unemployment. Some of the young people identified their family's poverty as the main reason for not choosing the standard A-level and university route, since they cannot afford the present higher education fees. In these cases they preferred instead to complete an apprenticeship in their chosen field because they could earn while studying and training:

'As you know our income isn't very good so ... that's why I haven't considered university because it's ... a big debt' – (male student at a Further Education college).

He also added: *'These educational cuts are really not helping at the moment but with this election, the UK election coming up [at the time of the interview] there are some parties which wish to completely cut all tuition fees for university. If they've done that I would go to university no problem, but I just don't like the thought of it being £9,000 a year to go to university, for three years; that's a lot of money for me, and to pay that back - it just seems like too much for me. (...) So an apprenticeship feels like a good thing because you're earning and learning and it's preparing you for work later on and it gives you experience in the workplace. But I think more money put into education from the government would help people like me a lot, definitely.'*

- **There are significant limitations of alternative educational routes to A-levels:**

Some of the policy makers we interviewed highlighted the weaknesses of vocational education seen as the alternative to the A-level route in England. There is clearly a tension between government policies which support the development of alternative learning arenas, such as apprenticeships, and the overall perception amongst most participants that formal academic qualifications are still widely regarded in society as the 'gold standard' that all young people should aspire to achieve: *'I think in this country (...) we never had a very high profile for vocational education and we haven't got a strong tradition of seeing it as a very positive route for young people' – (Youth Service Officer from a local authority in London).* According to some participants, the country needs a cultural shift to value vocational qualifications.

We also encountered some criticism of the apprenticeship system:

'It sits on an unhelpful place somewhere between employment and training, so it's neither one thing, nor the other. Young people don't know about it sufficiently, and parents and teachers don't know about it sufficiently. (...) So I think, the offer is broadening, it's just it's not yet known and is not credible enough really' (Senior Officer from London Councils).

While official statistics show that apprenticeships have a high probability to lead to employment (at least in the short term) despite an increase in take-up, only a small proportion of young people opt for apprenticeships. They may not be a viable option for poorer families as the payment for apprentices is currently well below the minimum wage and considerably below the London Living Wage, for example. For

many young people these alternative options are still unaffordable. Another council officer reported:

'The central government has pushed apprenticeships massively over the last 5 years or so. (...) We also spoke to a number of young people, some of whom who have graduated, and some of who've been through internship schemes but weren't getting paid. We spoke to a few young people who were doing it for free. Actually they were being out of pocket (...) And that's quite a big issue.'

Some of our participants even expressed concern about employers abusing the apprenticeship scheme:

'There's an emerging trend at the moment, I've seen quite a lot of cases recently of people who've been given apprenticeships, hairdressing and some of the trades; and just being treated very badly, (...) people are being employed on that basis as cheap labour without any consideration of supporting the training aspect and moving toward a qualification.' (Employment specialist, North East of England)

This suggests that some apprenticeships are not well regulated and so the level of training gained by young people may not be properly monitored and accredited. The lack of proper accreditation may mean that the term 'apprenticeship' is being used quite loosely to cover a wide range of different working arrangements, often low paid and with little training opportunities. As a result, apprenticeship schemes do not necessarily lead to employment. This can have very serious impact on these young people's future occupational opportunities and trajectories.

- **Students with special educational needs (SEN) require substantial support in their school-work transitions:**

Based on the interviews with students, we found that young people with learning difficulties, physical disability and SEN seem to face particular issues and challenges in their transition from school/ training to employment.

- **Effective careers advice and support measures are vital tools for assisting students' decision making:**

On the other hand, the students we interviewed reported that effective career advice, teaching general job-search skills and support measures for young people can help them to make better informed educational and occupational choices.

- **Access to social capital is an important factor in realising positive school-to-work transitions:**

Young people rely on their social networks for advice and opportunities and the extent to which they can benefit from these depends in large part on the level of resources (e.g. job opportunities) available through their social connections. Lower-income families tend to have limited access to advantageous networks.

2. There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young

people in this group—who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

As mentioned earlier, we will be conducting a repeat survey with these young people in 2016. That element of the research project will focus specifically on these questions of transitions and trajectories. Therefore, we will have more pertinent data by next year.

Based on our data collected thus far, it is apparent that the A-Level and university route is still widely regarded by students, parents and teachers as the 'gold standard'. Alternative routes such as vocational courses are often considered as best suited for academically less successful young people. Our interviews with young people from further education suggest that their previous academic achievement in school influences their later educational choices (whether to study A-levels or vocational courses). They recounted several factors which might have played a role in their lower academic attainment. Our data suggests that having learning difficulties, physical disabilities or health issues seems to lead more often to a vocational route; these young people also seem to have a more difficult transition from education to employment. Poverty came up as another important factor: some young people choose a vocational route, apprenticeship or employment for instance, because they and their families cannot afford higher education fees.

The future career trajectories of these students are an on-going focus for the RESL.eu project and the study's longitudinal aspect will be able to follow the young people as they make their transition from education to employment.

3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

Our data from schools demonstrate the very high level of support that is provided to young people, particularly those at risk of becoming NEET. Based on interviews and focus groups with staff across a wide range of schools, we have data relating to an impressive range of intervention measures.

The key challenge for these young people appears to be the transition to FE. Leaving the supportive environment of a school where students and their particular needs are known to staff, the larger and more informal environment of college seems to pose a range of challenges. For instance, students who are academically less successful seem to struggle with the self-managed learning environment in colleges. We also found that parents, who may have had a good relationship with the school and were regularly updated on pupil progress, have very little direct contact with FE college staff and seem unaware of how their child is progressing or any problems they are encountering.

While careers education is compulsory in secondary schools, in FE colleges students are expected to seek out these services themselves. Some of them however seem to lack the

confidence, awareness or interest to do so and in the end fail to consult the support services available to them. This may apply especially to the most vulnerable students.

In our interviews there appears to be a mismatch between the jobs that young people want to do and the jobs that are actually available in the local area. Young people in our study were often poorly informed about the kinds of job opportunities that existed. Students in FE colleges are doing courses with very specific jobs in mind such as child care or hairdressing. They frequently aspired to rather traditional career pathways which did not necessarily match the current knowledge economy – particularly in London. Some young people we have talked to seemed to lack a flexible skill set which would help them broadening their job search and reacting quickly to new job opportunities.

Our interviews with young people who have completed vocational studies revealed a particular difficulty they face in the labour market: So far, all young people from our study who have made the transition from education to employment have found a job (sometimes only on a voluntary basis) through their informal social connections - family and friends. As mentioned earlier, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often lack access to advantageous social networks. Not having informal connection with people in sectors of employment associated with their qualifications seems to limit our participants' opportunities even further.

4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

- Providing compulsory courses in job-search techniques and flexible employability skills to all young people. While they do have compulsory career education in secondary school, this is not necessarily the case in FE.
- Young people need a broader and more accurate understanding of the contemporary job market. As mentioned before, the majority of young people from our study demonstrated a narrow and rather traditional understanding of the occupations and jobs available to them.
- At the same time, we found that young people need access to personalised advice from teachers, trainers or other informed sources whom they trust and with whom they have a close relationship.
- Better regulation of apprenticeship schemes so that the training dimensions are better organised, assessed and standardised through recognised qualifications. This could lead to a better appreciation of these apprenticeships by employers more generally as well as by young people and their families.
- There is an urgent need for a better rate of pay for young people in apprenticeships (currently £2.73 – rising to £3.30 in October 2015). The current low rate of pay leads to concerns among young people and stakeholders that some apprenticeships are

simply a form of cheap labour. It may also be particularly discouraging for poorer families – as suggested by some of our key informants.

- Stronger regulation against the exploitation of young workers, for example through unpaid or very low-paid internships and an onus on businesses/industries to invest in young school leavers in terms of their development within a career.

5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

- Ultimately we believe it should be the responsibility of the Government to provide more effective policies and structures (e.g. career advice and support services) with adequate funding and resourcing.
- The development of policy and decision making should be conducted in close collaboration with the Further Education sector, both large and small employers and representatives of key sectors in the economy.
- The implementation of policy and decisions about allocation of funds should be carried out at a regional or local level to ensure an efficient and targeted system of support relevant and responsive to the local social and economic environment.

11 September 2015

National Foundation for Educational Research – Written evidence (SMO0082)

House of Lords: Select Committee on Social Mobility.

Inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds.

Submission of evidence by the National Foundation for Educational Research

14th September 2015

Introduction

3 The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) welcomes the opportunity to submit written evidence to the Inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds. In doing this, we are pleased to contribute to thinking in this priority policy area which seeks to enable and support young people to make successful transitions from education to employment. In addressing three of the questions listed in the Call for Evidence, this submission draws on available evidence including key publications from NFER's Research Programme and education-to-employment portfolio: [assertshttp://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-programme/](http://www.nfer.ac.uk/research-programme/) .

Summary

- 4 NFER maintains that important current factors that would positively affect social mobility and transitions are: improving the quality of careers guidance; raising expectations of young people; and taking steps to improve awareness and understanding of current vocational qualifications and routes to employment. These would contribute positively towards greater social mobility and improved transitions from education to employment.
35. The evidence available suggests that socio-economic factors, prior academic success and engagement with school are predictors of the route taken by young people and their post-16 destinations.
36. Research has identified the need for more flexible and appropriate post-16 provision suitable for all young people aged 16 and 17 years of age in terms of content, delivery and timing. This will help to engage them, keep them motivated, support their development of skills and prevent them dropping out of education. Furthermore evidence has confirmed that improved strategies to re-engage young people at risk of disengagement from learning are needed.
37. The provision of high-quality careers guidance is significant in improving the transition from school to work for all young people. High-quality guidance provides independent and impartial information and advice on career options. It is increasingly important given the complex decision-making context facing a young person which includes the raising of the participation age to 18, the diversification of education and training opportunities, the increase in higher education tuition fees, and the changing labour market which has shed many jobs traditionally filled by young people. There is evidence that many young people in England are not receiving high-quality careers guidance.
38. Increasing employer engagement with schools and colleges is a way of improving provision of careers guidance and assisting transition from education to employment. There is evidence that employer engagement can help young people to develop the

skills necessary for employment such as team working, communication and interpersonal skills, enabling students to be more work-ready. Employers are likely to employ more young people if they have played a role in helping them to understand the requirements of the world of work including expected attitudes and behaviour.

Q1: What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the workplace?

39. NFER considers that the most important current factors in terms of improving social mobility are:
- Careers guidance
 - Expectations of young people
 - Attitudes to vocational education.
40. One of the key factors that affect young people's social mobility and employment outcomes is access to effective careers guidance. This represents a considerable current challenge as changes in the responsibility for careers guidance (to schools in 2012) have brought into sharp focus the importance of effective careers guidance for all young people, but perhaps most significantly those young people *not* intending to take the A level route. In the UK there has been little detailed work on the relationship between careers guidance provision and educational outcomes. Recently, Hooley *et al.* (2014) conducted a quantitative analysis of destination data (currently a school-level database) which compared outcomes for those schools that have a nationally validated career education and guidance quality award and those that do not. This school-level quantitative analysis suggests that, at GCSE, Career Quality Awards are associated with a 1.8 per cent increase in GCSE performance and a 0.48 per cent decrease in persistent absences *and, at A-level, Career Quality Awards are associated with a 0.54 per cent decrease in persistent unexplained absences.* The authors suggest that more systematic research should be commissioned which captures the extent of career provision in schools and examines impact at *pupil* level as well as at school level.
41. To appreciate the huge importance of career guidance it is worth considering that young people make decisions in different ways, depending on their individual characteristics and therefore need varying types and formats of career guidance. Furthermore, when young people feel supported in their decision-making by their school, they are more influenced by school factors and less reliant on external factors such as friends and family.(Blenkinsop *et al.* 2006).Blenkinsop *et al.* 2006, the authors of '[How do Young People make choices at 14 and 16?](#)' highlight that young people's decisions vary '*according to context (including the curriculum offer and support mechanisms in place to support them in decision-making), the ways in which information and advice was being mediated to them, and their own individual approach to and skills of decision-making*' (p2). In examining how young people make decisions about their futures and routes to take from education to employment, the report revealed that they have different mindsets and make decisions in very different ways. Furthermore, their decisions change over time as they mature and become aware of other opportunities. The authors suggest that this indicates that any single approach to support '*will not work for all*

young people and that all individuals need varying levels and type of support at different stages in their school careers' (p 2).

42. We note that evidence shows (for example, the evaluation of the [Implementation and Impact of Diplomas: Information Advice and Guidance](#)) that young people want to understand the value of qualifications and whether they are going to enable them to progress in their transition from school into the workplace (Wade *et al.* 2011). They seek information, advice and guidance from a range of sources, particularly from their teachers, their parents and careers advisers.
43. Evidence from the Sutton Trust [Higher Ambitions report](#) highlights the importance of keeping teachers (and parents) informed about the current routes to careers (Nash, 2014). The authors included data from the NFER Teacher Voice panel that indicated that 65 per cent of teachers said they would rarely or never advise a student to take an apprenticeship if they had the grades to attend university.
44. Evidence suggests that low expectations affect social mobility and the employment outcomes of young people. The report, [NFER Teacher Voice Omnibus – Research report for the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission](#), revealed that respondents considered that the main impact on shaping students' hopes for the future are teachers' and parents'/carers' expectations (White *et al.* 2014). A majority of respondents agreed that colleagues' lower expectations of students from disadvantaged backgrounds adversely affect their outcomes: *'A majority of secondary school respondents (76 per cent) considered that their schools' current Year 11 top set(s) will be doing professional or higher managerial or administrative jobs in ten years' time. In contrast, a majority (60 per cent) thought that their schools' current Year 11 bottom set(s) will be doing skilled manual work or semi-skilled or unskilled manual work in ten years' time. Around one in ten respondents also considered that some of their Year 11 bottom set(s) students will be not in employment or training in ten years' time' (p2).* Other important influences on shaping students' hopes for the future were reported to be family background factors, students' ability and the local economy and other local factors.
45. An NFER paper, [Changing attitudes to vocational education](#), argues for a fundamental change to the way we view vocational education (McCrone, 2014). The author presents evidence to suggest that attitudes to vocational education have not kept up with the pace of structural change, it remains the poor relation of academic attainment and we need to address entrenched views that academic routes are in some way 'better'. This is particularly important in terms of social mobility as young people from families with lower social capital (that is they have fewer social contacts and networks that give them access to opportunities) benefit from advice to ensure they follow the best route for them ([Haynes, G et al., 2012](#)).
46. The paper concludes by advising that all teachers need to be better equipped with a basic knowledge of the ranges of options open to young people and where to direct them for impartial information and suggests this should be part of teachers' professional standards. Further, the author suggests that parents also need a greater awareness and understanding of current vocational qualifications and routes to employment. The introduction of an integrated application system for vocational and academic qualifications similar to that currently used for university entrance would help support

this. Additionally, schools, colleges and employers, including corporate, small and medium-sized enterprises and micro-businesses need to engage with each other to provide young people with information on academic and vocational routes to employment.

Q2: There is a group of young people aged 14-24 who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route, and are not classified as NEET. What is known about the young people in this group – who are they, why are they in this position and what are their career trajectories?

47. The evidence available suggests that socio-economic factors, prior academic success and engagement with school are predictors of the route taken by young people and their post-16 destinations.
48. Researching a group of young people of whom approximately two-fifths were taking four or more AS/A-levels, a similar proportion were taking a vocational route, and the remainder were taking three or fewer AS/A-levels, Taggart *et al.* (2014) [study of post-16 destinations](#) found that:
 - Parents' highest qualification levels strongly predicted young people's post-16 destinations, especially following a higher academic route.
 - Students from higher income families were more likely to choose a higher academic route. Students whose parents were in lower socio-economic status groups were almost four times more likely to follow a lower academic route compared to those from the highest SES families (Taggart *et al.* (2014) [study of post-16 destinations](#)).
 - Pre-school attendance and attending an academically effective primary and secondary school also predicted the likelihood of young people going on to the higher academic route (Taggart *et al.* (2014) [study of post-16 destinations](#)).
 - GCSE results were extremely important in determining which full-time education route young people followed beyond Year 11. GCSE results in English and mathematics were significant predictors of post-16 destinations. This was reported by Taggart *et al.* (2014) from their major longitudinal study which tracked 3,000 children from early years to their early post-16 destinations.
49. Taggart's findings are supported by the evidence reported in [The Wolf Report](#) (2011) which found that:
 - Of the 16-18 cohort England, 20 per cent finish Key Stage 4 at too low a level to start post-16 Level 2 courses; and a further 20 per cent experience periods of 'churn' between education and the labour market.
 - At post-16, around 18 per cent achieve a Level 2 award but no higher.
50. The Wolf Report concluded that '*it seems clear that at least one in five of each cohort is getting very little benefit from the post-16 secondary education system. Put simply, as a society we are failing at least 350,000 of our 16-18 year olds, year on year*' (p.52).
51. Spours *et al.* (2012) refer to this group as the 'overlooked middle' in 14-19 education and training, observing that they lie '*between those on the 'royal route' of GCSEs and A*

levels, those on Apprenticeships with jobs and those classified as NEET' (p.3). They estimate that the middle group accounts for approximately 50 per cent of the cohort.

52. We recognise that Question 2 in the Call for Evidence does not include young people who are NEET but insight can be gained by considering analysis of the experience of the NEET young people. For example, [research](#) by Spielhofer *et al.* (2009) may contribute to understanding that the segmentation analysis applied to young people who are NEET, and those that held jobs without training (JWT) in the 2009 research, can be applied to the young people described above.
53. Statistical segmentation analysis confirms there are segments within the larger groups of young people who are NEET and in JWT, and there are distinct differences between these segments (Spielhofer *et al.*, 2009) and the factors that influence whether they become and remain NEET. These factors may also influence the group of interest to the Committee and their career trajectories and include: attitudes to learning, personal and structural barriers to learning, satisfaction with the available opportunities, whether JWT taken are viewed as temporary or permanent.
54. Spielhofer *et al.* 2009 used latent class analysis of the Youth Cohort Study (YCS) data to segment young people aged 16 or 17 categorised as NEET or in jobs without training (JWT):
 - Greater than two-fifths of young people who are NEET are generally positive about learning and are very likely to participate in education or training in the short-term. A similar proportion face a lot of personal and structural barriers, and are likely to remain NEET in the medium-term. These young people were characterized by their negative experience of school, higher levels of truancy and exclusion and lack of educational attainment (most said that they did not have the qualifications needed for the course or job they wanted (79 per cent), while 58 per cent said that they needed more qualifications).
 - A fifth of young people in the study were classified as 'undecided NEET' - they do not face significant personal barriers to participating in education or training, but are dissatisfied with the available opportunities.
 - Within the JWT group, almost half are very content with their work and likely to remain in a JWT in the long-term. A third of young people in this group were found to be at risk of becoming NEET in the future, while 17 per cent had taken a JWT as a stop-gap solution before reengaging in education or training (Spielhofer *et al.* 2009).
55. The Spielhofer research:
 - found that in order to increase participation, young people need better information, advice and guidance before leaving learning or while in jobs without training to increase their awareness of the learning options available to them and enable them to make more informed choices (Spielhofer *et al.* 2009)
 - identified a need for more flexible and appropriate post-16 education and training provision suitable for all young people aged 16 and 17 in terms of content, delivery and timing, and that different policy solutions are needed to engage or re-engage the different segments of young people (Spielhofer *et al.* 2009)

- established that improved strategies to re-engage young people at risk of disengagement from learning are needed. For example, approaches related to teaching (such as teachers having knowledge, skills and expertise in their subject area, particularly important for vocational subjects) as well as expertise in pedagogical approaches; the learning environment (such as creating a work environment based on mutual respect where learners can develop an independent approach to learning); the provision of well-informed careers information, advice and guidance including course taster sessions; and curriculum and qualifications' content that ensures that there are good quality vocational, applied and practical qualifications and pathways open to young people need further developing(Bielby *et al.*'s (2012) [review of strategies](#)).
56. Further research needs to be conducted to improve our [understanding of young people's decision-making](#), what informs it and what their destinations are. This should include research on young people's knowledge and understanding of the exchange value of vocational qualifications (Lynch *et al.* 2015).

Q4: How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

57. Young people's transitions are instrumental in shaping their future prospects, lifetime earning capacity, wellbeing and social mobility. The transition from school to work can be improved by providing young people in this group with a curriculum that engages them, high-quality careers guidance and access to work-related learning opportunities. This provision will help to motivate young people and give them insights into the world of work and different careers. This will assist them to make informed decisions about their future education, training and employment. **Engaging young people aged 14-16 in education at Key Stage 4** when some lack motivation to learn is important for two main reasons: first, it helps them to develop the attitudes, attributes and skills which employers look for and value; and, second, it helps to prevent them slipping into the not in education, employment or training (NEET) category of young people. NFER's research on NEET prevention identified a range of effective practice in keeping young people engaged at Key Stage 4. This includes:
- Flexibility within learning programmes, ensuring that as much as is practical, programmes can be tailored to the needs, and interests, of the individual young person.
 - Developing open and supportive relationships between staff and students. This is particularly relevant for one-to-one support and mentoring.
 - Opening up the young people's horizons on future possibilities, providing them with the knowledge to feel confident in making decisions in the future.
 - Recognising the extra value an external partner brings to schools including expertise, support and training (Stevens *et al.* 2014, p.3).

58. **The provision of high-quality careers guidance** is increasingly important given the complex decision-making context facing young people which includes the raising of the participation age in learning to 18; the diversification of education and training opportunities, including the growth in apprenticeships; the increase in higher and further education tuition fees; and the changing labour market which has shed many jobs traditionally filled by young people. High-quality careers guidance provides young people with independent and impartial information and advice on career options (an outline of options is provided in McCrone, 2015). This means that young people are offered guidance on the full range of academic and vocational options which is not constrained by the vested interests of individual education and training providers.
59. There is evidence that many young people in England are not receiving this type of support. Responsibility for delivering careers guidance was devolved to secondary schools in England in 2012, giving them a statutory duty to secure access for their pupils to independent and impartial career guidance but with no dedicated government funding to commission such services. The House of Commons Education Committee's inquiry into the provision of careers advice concluded that the skills, incentives and capacity to fulfil this duty, recommending that *'schools must be enabled and empowered to, and held accountable for, the provision of high quality, focused careers guidance required by all their students to help them meet the challenges of today's world of work'*. (GB. Parliament. HoC. Education Committee, 2013, paras 122-124). Ofsted's (2013) [survey](#) also found that careers guidance in schools is not working well enough and highlighted the importance of providing information on the full range of career pathways. A recent [education and skills survey](#) by the CBI found that 80 per cent of businesses across the UK *'feel the quality of careers advice young people receive is not good enough to help them make informed decisions about future career options'* (CBI, 2015, p.63).
60. There is [evidence](#) that there is a lack of careers guidance on vocational options. Research by the Boston Consulting Group (2013) reported that 80 per cent of teachers surveyed claim they do not have enough knowledge to give advice and about half admit they have given poor advice. Furthermore, 57 per cent of teachers said that they feel pressured into advising students to stay at school post-16 in order to gain funding, even though more appropriate options may be available elsewhere, such as in a further education college or an apprenticeship scheme. Lack of apprenticeship-related careers advice was highlighted by the Industry Apprentice Council (2014) [survey of apprentices](#): less than nine per cent of respondents said that they had found out about their apprenticeship through either their teacher or careers adviser and six per cent had found out from careers fairs or the National Apprenticeship Service. The main ways that young people found out about apprenticeships was by doing online searches and from suggestions from family and friends.
61. NFER has contributed to the policy and practice discourse on improving careers guidance. In our [think piece](#), McCrone (2013) argues that there is an urgent need to significantly enhance the quality and consistency of careers guidance for all young people and to have a clear method in place for ensuring that this goal is achieved. She calls on the Government, careers professionals schools and employers to work together to find an effective and workable solution. NFER worked with the Association of School

and College Leaders, Association of Teachers and Lecturers and 157 Group to produce [Careers Engagement: a Good Practice Brief for Leaders of Schools and Colleges \(2014\)](#). This outlines the principles of effective careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG) in schools and colleges as evidenced and agreed by the four organisations. It provides practical advice on putting CEIAG plans into action, how to engage employers, and offers guidance to schools and colleges in assessing their careers provision in an easy-to-use format providing a workable approach for this important area.

62. **Increasing employer engagement with schools and colleges** is a way of improving the provision of careers guidance and assisting transition from education to employment. Mann and Virk (n.d) [reported](#) that employer engagement had a positive impact on some pupils' attainment and their transitions from full-time education to sustained employment. They concluded that: *'Research suggests that young people who experience a wider range of employer engagement activities are likely to secure a wider range of outcomes than peers with narrower experiences'* (p.11). In its evaluation of post-16 work experience placement trials, [NFER found](#) that placement experience was perceived by students, colleges and employers to have helped develop the skills necessary for employment, including team work, communication and interpersonal skills, enabling students to be more work-ready (Sims *et al.*, 2013).
63. [NFER's research](#) on how to provide meaningful experience of the world of work for young people as part of 16-19 study programmes produced a top tips guide for senior leaders in schools and colleges drawn from six institutional case studies (McCrone *et al.*, 2015). [The top tips guide](#) (NFER, 2015) highlights the importance of schools and colleges proactively engaging with the needs of local employers, working in partnership with them, and actively involving employers to prepare young people prior to a work experience placement.
64. It is important that attempts to increase employer engagement with schools and colleges does not overlook the potential contribution of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which represent over 99 per cent of all private sector businesses and account for around 59 per cent of private sector employment. Recently NFER partnered with South East Strategic Leaders, London Councils and the London Enterprise Panel to identify the range of current practice and experience of SME-education engagement in order to improve young people's employability skills and support their transition into work. The research findings (NFER, 2015) informed the development of a bespoke ['connect card'](#) designed to help education organisations and SMEs to engage with each other more effectively.
65. Employers are likely to employ more young people from this group if they have played a role in helping to them to understand the requirements of the world of work (e.g. behaviours, communication, team working and problem-solving skills) which will develop employability skills. [The CBI/Pearson Education and Skills Survey 2015](#) reported that nearly three quarters (73 per cent) of employer respondents had some links with schools or colleges and nearly two thirds of them indicated that they are willing to play a greater role in supporting careers provision in schools and colleges. Business involvement is a central part of [London Ambitions](#), which aims to achieve a culture change in careers, enterprise and employability education across the capital. The

London Ambitions strategy states that collaboration between stakeholders is required in order 'to narrow the gap between the education and employment sectors in a way that enables educators to contribute more effectively to equipping their students with the knowledge and skills employers seek, and reciprocally employers getting more involved in supporting and helping those educators in shaping and defining what they are looking for in their workforce of the future' ((London Councils, 2015, p.7).

66. In their [mapping of careers provision in schools and colleges in England](#), Gibson *et al.* (2015) advocated that employer involvement 'should be further explored to identify good practice in engaging with employers, how institutions could be better supported to work with employers in their local area and how networking and partnering might support employer engagement to make this engagement more efficient' (p.38). The new Careers and Enterprise Company aims to identify and build on good practice. The Company's purpose is to strengthen the links between schools and colleges and the world of work. The Company will work with Local Enterprise Partnerships to broker active school/college-employer engagement where employers get involved in a range of activities (e.g. project work, CV writing, mentoring and work experience) to help increase students' employability skills. It will be interesting to see what insights the Company's planned impact tracking can provide to inform future employer engagement with schools and colleges.

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14 September 2015

Social Mobility at University Alliance

Introduction

University Alliance brings together 18 universities with a common mission to make the difference to their cities and regions. We use our experience of providing high-quality teaching and research with real world impact to shape higher education and research policy for the benefit of our students, businesses and civic partners. We innovate together, learn from each other and support every member to transform lives and deliver growth.

What you see at Alliance universities is large-scale social mobility in action. An average 40% of our students come from low socio-economic groups compared to a sector wide average of 34% and an average of 20% at Russell Group universities.⁵⁹² Students from less advantaged backgrounds and circumstances who enrol on Alliance courses are supported and encouraged into a better start in life.

The UK economy is increasingly knowledge-based with most new jobs in high skill areas and labour market demand for higher (Level 6+) skills continuing to grow. But Alliance universities' impact on social mobility goes beyond the traditional model of higher education. As forward thinking and flexible institutions, they are involved in a wide range of activities across different skills attainment levels (Level 4+). This activity has a huge impact on both social mobility and economic development throughout the UK.

University Alliance argues that:

- A. In an increasingly knowledge-based economy continuing to widen participation to higher-level study is essential for social mobility.
 - B. Government policy should incentivise and reward partnerships across the entire skills ecosystem with the aim of creating smoother progression routes between institutions and according vocational and academic education parity of esteem.
 - C. Universities have an important role in designing education other than degree-level study, ensuring it is relevant to local and national needs. Government must support greater flexibility for learners including degree apprenticeships, other workplace-based courses and part-time study.
- A. In an increasingly knowledge-based economy continuing to widen participation to higher-level study is essential for social mobility.**
1. The UK economy is increasingly knowledge-based with most new jobs in high skill areas and labour market demand for higher (Level 6+) skills continuing to grow. According to the CBI, half of all jobs by 2022 will require workers to have completed some form of higher education.⁵⁹³ UKCES states that “long term trends look set to continue favouring growth in [high skill jobs], making the sustained supply of new skills into the labour market an on-going priority”.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹² HESA 2013/14, Participation of under-represented groups in higher education: UK domiciled young full-time first degree entrants

⁵⁹³ Confederation of British Industry (2015), *Inspiring growth: CBI/Pearson skills survey 2015*, available from: <http://news.cbi.org.uk/business-issues/education-and-skills/gateway-to-growth-cbi-pearson-education-and-skills-survey-2015/>

⁵⁹⁴ UK Commission for Employment & Skills (2015), *Growth through people: evidence and analysis*, available from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/410289/GTP_EA_final_v8.pdf

2. In this economic context, widening participation to higher-level study is essential. Social mobility will never be fully realised in a system where higher education numbers are restricted.
- B. **Government policy should incentivise and reward partnerships across the entire skills ecosystem with the aim of creating smoother progression routes between institutions and according vocational and academic education parity of esteem.**
3. Many universities, including all in University Alliance, work closely with 14-19 education providers (schools, FE colleges and UTCs) to form an effective skills ecosystem. As well as ensuring diversity of provision, the partnership work that our universities undertake brings learning closer to industry and helps address 'cold spots' in areas of low participation. For example:
 - a) **Plymouth University** has around 5,000 students studying in a regional further education partnership registered on foundation courses, HNDs, HNCs and honours degrees. This has enabled access to higher education on a significant scale across a geographically large region with very few universities.
 - b) **The University of Greenwich** is a sponsor of the Medway UTC, along with MidKent College, Medway Council, BAE Systems and other local employers and partners, which specialises in engineering and construction.
 - c) **Portsmouth University** is engaged in extensive outreach and aspiration raising programmes – an incremental and increasingly intensive progression package from year 5 to year 13 which systematically develops an interest in higher study. Through this programme the university works actively with staff and pupils at schools and colleges across the region, raising expectations and providing practical support, including subject conferences and masterclasses, aimed at improving educational outcomes at 16 and 18 and making Higher Education a viable opportunity for more local children. The university also runs a number of franchised courses in collaboration with local FE colleges, including courses in business, education and engineering.
 - d) The **University of Hertfordshire** works in collaboration with four local consortium colleges and other HE, enterprise and local authority partners to ensure that students in the local area have the best possible access to widening participation activities. The University set up Watford UTC which has a special focus on the technical skills, trades and technologies that support the computer and digital communication industries, hospitality and tourism. The University's involvement ensures the education on offer is relevant to industry, thereby giving students the best possible opportunity to secure employment after finishing. To date, more than 15,000 graduates of the University began their post-school education in the consortia colleges.
 - e) The **University of Lincoln** sponsors the Lincoln UTC and two academy schools in Holbeach; one secondary and one primary. The University Academy Holbeach (secondary) is unique as it not only offers sixth form provision, but also a range

of apprenticeship training. The HE participation rate in South Holland is one of the lowest in the country at 7% and since the University has sponsored the Academy, the size of the sixth form has increased from 9 to 275 and the numbers of students progressing to university has increased from 1 to 24. There are now over 80 students in apprenticeship training. The Lincoln UTC is also sponsored by Siemens and is designed to help address the shortage of engineering and other higher level skills in Lincoln and beyond.

- C. Universities have an important role in designing education beyond degree-level study, ensuring it is relevant to local and national needs. Government must support greater flexibility for learners including degree apprenticeships, other workplace-based courses and part-time study.**
4. Alliance universities and similar institutions have a strong record of collaborating with industry in the design of qualifications. This includes courses that:
- Are co-designed and sponsored by employers
 - Involve flexible workplace-based placements
 - Are taught in university campus-based employer hubs
 - Are accredited by employer-led professional bodies
 - Are offered through part-time, distance learning or further education based learning routes.
5. They are therefore well-placed to deliver learning, at a range of attainment levels, that is transferable and offers progression opportunities beyond immediate employer needs. For example:
- a) In partnership with BMW, who have a regional base in Oxford, **Oxford Brookes University** offer foundation degrees in Electronic Engineering and Mechanical Engineering. With significant input from BMW they have developed a practice-embedded curriculum as part of BMW's apprenticeship scheme. Aspects of the course are delivered with local college partners and the course is accredited by the Institute of Mechanical Engineers and the Institute of Engineering and Technology. Oxford Brookes University also supports their local University Technical College (UTC) in Swindon, which has over 90 local and national business partners. The UTC is developing a curriculum driven by these businesses needs, with involvement from the Institute of Engineering and Technology and their Local Enterprise Partnership. Oxford Brookes University are launching a Mechanical Engineering Foundation Degree and Top Up Degree at Swindon College as a clear progression route from the University Technical College.
- b) **Plymouth University** has worked on a Higher Apprenticeship in Construction with South Devon College which is approved by the Sector Skills Council for the construction industry (CITB-Construction Skills) and is endorsed by some large employers such as Seddon Group and Lovell Partnership as well as the Federation of Master Builders. This Higher Apprenticeship includes a Plymouth

University Foundation Degree, which means that students gain an academic qualification whilst also gaining practical experience.

- c) **Coventry University** set up Coventry University College (CUC) in 2012 in response to concerns that higher fees might deter non-traditional students from applying to higher study. The curriculum has been designed to provide qualifications from Foundation Level to Degree with each stage resulting in an award (Foundation Cert, HNC, HND or Honours Degree). This enables students to join and leave the College at a variety of points and to manage the pace of their learning and their ability to earn money for subsistence and further study. The majority of courses have been designed around professional body qualifications thus providing a complementary mix of employability skills and academic knowledge. CUC provides a high level of personal and academic support which has enabled it to accept students with lower entry qualifications, on a staged entry programme whilst not sacrificing levels of student retention or success. Recruitment has exceeded expectations with full time numbers ahead of target by 50% in the first year. Currently over 300 students study for their degrees on a part time basis. Whilst many Foundation Level (Year 0) students elect to continue with CUC, 40% progressed to degree programmes at Coventry University and a further 40% received offers from other Universities. It is unlikely that these students, having only gained low entry points aged 18, would have been able to continue with their higher education had they not attended CUC.
- d) Through the Higher Level Apprenticeship model, **Manchester Metropolitan University** has offered a long-distance work-based learning route for chemical scientists since 2012. Trainee scientists gain a foundation degree at the end of three years while developing specialist and generic skills of work in the chemical related industries. Partnerships between MMU and industry include work with pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline. Students undertake work-based learning and complete their academic learning online with a residential week at MMU in each of the three years of study. The success of the scheme is down to the strong working relationship between staff in industry and higher education and the support in development and recruitment by Cogent, the Sector Skills Council for the chemical, pharmaceutical, nuclear, life science, petroleum and polymer industries.

10 September 2015

Awarding bodies

Awarding bodies

City & Guilds – Written evidence (SMO0073)

City & Guilds Written Evidence Submission

House of Lords Select Committee Inquiry on Social Mobility

September 2015

About City & Guilds

City & Guilds is a global leader in skills development. Backed by a Royal Charter, we exist to make sure that people can contribute to successful businesses and economies. We do this by working with education providers, employers and Governments in more than 80 countries. Approximately two million people are currently working towards City & Guilds qualifications in the UK, across more than 26 sectors.

Summary

City & Guilds recognises that the factors affecting social mobility are complex and interrelated, however our submission will focus more on the factors surrounding educational inequality; how technical education and training is key to improving social mobility and what barriers still need to be overcome.

We argue that technical qualifications and routes such as apprenticeships are essential to improving social mobility, especially among 14-24 year olds for whom academic study is not desirable or compatible with their future aspirations.

We propose a number of short-term policy solutions to address this: developing a broader curriculum; clearer progression routes; quality experience of the world of work; and impartial careers advice for pupils and parents. However, the only way we can address the UK's low levels of social mobility must also be by tackling more intractable and long standing issues, such as, the perception of professional and technical education; employer investment in skills and instability in education and skills policy making.

City & Guilds would welcome the opportunity to provide oral evidence to the Committee.

Q1. What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

1. At the heart of tackling the issues that affect social mobility is improving skills. City & Guilds is at the forefront of the UK's drive to help young people gain the skills they need for future employment, employability and active citizenship and yet it is an alarming reality that the UK has one of the lowest levels of social mobility in OECD countries⁵⁹⁵. Whilst there is much debate around the looming skills gap, or high levels of youth unemployment, what everyone from Government to employers and the

⁵⁹⁵ OECD intergenerational social mobility study 2010

education sector agrees is that we need a better skills-based education offer, with apprenticeships at its heart.

2. In the Coalition Government's Social Mobility strategy (2011), the link between technical education and social mobility was clearly acknowledged:

At the heart of the Government's reforms will be a clear understanding that it is only by ensuring that the vocational education young people receive is of the highest quality and value to the individual student that we can tackle this country's long-standing failure to value vocational education. Our proposals will be particularly beneficial for social mobility, ensuring that young people on vocational routes, currently disproportionately drawn from disadvantaged backgrounds, are studying courses of real worth, rather than channelled into low impact, low value learning⁵⁹⁶.

City & Guilds calls on this Government to publish an updated Social Mobility strategy with a commitment to professional and technical education at its heart.

3. Professional and technical education has a unique role to play here- it is critical for engaging with those individuals who have disengaged from the current education system. Moreover, once someone has become disengaged from learning, it becomes harder to reengage them, further compounding their ability to become upwardly mobile. For example, the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility commented in its Seven Key Truths report: "Once a young person falls out of education, training and work, they encounter a range of barriers which make upward mobility more unlikely: youth unemployment is still impacting on individuals' wages by 21% at age 42"⁵⁹⁷.
4. The best way for social mobility to be encouraged is to enable professional and technical education and training to better serve these individuals, rather than hindering it's effectiveness by successive Governments 'tinkering' with the education and skills system. We must have a system where learners trust in its outcomes, which is being threatened by the lack of stable and coherent policy making. Moreover, there has been a substantial amount of reform to the education and skills system over the past thirty years. Our report which surveyed the last thirty years of policy making in the education and skills sector, *Sense and Instability*, report found that:
 - There have been 61 Secretaries of State responsible for skills and employment policy in the last three decades, compared with 18 for schools policy and 16 for higher education;
 - Between them they produced 13 major Acts of Parliament

'Reforming without reinventing' the education and skills sector will be key.

⁵⁹⁶ *Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers: A Strategy for Social Mobility*, 2011, p45

⁵⁹⁷ *Seven Key Truths About Social Mobility*, interim report of the all-party parliamentary group on social mobility, 2012, p28

5. Parents are a critical and often overlooked factor in influencing young peoples' transition from school to work. The findings of the UK's Social Mobility and Child Poverty (SMCP) Commission's July 2015 research⁵⁹⁸, identified a 'glass floor' that is inhibiting social mobility. The two underpinning pillars of this were found to be:
 - More advantaged parents securing educational opportunities to help their children, such as providing better careers advice and guidance, and placing a high value on 'soft skills';
 - Secondly, more advantaged parents securing advantages for their children into the labour market that are unavailable to less well-off parents, for example, securing informal and unpaid internships.
6. The importance of parental attitudes and interventions in shaping their children's future aspirations and opportunities should not be understated. Our report, *Ways Into Work*, found that nearly half of young people agreed that their parents were the biggest influence on what they wanted to do with their lives⁵⁹⁹. In addition, City & Guilds took part in Demos' Apprenticeship Commission, which reported in March 2015 that whilst 92% of parents think apprenticeships are a good option for young people, only 32% thought it would be the best option for their own child⁶⁰⁰.

Q3. Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

7. Helping learners' achieve their potential and supporting them along their learning journeys is essential to improving levels of social mobility. High quality professional and technical education and training must be available to people of all ages and backgrounds and at a level that is appropriate to them. Benefits to the individual and the productivity levels of the UK hinge on breaking these barriers to social mobility. For example, research City & Guilds conducted with the Centre for Economic and Business Research (Cebr) estimated that by increasing professional and technical skills by 10%, UK GDP could be boosted by £163 billion by 2025⁶⁰¹.
8. Lack of status around professional and technical career options has compounded the earnings gap. Alan Milburn, Chair of the SMCP has argued that 'ensuring fair access to higher education and vocational training' is critical to reducing social mobility and reducing the earnings gap. 'In the most mobile societies students are helped to make the transition to employment, via higher education for the most academically able and via vocational education for those wanting to develop their technical skills. In

⁵⁹⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-research-exposes-the-glass-floor-in-british-society>

⁵⁹⁹ *Ways Into Work: Views of children and young people on education and employment*, City & Guilds, May 2012, p10

⁶⁰⁰ The Commission on Apprenticeships, Demos, March 2015, p20

⁶⁰¹ *Global economic benefits of investment in vocational education and training*, City & Guilds Group and Cebr, Summer 2015

Awarding bodies

Britain by contrast we face twin challenges - unequal access to higher education and a low priority being accorded to vocational education'⁶⁰².

9. Lack of what is usually termed 'employability skills', but by this we mean young people having the confidence and competencies to operate in a modern workplace. This is not currently met by the current schools system and comes down to exposure to the workplace and a lack of quality work experience placements being available.
 - Our research, *Making Education Work*, shows that 80% of employers think work experience is essential and 67% would be more inclined to hire a young person with work experience⁶⁰³.
 - City & Guilds Group have set a target to provide 100 work experience placements, and 100 one-day workshops for young people by the end of the year.
 - With youth unemployment lingering at 16%, it's crucial that young people have the chance to immerse themselves in the workplace, so they are in a stronger position to enter the job market and develop the valuable skills that our economy needs.

10. More must be done to address the drop off in apprenticeships. Some qualifications and apprenticeships have less status than others because they lack the rigor of independent assessment, quality on-the-job training, and industry relevance that are the hallmarks of quality and what we at City & Guilds pride ourselves on. We offer 120 apprenticeship frameworks, across 26 industries and have over 136 years experience in this sector.

11. Our report, *Remaking Apprenticeships*⁶⁰⁴, explored the features of high quality qualification programmes and apprenticeships. The report argued that quality apprenticeships should have six learning outcomes:
 - Routine expertise in an occupation.
 - Resourcefulness – the capacity to think and act in situations not previously encountered.
 - Craftsmanship – pride in a job well done and an ethic of excellence.
 - Functional literacies – numeracy, literacy, digital and graphical.
 - Business-like attitudes – customer and client-focused, entrepreneurial and aware of value for money, whether in for-profit, public sector or third sector roles.
 - Wider skills for growth – the dispositions and wider skills for a lifetime of learning and change

⁶⁰² Alan Milburn's speech to the Resolution Foundation, November 2013

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/living-standards-working-poverty-and-social-mobility>

⁶⁰³ *Making Education Work: Preparing Young People for the Workplace*, City & Guilds, October 2013, p5

⁶⁰⁴ *Remaking Apprenticeships: Powerful Learning for Work and Life*, City & Guilds Research Alliance, 2014

Q4. How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

12. Clearer, more flexible progression routes are needed. The report by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR), *Moving On Up*⁶⁰⁵ argues that this is a key defining feature of Denmark's professional and technical system: 'Having a single set of standards should also lead to the adoption of a more flexible yet coherent vocational route, as per the Dutch model. There, young people on a primarily work-based route would spend at least one or two days a week in college, focussing on off-the-job training and the broader elements of their programme of study'. Denmark is above the OECD average for literacy, maths and sciences⁶⁰⁶.
13. We need more than just an institutional response to addressing educational inequality. Other interventions can increase social mobility that take place outside of schools and college. For example, through City & Guilds' work with Business in the Community and London Youth.⁶⁰⁷
14. Promote Apprenticeships, but not as the only answer. Apprenticeships are an excellent way of improving social mobility. The earning potential of apprentices and others with professional and technical qualifications was found to compare favourably with the same £150,000 lifetime earnings advantage that a representative graduate would earn compared to a non-graduate. The Government's target of achieving 3 million apprenticeship starts by the end of this Parliament must not obscure the range of quality technical qualifications which deliver for learners. This ambitious drive for higher apprenticeship numbers must also not come at the cost of low quality provision. City & Guilds has concerns that this could lead to a 'gaming' of the system and a subsequent lack of confidence in apprenticeships.
15. Improve careers information, advice and guidance. The Department for Business itself admits that more needs to be done on CIAG to increase social mobility⁶⁰⁸. We echo the findings of the Education Select Committee's report on this subject as well as other organisation such as the CBI who have described the current state of CIAG as being on 'life support'.
 - Our research report, *Making Sure Tomorrow Works*, showed that 38 per cent of the young people we surveyed between the ages of 18-20 felt they lacked clarity about the career on which they will very shortly embark⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰⁵ *Moving on up: Developing a strong, coherent upper-secondary education system in England*, IPPR, March 2015, p7

⁶⁰⁶ OECD Better Life Index, Edition 2015, <http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/>

⁶⁰⁷ <http://www.bitc.org.uk/blog/post/member-spotlight-city-guilds-and-london-youth>

⁶⁰⁸ *Social Mobility, A Literature Review*, Department for Business, Innovation & Skills, March 2011

⁶⁰⁹ CSD and the Future Foundation, *Making Sure Tomorrow Works*, Sep 2012, p13

Awarding bodies

- More than ever, young people are relying on advice from their parents and peers in making these crucial choices about their next steps. The CBI found that 93% of students not getting the careers advice they need⁶¹⁰.
16. An important aspect of this question is also about raising the status of apprenticeships among men and women who would not usually consider these careers. We conducted a survey of more than 2000 young professionals (aged 18 - 34) on the careers advice they received⁶¹¹:
- We found that men are twice as likely to be encouraged to take an apprenticeship as women.
 - Moreover, men and women were advised to pursue entirely different occupations, often in line with long-held gender stereotypes. This was particularly true in the construction industry, where less than one percent of women were encouraged to make it their career compared to 12% of men.
17. An example of good practice in careers guidance to bring to the attention of the Committee is the City & Guilds 'Apprentice Connect' initiative. Apprentice Connect is run by qualified City & Guilds apprentices who attend schools, colleges and careers events to deliver workshops, assemblies and advice to young people who may not have considered an apprenticeship as a route towards their desired career⁶¹².
18. Employers need to do more to invest in the skills and training of future generations. Some commentators have argued that state policy has 'socialised' employers into thinking that they have less responsibility here, but with further cuts to FE and skills budgets, employers will increasingly be seen as the main drivers of skills investment. The Government's proposals for an apprenticeship 'levy' may provide the answer to this.

Q5. Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

19. Government alone cannot address these issues, but it has a responsibility to lead the change by raising the status of professional and technical education and the support of the UK skills system. Employers, schools, parents and skills organisations all need to work together to support these aims.
20. Local and regional bodies, such as Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), have the potential to play an important role here, although the devolution of skills budget may pose a number of implementation and funding questions. We are working with LEPs and local bodies to ensure a strong local voice for skills.

⁶¹⁰ CBI Survey, November 2013 <http://www.cbi.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases/2013/11/93-of-young-people-are-not-getting-the-careers-information-they-need-cbi/>

⁶¹¹ *Careers advice, Girls vs Boys*, City & Guilds, March 2014

⁶¹² More information about Apprentice Connect can be found here: <http://www.cityandguilds.com/what-we-offer/learners/become-an-apprentice/apprentice-connect>

OCR – Written evidence (SMO0060)

**House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility
Inquiry into the transition from school to work for 14-24 year olds
Evidence from OCR**

Overview of OCR

1. OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations) is a leading UK awarding body committed to providing qualifications that engage learners of all ages in schools, colleges, training organisations, work or part-time learning programmes, to enable them to achieve and enhance their potential. We offer a wide range of general and vocational qualifications that equip learners with the knowledge and skills they need for their future.
2. We work with a range of education providers including schools, colleges, workplaces and other institutions in the public and private sector. Over 13,000 centres choose OCR A Levels, GCSEs and vocational qualifications including Cambridge Progression, Nationals and Technicals, NVQs, Functional Skills, and the components of Apprenticeships.

Executive Summary:

- High quality impartial information, advice and guidance is critical to the successful transition from school to workplace and must include information for parents so they can guide their children;
- OECD countries where young people ‘earn and learn’ have lower levels of youth unemployment;
- Many nations that score well in indices of youth employment, productivity and skills development have a more clearly defined vocational education and training (VET) system than England;
- CBI highlights that employers are looking for ‘soft skills’ in young people such as communications, confidence, team-working, decision-making and resilience as well as qualifications in young people.
- OCR’s learning programme model includes attainment of core skills as well as developing ‘soft skills’ so important in the workplace;
- OCR undertook a 13 week Traineeships programme with a group of NEETs, with 96% of them re-engaging with learning or moving into employment;
- OCR has developed a unique ‘Employer Project Approach’ to our vocational qualifications, working closely with employers to deliver real world business projects to schools which are tied in to our qualifications;
- Government has a clear responsibility for improving the system to support transitions for young people. Part of the solution is less policy churn, greater stability, increased employer engagement and fair and sustainable funding.
- Devolution of skills cannot result in a postcode lottery of support in transitions from school to workplace and IAG;
- Charities such as Business in the Community are running excellent business and school partnership programmes helping young people in disadvantaged areas.

Response to areas of inquiry

What are the most significant factors that affect the social mobility and employment outcomes of young people in the transition from school into the work place?

3. Our expertise of working with young people tells us that good quality information, advice and guidance (IAG) is critical to the successful transition from school to the work place. One of our partner organisations, Worktree, an employability education charity based in Milton Keynes, did a Career WorkOut pilot in 5 Luton schools earlier this year. The programme aimed to raise career awareness and aspirations of students aged 9-18. The data from this pilot highlighted that 65% do not have knowledge about the different kinds of jobs available to them.
4. Young people's knowledge of the qualifications they are doing and where they will take them on their career pathway is also a significant factor. OCR is a patron ambassador to Youth Employment UK (YEUK), the country's leading campaigning and membership organisation dedicated to tackling youth unemployment in the UK. YEUK ran a workshop to understand the barriers to education and employment that young people are facing today. The young people questioned were aged 13-17 year of age. They highlighted that one of their main concerns was that when choosing their GCSE qualifications they had no idea what the benefit would be from choosing one subject to another and had no guidance in school to help them make informed choices.
5. Whilst choosing GCSE's was highlighted at the workshop as one of the student's concerns, what then emerged was the lack of understanding of all their post 16 options. Some of the group had visited at least one university, but none of the young people had any knowledge of apprenticeships.
6. According to research by the Chartered Institute for Public Relations (CIPR), parents are the most significant factor in careers and education choices for their children⁶¹³. Key findings from the CIPR research show that while parents rank themselves, school teachers, friends and other family members as the most influential factors in their child's career choices, students themselves rate their parents' influence on the decision as highly as parents do. Therefore it is important that any policy to improve IAG also targets parents as well as the students themselves.
7. The lack of high quality IAG coupled with the incentive for schools to recruit for their own 6th forms is a further significant factor in affecting young people's transitions from school. According to a recent survey of its members by the Association of Colleges "74% of respondents felt information, advice and guidance has worsened because schools want to keep the more academic students to benefit their performance tables, regardless of what is in the best interests of the young person. This is backed up by data from the 2014 survey when 69% of respondents said schools allowed college liaison

⁶¹³ <http://www.fenews.co.uk/fe-news/parental-influence-the-deciding-factor-in-student-careers>

Awarding bodies

officers to only speak to certain students; anecdotally this is usually the ‘less academic’ students.”

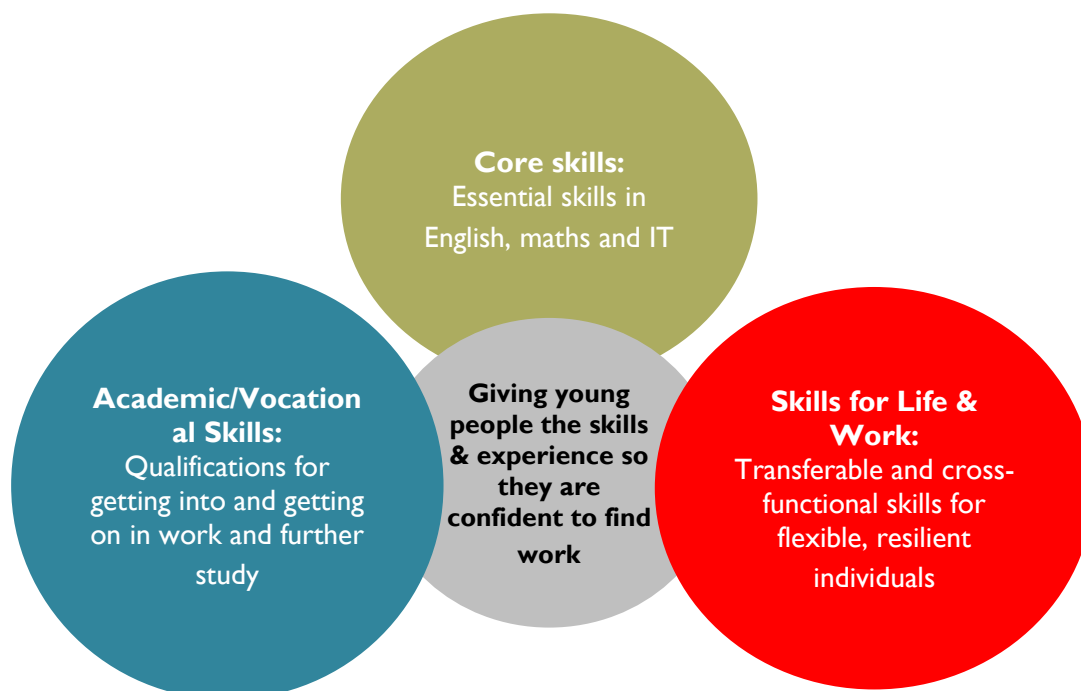
8. In a survey of 1800 students undertaken by the National Union of Students and OCR⁶¹⁴, when asked about IAG, 42% said that they did not receive enough IAG about career choices and choice of study before they made their A level subject choices. Just one quarter of those young people interviewed who were from POLAR 1 classification group said they received enough advice before they chose their A Levels, compared to 44% in POLAR 5.
9. Another critical factor is young people having access to high quality experience of work. The benefits of ‘earning and learning’ for young people are clear and well documented. According to the UKCES report ‘the death of the Saturday job: the decline in earning and learning amongst young people in the UK’ (June 2015) those young people who combine work with full-time education are 4-6 percentage points less likely to be NEET five years later than those just in education. They are also likely to earn more than those just in full-time education, with a premium of 12-15 per cent.⁶¹⁵
10. The report goes on to give international evidence about the importance of young people gaining experience of work, saying “every country in the OECD that has more earning and learning at 15-19 has fewer people becoming NEET later on in the 20-24 age range. The same pattern applies to 20-24 year old learners and 25-29 year old NEETs. Broadly speaking, it seems that high levels of young people earning and learning lead to lower youth unemployment.”
11. OCR also believes that a broad and balanced curriculum plays a vital role in preparing young people to progress in their learning or transition into employment. The Progress 8 school accountability measure will give double points for achievement in English and Maths GCSE. Whilst OCR believes it is right to make these a priority, it will put more pressure on curriculum time. The Government has announced plans to introduce ‘compulsory’ Ebacc subjects. We are concerned this will limit the subjects their students can take and would impact on creative subjects.
12. Schools and colleges remain committed to a broad education and know that there is more to life than exams but resourcing a broad curriculum, that exposes all children to a multi-disciplinary mix of science, technology, arts, humanities and enterprise, and includes those non-examined parts of the curriculum, e.g. character and resilience, community engagement, nutrition, financial literacy, will now be more of a challenge than ever.

⁶¹⁴ <http://www.nus.org.uk/global/informing-the-reforms.pdf>

⁶¹⁵ DfE Research report No. DFE-RR182 “Young people’s education and labour market choices aged 16/17 to 18/19”

Does the current transition system support young people who do not follow the A-Level and higher education route to perform better in terms of employment outcomes? If not, why not? What challenges do these young people face in their ability to transition successfully into the workplace?

13. The lack of high quality IAG is particularly disadvantageous to those not following the traditional A Level to higher education route. This is because much of the IAG young people receive comes from their teachers, the majority of whom have followed their career path through university.
14. Whereas the route through A Levels to university is very well understood, vocational pathways are often seen to be complex and are difficult to understand. Many of the nations that score well in indices of youth employment, productivity and skills development have a more clearly defined vocational education and training (VET) system than England. Strong international VET systems, such as those in Germany, Austria and Switzerland typically have strong pathways into a range of occupations that are understood by the general public; high rates of employer engagement and well understood meanings of what this is; and the association of vocational pathways with high quality positive returns in the labour market. The plethora of qualifications and systems reform in England is resulting in a system which does not support young people in making the right decisions for them.
15. Unlike those countries with a strong, defined VET system, ours is confusing and misunderstood. There is a yawning gap between what our young people are being taught in schools and what employers want and expect from our young people. The CBI's 'First Steps' report highlights the kinds of attributes that employers are looking for when recruiting young people. What is revealing is that employers are not just looking for qualifications. The diagram below highlights the components of a learning programme model highlighted as best practice by the CBI and which OCR advocates in order to deliver the skills and training so that young people can transition from learning into their working lives.



Awarding bodies

16. Our OCR approach to a learning programme model includes the core, transferable skills (such as English, maths and IT) which are vital to any young person going into employment and the academic/vocational qualifications and skills (learning and skills acquisition which allows learners to progress into work or further study). But added to this are the vitally important, but difficult to quantify, 'soft skills' which help to build work-ready individuals with the attributes to prepare them for employment such as communication, confidence, team-working, decision-making and resilience.
17. A report released by McDonalds in January 2015 entitled "The Value of Soft Skills to the UK Economy"⁶¹⁶ put the economic worth of these skills at £88 billion. However, these skills are hard are not recognised as much as they should be. Indeed the CBI has stated that these 'soft' skills are just as important to UK business as academic or vocational qualifications.

How can the transition from school to work be improved for all young people, particularly for those who do not go on to study A-Levels and higher education? How can employers be encouraged to employ more young people from this group?

18. Employers tell us that many young people going into an apprenticeship are not 'apprenticeship ready' – there is a gap in their skills and development resulting in them not being ready to go straight into workplace learning. It is important, therefore that there are 'bridging' qualifications and experience, such as Cambridge Technicals which are designed to help prepare young people for the world of work and employer expectations.
19. To address this transition between school and work, in summer 2013 the then coalition Government launched the Traineeships initiative. This is an education and training programme designed to equip 16-24 year olds with the skills and experience they need to get an Apprenticeship or secure sustainable employment. With a focus on work preparation and (for those who need it) literacy and numeracy training, Traineeships can last from six weeks to six months and are aimed at those not currently in a job and who have little work experience. Delivered by employers in many industries working in partnership with education or training providers, they are open to all young people regardless of their qualifications.
20. Ahead of the Government launching the Traineeships programme, in May 2013 OCR launched a highly successful pilot in line with the Government's Traineeships framework. The programme was delivered to a group of 23 young people that were classified as NEET for a period of 13 weeks. It offered a mixture of core English and maths skills, work preparation, including vocational skills courses and interview practice, and a work placement. The pilot focused on equipping young people with broad customer service and business administration skills as these could be translated into a range of work contexts. Work placements were secured with a range of local employers, including solicitors, retailers and GP surgeries. Each week the Trainees spent three days in the classroom and two days in the workplace. The results of the pilot were impressive, with

⁶¹⁶<http://www.backingsoftskills.co.uk/The%20Value%20of%20Soft%20Skills%20to%20the%20UK%20Economy.pdf>

Awarding bodies

96% of learners moved on from the pilot into employment, apprenticeships or further education.

21. In November 2014, OCR gave evidence to the Education Select Committee on Traineeships⁶¹⁷. At the evidence session OCR called for five key recommendations which could help young people and employers engage in Traineeships. They are:
- a. Government should make traineeships more flexible through the creation of bite-sized units whilst also providing funding according to progression;
 - b. Traineeships should be promoted within schools as a 'stepping stone' into employment, FE or apprenticeships;
 - c. Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) should be included in the overarching strategy behind traineeships within local areas, through the development of a 'Skills and Employment Board';
 - d. Clear, high-quality and concise information that is readily accessible for young people is urgently required and should be marketed through appropriate channels, capturing interest and of young learners as well as directing them towards future career/learning pathways;
 - e. Incentivising employers should be considered as a viable solution to ensure the number of traineeships offered increases and that employers see the benefit of taking part.
22. However, Traineeships are only part of the solution. Young people will only be better prepared for the transition between school and work when there are better links between employers and schools. In recognition of this OCR has developed a 'project based learning approach' to some of our vocational qualifications, working closely with large employers such as Transport for London, Siemens, Bombardier and F1. In project based learning, students work over an extended period of time (usually a 6 week project), possibly taking an interdisciplinary approach, for a purpose that is greater than meeting the requirements of the curriculum. They solve a real work problem, build something or address a real need.
23. For example, OCR's project approach with Siemens saw us developing a curriculum for 14 to 16 year olds which aimed to tackle the skills gap in engineering and manufacturing. The Siemens project, which was the first of its kind in the UK, was developed in conjunction with the Cabinet Office, the Department of Education and the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. It used real life applications to explain the science and technology behind projects such as wind turbines, scanner and trains to enthuse learners.
24. The programme, which supports the delivery of OCR's Cambridge National in Engineering Level 1/2 qualification, is now available to every school in the country with modules providing teachers with a structured plan to teach students how a range of topics work together across the syllabus, giving learners an understanding of how skills and knowledge could link together in a working environment.

⁶¹⁷ <http://www.ocr.org.uk/news/view/ocr-shares-expertise-on-traineeships-with-commons-select-committee/>

Who should be responsible for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers?

25. The Government has a clear responsibility for improving the system to support the transition into work for school leavers. OCR recently produced a 'Guide to the Skills System'⁶¹⁸ in conjunction with the Parliamentary Skills Commission. The guide is aimed at Parliamentarians and policy makers and highlights 6 key messages for this Parliament. They are:

- Greater stability in the sector: employers, practitioners and FE and skills experts are calling for less policy churn and greater stability so the sector can be more proactive in meeting our skills challenges;
- Adopt greater systems thinking: Parliamentarians need to strengthen vocational pathways and transitions between education and work to ensure a functioning pipeline of training delivering high level skills; Government departments must identify areas for greater collaboration and cost-savings;
- Improve the policy process: to allow policies to embed, quality to develop and give employers confidence in the system;
- Enhance quality and confidence: There needs to be high quality careers advice and guidance from a young age. We also need high level vocational qualifications and pathways which learners and employers understand the value of;
- Boost employer engagement: Strategic engagement from employers to produce a skills system which is fit for purpose, including SMEs;
- Ensure fair and sustainable funding: Funding needs must be fair and sustainable, with the right balance of contribution from employers, government and individuals, to ensure the long term sustainability of the FE and skills sector.

26. However, responsibility cannot lie just with Government. Local authorities, schools, colleges, employers, awarding organisations, charities, parents and the individual also play their part. The challenge will be joining systems and services together and who will be accountable for improving these vital transitions.

27. With the Government devolving responsibility for skills to Local Enterprise Partnerships this should allow for greater flexibility and to be able tackle specific labour markets needs and challenges in each geographical area. However, according to a recent Centre for Cities presentation to the All Party Group for Skills and Employment on 'the Devolution of Skills to Cities' "there is a lot of nervousness about the asymmetry that might come with devolving some areas to a greater degree than others." Government has a clear role to play in ensuring there is no 'postcode lottery' in this policy area.

28. OCR is a member of Business in the Community (BITC), a charity founded by the Prince of Wales. BITC works with UK businesses to tackle a wide range of issues in order to build a fairer more just society. One of the programmes they offer is called 'Business Class'⁶¹⁹. Business Class helps businesses support young people facing social disadvantage through forming long-term partnerships with local schools those young

⁶¹⁸ <http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/sc/research/guide-skills-system>

⁶¹⁹ <http://www.bitc.org.uk/programmes/business-class>

Awarding bodies

people attend. OCR has partnerships with schools in both Cambridge and Coventry. We have undertaken a number of activities such as mock interviews, helping with presentation and problem solving skills, proving hugely valuable for those young people and career development and volunteering opportunities for OCR staff. These kinds of links with schools need to be extended so that young people are getting valuable experience and businesses are better able to understand the barriers and disadvantage some young people face.

14 September 2015

Pearson Education – Written evidence (SMO0089)

Submission to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility by Pearson Education Plc – September 2015

1 About Pearson

- 1.1 Pearson is submitting evidence to the committee, in its capacity as an exam board and owner of the BTEC qualifications, but also as a FTSE 100, UK headquartered company with a real understanding of the need for highly skilled, well rounded employees.
- 1.2 Pearson recognises many of the challenges raised by the committee, as well as by other policy makers.
- 1.3 This submission seeks to address two of the committee’s areas of interest in this inquiry:
- i) “Who is in this group”
 - ii) “What can be improved to help them, and all young people, gain good quality employment”
- 1.4 In answer to these broader questions, with our unique perspective as the world’s largest learning company, we have set out below what we believe to be the clearest analysis of the backgrounds of ‘BTEC students’ and also what they go on to achieve.
- 1.5 In addition we have set out some of the things that we are currently doing to keep our vocational qualifications current and ensure they offer an engaging and rigorous alternative to traditional qualifications.

2 Vocational qualifications – an observation

- 2.1 Before seeking to address the specific questions raised by this inquiry, we do think it important to add some context to some of the implicit assumptions within the summary of the committee’s remit.
- 2.2 Whilst we do recognise, as set out below, that vocational qualifications like Pearson’s BTEC are often studied by students from more disadvantaged backgrounds, we also feel it is important not to under-sell the value and popularity of these qualifications

Awarding bodies

and indeed to celebrate the successes of thousands of young people who study BTEC every year.

- 2.3 BTECs are world-leading vocational qualifications, accessed by students from a whole range of backgrounds and in many countries. We feel that a key part of this debate is raising (through improving both standards and attitudes) the esteem in which vocational qualifications are held and positioning them as one of several potential progression routes, rather than an automatically less prestigious route to be compared with traditional A-levels.
- 2.4 With almost one-quarter of university entrants now starting higher education having taken a BTEC⁶²⁰ at Level 3 or above, and that number expected to rise, continuing to elevate the status of high quality vocational qualifications will be key to changing the debate around progression routes.

3 About BTECS

- 3.1 BTECs are designed as specialist work-related qualifications and are available in a range of sectors, such as business, engineering and ICT. A number of BTECs are recognised as Technical Certificates and form part of the Apprenticeship Framework. Although they're often studied by full-time students, BTECs also provide career development opportunities for those already in work. Delivering the knowledge, skills and understanding students need to prepare for their chosen career, BTEC Nationals offer progression to higher or further education or into employment.
- 3.2 Some schools, colleges and training centres provide courses part-time. BTECs are available at different levels, from Entry Level Skills for Working Life, right through to professional qualifications at Level 7 (equivalent to postgraduate study). They also come in different sizes at each level ensuring students can choose a course that fits around work or other studies.

Who are 'BTEC Students'?

- 3.3 In recent years, a number of reports, as well as analysis of Pearson's own data as the provider of BTEC, have looked at the students who take BTECs, the communities and families they come from and what they go on to achieve.
- 3.4 Whilst drawing on different sources for and levels of data, these reports between them highlight a clear theme. BTECs disproportionately serve a cohort of pupils from the most deprived communities and allow many of those students to go on to higher education and the possibilities that lie beyond.

⁶²⁰ [UCAS data on entry to HE – 2014 End of Cycle Report](#)

3.5 A few points from these reports are worth paying special attention to:

(i) The number of 'BTEC students' has increased hugely in recent years.

In 2012, over 50,000 university entrants had studied a BTEC (including many who did so as well as A-levels rather instead of them). This is an increase from less than 34,000 students in 2008⁶²¹.

(ii) The overall proportion of university students who have taken a BTEC has also increased.

Almost one quarter of HE students in 2014 got there having taken a BTEC⁶²², compared with just 13.5% in 2008.

(iii) An increasing proportion of HE students enter having taken a mixture of traditional A-levels and BTECs.

Between 2008 and 2012 the percentage of students taking a BTEC as well as a Pearson A-level increased ten-fold, from 1% to 11%⁶²³.

(iv) The demographic mix of 'BTEC students' has remained largely the same – with students twice as likely to come from the most disadvantaged communities when compared to students who only take A-levels.

When comparing the socio-economic backgrounds of students who took A-levels with those who took BTECs only, 20% of A-level learners came from lower social-economic backgrounds, whilst 40% of BTEC learners were in this group⁶²⁴.

(v) 'BTEC students' go on to make good progress once they enter higher education

Almost 50% of 'BTEC students' go on to achieve a 1st or 2:1⁶²⁵. Whilst the percentage is higher for A-level students (73%), this compares well given the very different cohort outlined above and the lower likelihood of family experience of higher education⁶²⁶. Almost 90% of BTEC students go on to receive a 1st or 2nd class degree, compared to 96% of A-level students⁶²⁷.

(vi) 'BTEC students' who undertake degree level qualifications can thrive in employment

⁶²¹ HESA data on students by qualification type, analysed by Pearson

⁶²² [UCAS data on entry to HE – 2014 End of Cycle Report](#)

⁶²³ Pearson analysis of internal data for BTEC and Pearson A-level students

⁶²⁴ Pearson analysis of internal data for BTEC students

⁶²⁵ Pearson analysis of internal data for BTEC and Pearson A-level students

⁶²⁶ [Vocational Progression to Selecting Universities Comparisons & Trends 2010-2013](#)

⁶²⁷ Pearson analysis of internal data for BTEC and Pearson A-level students who started a degree course in 2008/09 and completed in 2012

Awarding bodies

One study in 2013 claimed that BTEC students are slightly more likely to be employed post-graduation than A-level students (89.8% vs 88.1%)⁶²⁸. This report also showed that BTEC students were more likely to be 'Managers and senior officials'⁶²⁹.

4. Rigour alongside applied learning

- 4.1 Pearson has sought to address the feedback and priorities of a number of partners – in higher education, in schools, in industry, in government, among teachers, parents and learners – and strengthen the BTEC offer.
- 4.2 Working with our partners in higher education and industry, we are in the process of re-designing our BTEC qualifications to bring additional rigour and even higher standards and to ensure that these long-standing qualifications are fit for purpose.
- 4.3 Our main goals have been to:
 - Refresh BTEC Nationals (our Level 3 qualifications, equivalent to A-levels) courses so learners can be confident they contain the most up-to-date content, and continue to remain effective in shaping current and future employment opportunities for BTEC Nationals students. This redevelopment has been based on research. Our new BTEC Nationals are underpinned by learning methods that are designed to enhance cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills.
 - Consult with employers, professional bodies and Higher Education to ensure they are actively collaborating on this redevelopment, so they are confident these new courses will prepare young people with the right balance of knowledge and skills for entry to the modern workplace either directly or via Higher Education.
 - Give students the opportunity to achieve their potential and progress to the next stage in their lives, whether that's into Higher Education or a good career.
 - Ensure post-16 students' achievements in colleges and schools in England are recognised in the new accountability measures. That's why we've made sure the new BTEC Nationals also meet the Department for Education's technical guidance.
- 4.4 Despite these changes and the continued, and increasing popularity of BTECs amongst learners, we recognise that there is still a challenge in ensuring that vocational and traditional academic qualifications are equally valued.

⁶²⁸ [The outcomes associated with the BTEC route of degree level acquisition, London Economics 2013](#)

⁶²⁹ [The outcomes associated with the BTEC route of degree level acquisition, London Economics 2013](#)

5 What is the challenge?

- 5.1 We believe that the BTEC pathway is valuable because it supports a career, not only a job. Even those who do A-levels could potentially benefit more from the vocational route. Understandably however those students won't choose a vocational route if the acceptability of its currency is not clear enough.
- 5.2 Through initiatives like our annual BTEC Awards, now in their 5th year, we have sought to celebrate the achievements of BTEC students and demonstrate the success of BTEC students. The pen portraits of this year's award winners included in the annex to this submission highlight both some of the more challenging backgrounds of some BTEC students and also the huge success they can achieve.
- 5.3 In the same spirit Pearson now publishes a national overview of BTEC results in the same way so that progress made by BTEC students is clearly demonstrated and celebrated.

6 What do employers want?

- 6.1 The recent Pearson/CBI Annual Skills Survey⁶³⁰ identified that "2 in 3 businesses (68%) expect their need for staff with higher level skills to grow in the years ahead, but more than half of those surveyed (55%) fear that they will not be able to access enough workers with the required skills".
- 6.2 The majority of businesses either prefer recruits to hold a mix of both academic and vocational qualifications (37%), or value academic and vocational qualifications equally (37%).
- 6.3 The report also found that "demand for highly skilled workers is particularly strong in sectors critical to the rebalancing of the economy – engineering, science and hi-tech (74%), construction (73%) and manufacturing (69%)."
- 6.4 John Cridland, Director-General of the CBI spoke at this year's Festival of Education, where he commented

"In some places just a picket fence separates a college where you can take great BTEC nationals – but not A-levels – and a Sixth Form where you can take great A-levels – but not BTEC nationals."

⁶³⁰ [Inspiring Growth: Pearson/CBI Skills Survey 2015](#)

Awarding bodies

“You know what? I’d love to kick down that fence and give all young people the chance to study vocational and academic qualifications. Instead of forcing them to give up their future because the “system says no”. If that means radically changing how we fund schools and hold them accountable, so be it.”

- 6.5 In higher education too, there is recognition that the education landscape of the future will have a big place for BTECs. UCAS Chief Executive Mary Curnock Cook has been reported as saying that vocational qualifications “support excellent outcomes in higher education”, saying universities needed to adjust “to this shift in the profile of secondary education” in the future.

Annex

National BTEC Awards 2015 - Winner Profiles

[Outstanding BTEC Business Student of the Year 2015](#)

Lily Mann, The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College

Lily Mann is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Business Student of the Year.

Lily is currently studying for a Level 3 BTEC Diploma in Business alongside a Level 3 BTEC National Subsidiary Diploma in ICT and an A level in Economics at The Bromfords School and Sixth Form College in Essex. She has been selected to join Tesco’s Management Programme in September and plans to combine this with a degree in Business Management and Law at university.

Described by her tutors as an exemplary student who produces work that is thoughtful, well-researched and highly evaluative, Lily is on track to achieve Distinctions in all of her BTEC units and during her time at college, she has proved herself as an exceptional business student and a hard-working BTEC ambassador, winning several awards including the Institute of Directors Aspirations in Business Award for North/South Essex and the college’s Entrepreneur of the Year award.

As well as being a highly committed student, Lily is gaining valuable experience through part-time employment and has also dedicated over 100 hours to promoting BTECs to younger students and their parents. Using the business skills and knowledge she has gained during her course, she mentors other students and has devised a host of charity events within her school and the local community.

Awarding bodies

The judges praised Lily's hard work, passion and determination and described her as an exceptional and worthy winner with a bright and successful future ahead of her.

Outstanding BTEC Child and Social Care Student of the Year 2015

Stephanie Trembath, Truro and Penwith College

Stephanie Trembath is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Child and Social Care Student of the Year.

Stephanie is currently studying for a Level 3 Diploma in Health and Social Care at Penwith College where she is on track to receive a triple-distinction. She is passionate about helping others and has a dedication to social care that marks her out as truly outstanding.

Stephanie supports herself financially with paid employment as a community carer alongside her BTEC. She juggles long working hours with her studies yet has still far exceeded the 100-hour work experience requirements of her course, completing a range of placements in hospital wards, care homes and day care centres. She has also participated in many local voluntary projects working with individuals in her community who are isolated and alone.

Described by her tutors as dedicated, mature and completely committed to her studies, Stephanie is a passionate and hard-working student who is making a real difference to people's lives. On finding an elderly person on the floor in their own home having had a stroke, Stephanie administered vital first aid and support until the ambulance arrived, applying the vast experience she has gained in a range of care settings to help save this individual's life.

The judges praised Stephanie's unquestionable commitment to her vocation and her outstanding achievements both in college and in her local community.

Outstanding BTEC Construction Student of the Year 2015

Kyle McKee, South Eastern Regional College (Bangor Campus), Northern Ireland

Kyle McKee is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Construction Student of the Year.

Kyle has a distinction-level BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Construction from South Eastern Regional College and was awarded the Institution of Civil Engineers Quest Scholarship in October 2014. He is currently studying for a BTEC Extended Diploma in Construction at the college for which he is expected to achieve a triple starred distinction and then plans to join Queen's University in Belfast to study Civil Engineering.

Awarding bodies

Kyle is an excellent student who excels in his academic and extracurricular work. During his Diploma he was chosen as one of an elite group of students to participate in an EU-funded two week work experience placement with the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure in Malta and has appeared in a video to promote the college's programme of activities to enhance students' employability skills and future career prospects.

In his spare time, Kyle is heavily involved in his community. He is a qualified dinghy sailing instructor and volunteers at a local sailing club, he is a Scout Troop Young Leader, a volunteer adult leader at his local Education Board Youth Club and he holds the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.

The judges praised Kyle's considerable achievements, both in and out of college and described him as an extraordinarily committed BTEC student who is set to excel both in his chosen field and as an active and highly skilled volunteer in his local community.

Outstanding BTEC Creative Art and Design Student of the Year 2015

Zach Wrightson, Priestley College

Zach Wrightson is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Creative Art and Design Student of the Year.

Zach's educational journey is the epitome of a BTEC success story. Having left school with a single GCSE, Zach gained a BTEC Level 2 Diploma in Art and Design at Priestley College before progressing to a BTEC National Extended Diploma in Art and Design. He achieved a triple-starred distinction in his BTEC alongside GCSEs in English and Maths and is now studying Costume Design at Cleveland College of Art and Design.

During his time at college, Zach was a focused and determined student who was popular with his tutors and peers and proved himself as a talented and innovative designer. One of his biggest challenges was to develop and pitch a wallpaper design for Barclays Bank. His winning pitch, concept and design were described by his tutors and the Barclays team as exceptional and his wallpaper now adorns Barclays' Knutsford offices.

Zach also contributed significantly to wider college life during his time at Priestley, designing costumes for the college's catwalk shows and attending every college open event where he gave talks to visiting groups of students and encouraged them to follow the vocational route.

The judges described Zach as an outstanding and exemplary student whose BTEC journey has taken him from a school-leaver with poor GCSE grades to a highly capable, confident learner.

Outstanding BTEC Engineering Student of the Year 2015

Awarding bodies

Charlie Passey, Petroc College, Devon

Charlie Passey is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Engineering Student of the Year.

Charlie is currently studying for a BTEC Extended Diploma in Engineering at Petroc College in Devon and will progress to Swansea University in September to study for a degree in Electronic and Electrical Engineering.

Charlie left secondary school with little idea about what he wanted to do. He tried A levels then a Medical Science diploma but was never truly committed. After a brief spell working as a labourer, Charlie discovered that a BTEC in Engineering could not only provide a route back into education but would also match his style of learning. Being able to put into practice the theories he learns in class has helped him to fully understand the concepts being taught and he is now on track to achieve a triple-starred distinction.

Charlie has a very strong work ethic and is self-motivated and well-respected by his peers. Alongside his BTEC studies, he has independently learned the Python coding language and passed his amateur radio exams. As a member of RAYNET, the Radio Amateurs' Emergency Network, he has also been active in setting up radio communications for student-led orienteering races and charity fundraising events.

The judges praised Charlie's commitment, drive and ambition. Finding an educational route to suit his learning style has allowed him to develop a passion for engineering and he has an excellent future ahead of him.

[Outstanding BTEC Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Student of the Year 2015](#)

Kealy Aylwin, The Cheadle and Marple College Network

Kealy Aylwin is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Hospitality, Travel and Tourism Student of the Year.

Kealy achieved a triple-starred distinction BTEC Level 3 in Travel and Tourism at The Cheadle and Marple College Network in 2014 and now works as a Passenger Service Agent with Jet2 Ground Operations at Manchester Airport.

Kealy knew from a young age that she wanted to pursue a career in travel and chose the BTEC route as she felt it was more suited to her style of learning. During her time at college, Kealy faced several challenges, including being main carer to her mum, yet she approached

Awarding bodies

her course with enthusiasm and a determination to succeed, completing a number of other airline and travel qualifications and certificates alongside her BTEC.

Her tutors describe her as a hard-working, committed and enthusiastic student who excelled in her work placement for Thomas Cook in Benidorm, supported and inspired her fellow students at Manchester Airport's Flying High Academy and is now gaining the experience she needs to join the cabin crew of a leading airline.

The judges were impressed by Kealy's genuine passion for the travel and tourism industry and her drive to achieve her career ambitions. They praised her high levels of commitment and motivation and the valuable work experience she gained during her BTEC, which has set her on the path to achieving her ultimate goals within travel industry.

Outstanding BTEC IT Student of the Year 2015

Labinot Krasniqi, Westminster Academy

Labinot Krasniqi is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC IT Student of the Year.

Labinot swapped from A levels to the BTEC Extended Diploma in ICT at Westminster Academy because he felt a BTEC better suited his learning style. He is on track to achieve a triple-starred distinction and has been accepted by King's College London to study Computer Science in September.

Labinot is a dedicated and hard-working student with a passion for computer programming and video game development. He was runner up in the BAFTA Young Games Creator Awards 2013, where he designed a game with two other students and presented it to gaming industry professionals, he has undertaken work experience at Rocksteady Studios and he has a level of understanding of his subject far beyond the taught content that often prompts his fellow students to seek his help.

Outside college, Labinot is teaching himself a number of computer languages in preparation for his degree and is working with a small team to develop further their BAFTA video game concept. He participates in Westminster's programme to help elderly people in his community to learn ICT skills and also tutors year 12 and 13 students who need extra support with IT.

The judges described Labinot as an outstanding IT student with a passion and dedication to his subject. His volunteering and tutoring work demonstrate his commitment to helping others develop essential computing skills.

Awarding bodies

Outstanding BTEC Land Based Student of the Year 2015

Megan Taylor, Nescot College

Megan Taylor is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Land Based Student of the Year.

Megan is a truly inspirational BTEC student. She achieved a triple-starred distinction in a BTEC Level 3 Extended Diploma in Animal Management from Nescot College in 2014 and is now continuing her studies at university despite having a heart condition which causes her to faint between 6-8 times each day.

Shortly before she began her BTEC, Megan fainted and fell, fracturing her skull in three places. As a result, she severely damaged her hearing, her balance is very poor and she suffers permanent dizziness. Yet despite these huge challenges, Megan excelled on her BTEC course and spends much of her spare time volunteering and raising money for animal charities and Help for Heroes.

Megan's commitment to animals is also evident in the array of work experience she has undertaken. During her BTEC, Megan volunteered at Chessington Zoo and The Wildlife Heritage Foundation Big Cat Sanctuary and alongside her studies worked at a children's farm, started a business selling survival tools, was a Cub Scout Leader, a Kindness Ambassador . She also volunteered with four charities including Pets as Therapy where she visited nursing homes, hospitals and special needs schools with her dog.

The judges praised Megan's tenacity, drive and attitude in achieving so much despite so many challenges.

Outstanding BTEC Media Student of the Year 2015

Adrian Bloomer, Walsall Studio School

Adrian Bloomer is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Media Student of the Year.

Adrian is on track to achieve a triple-starred distinction in his BTEC in Creative Media Production at Walsall Studio School. He is described by his tutor as a natural filmmaker of the highest calibre with a talent to match and he has secured a full-time job starting this summer with Freeview broadcaster Big Centre Television.

Awarding bodies

During his time at Walsall Studio School, Adrian has amassed an impressive array of practical experience, working on practical assignments as a camera operator and editor for live music events, broadcast features, documentaries and corporate videos for clients including the Arts Council of England, Emergenation and BCTV.

Adrian's BTEC has given him the opportunity to grow in confidence as a filmmaker and develop the skills he needs to become an in-demand, respected and dependable media professional. As well as being a very talented and innovative filmmaker, Adrian is a strong advocate for vocational education; he describes his BTEC as an excellent grounding for a career in media with a good mix of theory and practical work that has enabled him to gain new and important skills.

The judges praised Adrian's obvious aptitude for his BTEC, his professionalism and his tenacity in securing a full time job in the television industry even before his course finished.

Outstanding BTEC Performing Arts Student of the Year 2015

Nick Rawbin, Central Sussex College

Nick Rawbin is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Performing Arts Student of the Year.

Nick is studying for a Level 4 BTEC in Performing Arts at Central Sussex college and is on track to receive distinctions in all units. In September, he will take up a highly-prized place at Italia Conti Academy of Theatre Arts and plans to become an actor.

Nick's tutors describe him as a talented and selfless student who works hard in every aspect of his course. He is a young carer for his mum and grandfather and holds down three part-time jobs in order to support himself through college. Nick has an outstanding level of determination to succeed, despite his own personal challenges. He is well-respected by his fellow students and a highly valued member of the college's performing arts company.

Nick also volunteers at his local leisure centre and has worked on a voluntary project with Age UK East Grinstead to gather stories from the elderly people in his community that were developed into a show to raise awareness of older people and dementia.

The judges were impressed by Nick's commitment to a career in the performing arts. His achievement in earning a place at a top drama school, together with working to put himself through college whilst caring for two family members, make him an outstanding and inspiring BTEC student.

Awarding bodies

Outstanding BTEC Public Services Student of the Year 2015

Emma Horn, Blackpool Sixth Form College

Emma Horn is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Public Services Student of the Year.

Emma is studying for a BTEC in Public Services at Blackpool Sixth Form College and holds a Level 2 BTEC in Public Services and a BTEC in Aviation Studies.

Emma's commitment to a career as an RAF pilot is outstanding and inspirational. She is a Flight Sergeant in the RAF cadets, was awarded the Master Cadet teaching title and was nominated by her RAF squadron for the award for the best female cadet in the country.

However, Emma's achievements are not limited to her RAF role. She plays an active part in college life as a Public Services mentor and ambassador to her peer group and as chairperson of the Public Service Young People Committee, which raises money for course-related local charities.

Emma is also involved in the recruitment of new public service students and regularly speaks at college open evenings to year 11 students about her BTEC experience.

Emma is described by her tutors as a perfect role model and a pleasure to teach. In her spare time, she volunteers as an NCO on RAF camps to look after the wellbeing of other females and this summer will take on a volunteering role as a Camp America councillor in Interlaken.

The judges were hugely impressed by Emma's in-college and extra-curricular roles, her outstanding BTEC grades and her support for younger students.

Outstanding BTEC Science Student of the Year 2015

Roua Sami, Salford City College

Roua Sami is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Science Student of the Year.

Roua is on track to receive a triple-starred distinction in a Level 3 BTEC Extended Diploma in Applied Science from Salford City College and will join Durham University's Pharmacy degree course in September.

Awarding bodies

Roua arrived in the UK from Iraq in 2012, without a secondary education and only very basic English. Determined to overcome her lack of qualifications to pursue a career in science, Roua enrolled on Salford's BTEC Applied Science course so she could carry out the practical assignments and experiments that would improve her writing and lab skills. She also took GCSE English and Maths alongside her BTEC and evening classes in GCSE Physics and Chemistry to gain the qualifications she needed for university. She organised work experience placements at Specsavers to develop her communication skills and with Gatley Pharmacy to enhance her university application.

Roua managed this challenging workload whilst caring for her chronically-ill 19-month old sister and acting as a peer mentor for her fellow female Arabic and Muslim students and helping to register a multifold increase in the number of Arabic female students joining her BTEC course by speaking to prospective students at open evenings about the opportunities her BTEC has given her.

The judges describe Roua as an excellent ambassador for BTECs and for women in science. Her proactive approach to the educational barriers she faced and her dedication and hard work in securing her university place make her truly outstanding.

[Outstanding BTEC Sport Student of the Year 2015](#)

Hayley Simpson, Tameside College

Hayley Simpson is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Sport Student of the Year.

Hayley achieved a triple-starred distinction in her Level 3 BTEC in Sport at Tameside College and is now studying Sports Coaching at Leeds Beckett University.

Driven by her desire to become a Physical Education teacher, Hayley gained several other sports qualifications alongside her BTEC, including the FA Level 1 Coaching Football certificate, a Young Club Managers qualification and the ECB Young Leaders Award.

At college, Hayley was a student ambassador responsible for liaising with local schools to promote the college's sport department and became a Young Ambassador for her borough, attending national conferences and promoting sport at primary school level. She has recently returned to Tameside to support current students and talk to them about her university experiences.

Awarding bodies

During her BTEC, Hayley volunteered in her local secondary school PE department, at her local athletics club, as an event leader in the Greater Manchester School Games and as a marshal at the Manchester Marathon.

In addition to juggling these roles Hayley competed in National Athletic events representing East Cheshire Harriers in distance and cross-country running and was the 2013 U17 3000m Greater Manchester Schools Champion.

The judges describe Hayley as an outstanding BTEC student who combines her excellent grades with impressive sporting achievements. She is a role model to other students through her work as a volunteer and Young Ambassador.

Outstanding BTEC Adult Learner of the Year 2015

Nathan Headington, Leeds College of Building

Nathan Headington is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Adult Leader of the Year.

Nathan returned to education as a mature student with no academic qualifications. In the space of three years he has excelled academically, obtained full time employment, achieved a Level 6 NVQ, become Leeds College of Building's HE student representative and secured a place at university to study for a degree in Construction and Project Management.

Nathan began his journey back into education with a BTEC Subsidiary Diploma in Civil Engineering at Leeds College of Building, gaining distinctions in all units before progressing onto an HND in Civil Engineering and a full time site management role which he structures around his HND.

Described by his tutors as truly inspirational, Nathan even finds time to support his fellow students by sharing his experiences of construction sites and organising work placements within his company.

He is a student member of the Institute of Civil Engineers (ICE) and was recently nominated for the G4C Student of the Year Award. He plans to sit his professional review for Technician Membership of the ICE this summer and will be the first full time student from Leeds College of Building to do this. He is also a father of five.

Awarding bodies

The judges were unanimous in their praise for Nathan. Returning to education as a mature student takes dedication and commitment and Nathan has excelled in his roles as student, site manager, peer and student rep.

Outstanding BTEC International Student of the Year 2015

George Benson Lyimo, Braeside High School, Nairobi, Kenya

George Benson Lyimo is the 2015 BTEC International Student of the Year.

George left his home in Tanzania to pursue a BTEC Extended Diploma in Business at Braeside High School in Nairobi in 2012. He gained a triple-starred distinction and is now studying for a degree in Business and Computing at Huddersfield University.

During his time at college in Kenya, George excelled as a young, innovative and creative business leader. He launched his own social network (texeer.com), provided internet connectivity for his fellow students when the college provision failed and regularly helped out at college repairing and maintaining students' and teachers' computer equipment, despite no formal training. In addition, he organised annual charity events which raised vital funds which are now supporting young Kenyan children into education.

Alongside his BTEC, George taught himself HTML and CSS and volunteered as a computer technician in order to gain the knowledge and experience he needed for his degree course and to further develop his social networking site into a fully fledged and commercially viable, internationally-recognised product.

The judges praised George's dedication in moving country to pursue his studies and his clear aptitude and flair for business as evidenced in his excellent grades and acceptance onto a degree course in the UK.

Outstanding BTEC Apprentice (19+ years) of the Year 2015

Gareth Davies, Leeds College of Building

Gareth Davies is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Apprentice of the Year (19+ years).

Awarding bodies

Gareth is employed by Jagger Construction as a Project Manager having joined the company as an apprentice in 2010. He completed his BTEC Apprenticeship in Civil Engineering with Leeds College of Building and is now studying for a Higher Level Apprenticeship.

Gareth's commitment to his studies, the college, his employer and the Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE) is exemplary and his tutors describe him as a superb role model. He was one of the first students in the country to complete the ICE Advanced Technical Apprenticeship, he has passed the ICE Technician Professional Review and was awarded the Jean Venables Medal for enhancing the profession of civil engineering. He is also Leeds College of Building's Higher Level Apprentice of the Year by and he was shortlisted for Yorkshire's G4C Apprentice of the Year.

Gareth believes passionately in apprenticeships and works hard to inspire young people to pursue civil engineering. He is an elected member of ICE's Regional Committee, where he was instrumental in securing a visit to a local FE college by ICE's Director General and he volunteers as a STEMNET Ambassador. At college, he regularly coaches other students preparing for their Professional Reviews.

The judges praised Gareth's excellent track record of achievement and his passionate belief in apprenticeships. Encouraging other young people to take up a career in civil engineering, while excelling in his own career, makes him truly outstanding.

Outstanding BTEC Apprentice (16-18 years) of the Year 2015

Liam Flanagan, Employment and Skills Group

Liam Flanagan is the 2015 Outstanding BTEC Apprentice of the Year (16-18 years).

Liam joined Howells Solicitors Sheffield as an apprentice and holds a Level 3 BTEC Diploma in Business Administration. He is now employed full-time by the company and studying for a Level 3 BTEC Diploma in Customer Services in preparation for training with the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.

Liam originally gained a Level 2 BTEC in Public Services as a Cadet Staff Sergeant Instructor in the Army Cadet Force, before deciding to pursue a career in law. After an NVQ in Business Administration, Liam chose a BTEC Apprenticeship with Howells LLP to gain first hand experience of working in a law firm and a business qualification that would enhance his career prospects.

Awarding bodies

He was the first apprentice Howells employed and his outstanding professional approach not only secured him full-time employment with the company but also encouraged the firm to take on four additional apprentices who Liam now mentors.

As well as his impressive commitment to his studies and employer, Liam still retains a position as an adult instructor in the Army Cadet Force.

The judges described Liam as a role model for all aspiring apprentices, who had a significant responsibility as his employer's first apprentice to prove the value of the qualification and route of learning. He opened the door through which others are now following and as such, is an excellent ambassador for BTEC Apprenticeships.

14 September 2015

Individuals

Individuals

Matteo Calogiuri – Written evidence (SMO0008)

My views in this submission are based on my experiences at a diverse state school in the borough of Ealing, West London between 2005-2013. I am now a university student taking an industrial placement as part of my degree. My opinions only represent my specific experiences up until my current stage in life where I have finished my second year at university as of July 2015.

11/08/15

1. I believe that the greatest factor influencing social mobility and therefore employment outcomes is a lack of career advice from high schools for students from years 7 – 11. From my experience as a student the main objective was to do well academically for the sake of it, however there was a lack of student mentoring in helping students match subjects with potential career paths and giving career orientated motivation to succeed academically. Most students get to year 11 and are unsure what paths to take and this uncertainty leads them to take A-levels and go to university as it is seen as a standard route. From what I have seen, those who perform better academically tend to take the standard university route before employment while those who struggle a bit more tend to choose an *apprenticeship*. *However what is interesting is that those who took an apprenticeship seem to be much more settled in industry while those at university are not 100% clear on their career path and some come out of university lost. It seems to me that starting work straight after GCSE's on apprenticeship schemes has given a head start against those who went to university. By talking to friends at university it seems that some regret going to university or at least are still not sure whether it was worth doing as they continuously compare themselves to those who have well paid jobs in an apprenticeship. The general feeling for those at university in my age group is that they have realized too late that academics only takes you up to a certain point, and that experience is much more important. Had these students been mentored or at least informed much more at high school perhaps they would have taken an apprenticeship instead. This is because at school the general view between students due to a lack of career information was that apprenticeships were for those who struggled academically hence why many students viewed the classic university route as superior. However it is important to note that those doing harder subjects at university such as engineering or medicine seem to have a better idea so this opinion of mine applies to those students studying general degrees such as Geography , History , English ect*

What I would have liked to see more is perhaps career fairs, and an increase in promotion of apprenticeship schemes. It would be helpful to introduce to students within their academic timetable career related sessions.

Individuals

This stereotypical view of university being superior than an apprenticeship route is also influenced by traditional views held in households, so there is also a parental influence especially within certain cultures where getting a degree is seen as a family honor which is more relevant within ethnic minorities where later generations of immigrants become the first in their family to achieve a degree.

Students have a lack of awareness, and this lack of awareness leads to them to make changes too late and this is why in some cases they struggle to find work after university. This highlights the lack of promotion around apprenticeships.

2.

As mentioned previously those who are neither NEET's nor in higher education from my experience tend to be taking apprenticeships. Those taking this route tend to be more within the indigenous population while those which have originated from abroad tend to take the academic route.

3.

The current transition system when compared with other countries in my opinion is much more advanced. Coming from a southern European background it is clear that northern European countries are way ahead in terms of helping students start a career. The only improvement which needs to be made as mentioned in question 1 is the promotion of career opportunities after GCSE's. The apprenticeships system in my opinion is very successful, I find these students are not only more settled financially but are more mature due to an earlier start they gain in starting their careers and interacting with adults. There needs to be more promotion of apprenticeships, as universities are much better at reaching students.

4.

For improvements, students need to have more exposure to business. However a key element here would be to inform the parents as a lot of the time they act as key mentors in all areas of life for students. An example is that females perform better academically than males in STEM subjects however there seems to be a massive drop in the percentage of these female students taking subjects such as engineering as it is seen as a male based job. There is research to suggest that this is partly influenced by their parents such as parents of female students who didn't see them working in engineering as much as parents of male students. Therefore there could be a correlation between parental influence and social mobility amongst students.

5.

The responsibility for ensuring a better transition into work in my opinion rests with schools and business. There needs to be more direct communication between business and schools, especially informally. In my time at school I never saw an external multinational company or even local come in and talk about their post GCSE careers. I only heard now and then from general knowledge about the availability of apprenticeships however there was no internal promotion within the school from companies offering these places. It seemed that universities out competed businesses in attracting students. There was some employer engagement such as guest speaker events, however these were based on employment after university and not employment after year 11.

8 August 2015

Individuals

Charlie Doherty – Written evidence (SMO0025)

[Charlie is a Member of the UK Youth Parliament, representing Crawley & East Grinstead. At the time of writing the submission, Charlie was in Year 11 and studying 11 GCSE's. Charlie plans on attending a local college, and afterwards, hopes to undertake an apprenticeship.]

Q1 . - High rent costs to live independantly, if job is away from home.

- Travel Costs are high.
- Un experienced workers sometimes don't get ideal jobs, and are turned away.
- Not enough support or advice given.

Q2. They may intead my have taken apprenticips, or were unable to complete their degree's for what ever reason.

Q3. I feel as if it does not support these people as employers now are very conserned on the grades in which their new employe's gained at at school. And i feel that if two people were up for a job, then the employer would choose the person with the beter degrees. meaning the person with no or little degrees, is likely to end up in a job not suited to them with very little future.

Q4. I feel that an employer should base who they hire on the employees personality. and the ability in the job, not what the paper with grades dictates. Of course grades are important but i feel as if employers should look past the grades to see what each person is really like and how their personality would do in the job. I also feel as if busiesses should advertise jobs with a minimum age of 15 (which as far as i believe is the minimum age for a job) so that it encourages young people to go their. And if the employer thinks you wold be good for the job, they should employ you despite your age.

Q5. I feel as if businesses should not descriminate against age before they have seen the person. If once they meet them they arn't right for the job then they dont get it, but if age is the only issue i dont think they should be allowed to turn you down just because your young. I also feel as if the goverment should make in compulsory that businesses and employers should act in this way ie. not descriminating on age. Another organisation i feel has responsibility is the school or college, i feel as if they should have PSE lessons where they are telling children how to persue their chosen careers and what jobs are out there for them.

9 September 2015

John Taylor – Written evidence (SMO0146)

Evidence submission to the House of Lords Select Committee on Social Mobility
John Taylor, Company Secretary, Hiscox plc

I have been asked to share my views on the requirements placed upon quoted companies to report on Environmental, Social and Governance matters (formerly known as corporate social responsibility- or CSR - matters).

The Companies Act 2006 places an obligation on quoted companies (i.e. those with a Stock Exchange listing) to provide information about environmental matters (including the impact of the company's business on the environment), the company's employees, and social, community and human rights issues, including information about any policies of the company in relation to those matters and the effectiveness of those policies.

This legislation would only apply to quoted companies, whereas there are many private companies that have large numbers of employees. It is also confined to companies that are incorporated in the UK whereas there are overseas companies with significant numbers of UK employees.

The Companies Act drives UK companies to report on Environmental, Social and Governance matters (ESG) (ESG being the new CSR) but a more significant driver is the Company's desire to preserve its reputation and public profile. There is also peer pressure and the fact that the Company's trading partners and suppliers may not want to deal with companies that have poor ESG credentials even if the company itself is ambivalent. It is not uncommon now for questionnaires to be sent prior to a trading relationship being established. For listed/quoted companies there will also be pressure from institutional shareholders.

Quoted companies can volunteer to meet certain ESG standards by participating in initiatives such as Climatewise, UN Global Compact or FTSE 4 Good. Only larger (especially FTSE 100) companies are likely to have a written policy on ESG.

Quoted companies will from time to time require approval of their shareholders to do certain things. Each year they will hold an AGM in order to obtain shareholder approval for their annual accounts, re-election of their Directors, payment of dividends etc. They also hold Extraordinary General Meetings (EGMs) on an ad hoc basis when they have specific corporate actions requiring approval, e.g. an acquisition.

Due to the sheer number of company meetings and the volume of documentation attaching to each, institutional shareholders rely to a large extent on advice from 'Proxy agencies' who pore over the detail of the Company's reporting and assess their proposals. The best known of these are ISS, IVIS (formerly ABI), Glass Lewis, Manifest and PIRC. Some of the Proxy Agencies sell their research to the institutional shareholder community and some (notably ISS) go as far as making voting recommendations for each resolution at the relevant shareholder meeting. To assist quoted companies in their reporting the Proxy Agencies publish policies which act as a yardstick against which a company can be assessed. Each time a company convenes a shareholder meeting the Agencies produce a detailed report

Individuals

assessing the information which has been publicly disclosed and analysing it, highlighting compliance or non-compliance with policy. To date some proxy agencies have been more focused on ESG than others . The IVIS website details their approach.

Arguably the most important influence on quoted company reporting these days is the UK Corporate Governance Code (formerly the Combined Code) (the Code) which is published by the Financial Reporting Council (FRC). This works on a 'comply or explain' basis but in practice most FTSE 250 companies will comply in full or with only one or two exceptions. Under Listing Rules Quoted companies are required to report on their compliance (or otherwise) with the Code. Companies issue a 'Corporate Governance Statement' within their annual report and accounts and this is then analysed by the Proxy Agencies. It is likely that companies will endeavour to shape their policies around those of the Proxy agencies.

Any change in the Code to require disclosure in relation to ESG would be likely to have a significant impact. Whilst it would not directly apply to the the non-quoted sector it would apply to FTSE350 constituents which are major UK employers. An example of how this could work would be the Davies Report 2011 which considered how the representation of women on Boards might be increased. This led to provisions being added to the Code requiring companies to take account of gender diversity in their Board succession planning and report any measurable objectives they set. This has had a significant impact and is widely regarded as having brought about an increase in gender diversity on Boards.

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